

NAMMCO



WORKING GROUP ON BY-CATCH, ENTANGLEMENTS AND LIVE STRANDINGS

*22 June and 3 July 2020
Video Conferences*

REPORT



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SUMMARY

The NAMMCO Council Working Group on By-catch, Entanglements and Live Strandings (BYCELS) held two video conferences on 22 June and 3 July 2020. Present were Guðni Magnus Eiríksson (Chair) (Iceland), Ulla Svarrer Wang (Faroe Islands), Nette Levermann (Greenland), Hild Ynnesdal and Kathrine A. Ryeng (Norway), and Mana Tugend (NAMMCO intern) and Charlotte Winsnes from the Secretariat. Nette Levermann and Hild Ynnesdal did not participate to the 3 July meeting where agenda items 3, 4, 5, and 6 were discussed.

Actions arising from the meetings:

Greenland:

- To possibly comment on agenda items 3 and 4 in view of their absence when these were discussed in the Committee.

1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND REVIEWING DOCUMENTS

The Chair Guðni Magnus Eiríksson opened the meeting on 22 June 2020, the agenda was adopted (Appendix 1) and the meeting documents (Appendix 2) reviewed.

2. DATABASE, DATA REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES

2.1 DATABASE – SUBMITTED 2019 DATA

Document NAMMCO-Database-updated May 2020 gave the submitted 2019 data from member countries in relation to by-catch, entanglements, strandings and ship strikes. It was reiterated that the BYCELS is animal welfare issues and the task at hand is to map what and where the problems are in each member country in order to target effort towards finding solutions to mitigate these issues.

2.1.1 General on by-catch

The chair underlined that the data cannot be used for comparisons between countries, only within the countries, due to differences in how the data have been collected and differences in fishing methods. Thus, the idea will be to see whether there are any improvements within a country and how to mitigate by-catch.

Furthermore, it was noted that the reported by-catch data does not reflect the real data, and that the reliability of the data could be questioned given that reporting is not consistent.

It was however agreed that member countries should continue to submit these data. In addition, scientific estimates would be included where these exists.

2.1.2 Submitted data for by-catch

The Faroe Islands informed that there has been no reporting of by-catch and that this is because there is no coastal fishing with nets on low depths.

Greenland underlined that their reports are completed over two years, so that the reported data includes numbers from 2018 and 2019.

Iceland reported several by-catches. In the past years, Iceland had encouraged fishermen to report on by-catch and this seemed to have had a positive effect through the increase in by-catch reported. A plan to inspect lump sucker fisheries should have been implemented in the beginning of 2019 but had been postponed due to the covid-19. Furthermore, Iceland is developing an app for reporting of all catches (online logbook) making reporting of by-catch easier.

In Norway, new regulations that will require all vessels to report by-catch are currently on public hearing, and the electronic logbook will be revised to facilitate reporting of by-catch. Recreational

fishermen can report by-catch in an app from the summer 2020. It is envisaged that this will encourage fishermen to report more consistently than currently where few reports are received by the authorities. As a result, the numbers reported to BYCELS are estimates of the by-catch and not reported numbers.

2.1.3 Data for entanglement

There were no entanglement data reported from the Faroe Islands and Iceland, and only a few incidents reported in Greenland and Norway.

2.1.4 Data for strandings

Three animals have been reported as stranded in the Faroe Islands in 2019. Location information has been reported for all three and for one individual also the length. Greenland has no reported strandings. Iceland reported several strandings among which three mass strandings. The information reported were number of strandings and the sex of the animals. Norway has information on several individual strandings. However, this information is strictly speaking not official as it has not been reported to the authorities but have been collected by individual researchers.

2.1.5 Data for ship strikes

None of the member countries reported ship strikes for 2019.

Norway suggested that ship strikes should not be reported by the member countries to NAMMCO, since no reporting is done within the countries.

2.2 SUGGESTED MODIFICATIONS TO CURRENT NAMMCO DATABASE

Document NAMMCO /BYCELS-2020-01/02 contained a proposal from the Secretariat on modifications of the database to simplify the reporting.

2.2.1 General

BYCELS agreed to remove the Latin names for each species from all sheets and place them instead on a separate sheet containing a list of species with their English names, Latin names and common names in the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland and Norway.

Entanglement/entrapment is a sub-category of by-catch. For the BYCELS work it was agreed to use the term by-catch for small cetaceans and seals whereas entanglement will refer to large cetaceans.

2.2.2 Reporting of by-catch data

The following items have been adopted by BYCELS regarding the reporting of by-catch data:

- To add a new column for estimates to be filled in by the Secretariat according to what is presented in the scientific working group on by-catch.
- To keep the year and month columns in two columns.
- To specify the main fishery target species. However, it should be noted that Greenland expressed some doubts about the usefulness of such category.
- To specify the fishing metier (level 3), namely the gear groups.
- To provide details on the fishing gear.
- To add a comment column for potential comments concerning the reporting.
- To report on both professional and recreational by-catch as it could give further and valuable information on by-catch. At the moment, the Faroe Islands and Iceland only report by-catch from professional fisheries. Norway developed an app to report by-catch induced by recreational fisheries, but since reporting occurs only on a voluntary basis, it is not reliable data. Greenland underlined that in their reporting there is no distinction between professional and recreational fishermen – both are included in the reporting. Furthermore, it was pointed

out that the Greenlandic situation have several more distinctions that would not fit into only these two categories.

2.2.3 Reporting of entanglement and entrapment data

The following items have been approved by BYCELS for reporting of entanglement and entrapment data:

- To combine entanglement and entrapment.
- To keep latitude and longitude in addition to the location, as it is particularly useful in Greenland for instance, where several places have the same name.
- To remove 'no information' regarding the sex of the animal in order to have only 'female', 'male' and 'unknown' as possibilities.
- To add the gear status in order to give precision about whether the gear belongs to a fishing company or whether it is marine debris. To this point, Greenland questioned whether entanglement in marine debris is included in the mandate of BYCELS. The Secretariat assured that it is as the working group tackles animal welfare issues related to entanglement and strandings of marine mammals, so that it is not limited to fishing.
- To have the categories written, instead of numbers.
- To add 'self-released' and 'dead' to the 'disentanglement/entrapment outcome' categories.

2.2.4 Reporting of strandings data

The following items have been approved by BYCELS for the reporting of strandings data:

- To keep the latitude and longitude in addition to the location name for the same reason mentioned above.
- To remove 'no information' regarding the sex of the animal in order to have only 'female', 'male' and 'unknown' as possibilities.
- To add the total number of animals at the event and describe the event.
- To report on the number of alive animals stranded if known.
- To report the event by location and time of the year.

2.2.5 Reporting for ship strikes data

BYCELS agreed to stop reporting ship strike data. Currently there are no legal requirement in member countries to report ship strikes, and it was agreed that BYCELS should encourage member countries to report to already existing schemes like the IWC.

Generally, BYCELS discussed and agreed on the value of using existing information to the extent possible from i.e. the IWC database on ship strikes, strandings and entanglement in their work.

3. STRANDING NETWORK

Documents NAMMCO/BYCELS-2020-01/03 contained the BYCELS Guidelines for setting up stranding networks.

The Chair recalled that the guidelines for the establishment of a stranding network had been agreed upon in the October 2019 meeting. He further noted that the decision had been to forward the guidelines to member countries for their use. Reconsidering the serious animal welfare implications related to strandings, the Chair invited members to consider making the establishment of national stranding networks a recommendation to member countries.

Currently no formally established national stranding networks exists in member countries. In the Faroe Islands there is a practice where the police or the district administrator will be contacted when a stranding is observed. They in turn will contact Bjarni Mikkelsen, the head marine mammal biologist and the veterinary responsible for marine mammal, Signar Petersen.

Furthermore, Iceland is developing an app for reporting of all catches (online logbook) making reporting of by-catch easier.

In Norway, Ryeng and the Marine Research Institute, have upon request from the Ministry of Fisheries recently delivered an assessment whether there is a need of an official stranding network in Norway. The advice is that such a network should be established.

It was recalled that Greenland already has developed a one-page information sheet regarding the procedure to follow if encountering a stranded or entangled animal.

Norway noted that by sampling stranded animals, valuable information on why the animals stranded could be obtained and more insight to the ecosystems around the coasts.

BYCELS agreed to submit the guidelines to the Council with a recommendation that member countries establish national stranding response networks.

4. GUIDELINES

NAMMCO/BYCELS-2020-01/04 contained the IWC guidelines for disentanglement events.

The Secretariat had been asked to review existing guidelines and information on how to disentangle animals and draft a bullet point list highlighting safety issues for the consideration in an entanglement situation. The request had been formulated by Greenland based on a desire to help already trained personnel reiterated parts of the training, given that there have not been and probably will not be many events per year.

The Secretariat explained that the IWC guidelines were covering the essential and important information. Extracting content to make a bullet list would become counterproductive and most probably dangerous as it would have to leave out information and possibly thereby create dangerous situations.

The need to train people on how to disentangle animals and the need to keep trained personnel up to date was underlined by Norway, where response personnel at the Directorate of Fisheries' Sea Unit organise annual repetition sessions.

The members agreed to recommend to Greenland that such a list not be developed but invited Greenland to give comments to this agenda when reviewing the draft report.

5. FUTURE OF BYCELS

The chair proposed, and the members agreed, to postpone the discussion under this agenda item until all members could be participating. It was noted that the focus would be to identify what kind of issues member countries have with regards animal welfare issues related to by-catch, entanglement and live stranding.

6. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held after the 2020 data have been collected, so after February 2021 and before the next Council meeting. A date will be set later in the year.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was discussed.

8. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

The report was adopted by correspondence on 13 July 2020.

APPENDIX 1: AGENDA

- 1. ADOPTION OF AGENDA AND REVIEW OF DOCUMENTS**
- 2. DATABASE, DATA REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES**
- 3. STRANDING NETWORK**
- 4. GUIDELINES**
- 5. FUTURE OF BYCELS**
- 6. NEXT MEETING**
- 7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

APPENDIX 2: LIST OF DOCUMENTS

WORKING DOCUMENTS

Doc. No.	Title	Agenda item
NAMMCO/BYCELS-2020-01/01	Draft Annotated Agenda and List of Documents	1
NAMMCO-Database-updated May 2020	NAMMCO Database	2
NAMMCO/BYCELS-2020-01/02	Memo from the Secretariat on the database and future of BYCELS	2
NAMMCO/BYCELS-2020-01/02-Appendix 1	Suggestion for revisions of database	2
NAMMCO/BYCELS-2020-01/03	Guidelines for setting up stranding networks	3
NAMMCO/BYCELS-2020-01/04	IWC guidelines for disentanglement events	4

FOR INFORMATION DOCUMENTS

Doc. No.	Title	Agenda item
NAMMCO/BYCELS/2020-01/FI01	Report of previous meetings https://nammco.no/topics/bycels-reports/	1