27th meeting

NAMMCO Scientific Committee

*25-29 January 2021, Online*

**DRAFT ANNOTATED AGENDA**

*Please note that the traditional order of the agenda for meetings of the NAMMCO SC has been modified this year to adapt to an online meeting format. This includes some items being done in writing only (i.e. national progress reports (also from observers) and interactions with other organisations), as well as redistributing items across the week to balance workloads each day and allow the possibility that work can be done on some items between the online plenary sessions. The final report will be structured to follow a logical reading order rather than follow the order of discussion during the meeting. Sections of the report will be circulated as they are drafted to facilitate the ability to review the report within the meeting and this will be done on a Sharepoint site so that everyone may work on the document online.*

###### Monday 25th January (13:00-16:00 CET)

1. **Welcome from the Chair & Opening Remarks**

*Including procedures for online meeting (e.g. muting microphone when not speaking, video on when speaking, short breaks each hour, work taking place beyond plenary meeting sessions online) and special welcome to new SC member Martin Biuw.*

1. **Adoption of Agenda**
2. **Appointment of Rapporteurs**
3. **Review of Available Documents and Reports**

*Includes submissions on items that have previously been part of SC agenda, i.e. national progress reports (also from observers) and interactions with other organisations. Open for specific questions.*

1. **Updates from Council**

*Update to be presented by the Secretariat on relevant decisions taken by the Council, includes: a) new timing of NAMMCO meetings (Council agreed to SC proposal to move their meeting to shortly before the Council meeting, although required a minimum of 2 months between the two), b) revision to rules of procedure for all committees and council to require that WG & SC meeting documents be delivered 2 weeks before the meeting (letter from SC to HoDs, and Chair reply available as FI docs); c) ringed & bearded seal working groups may not be delayed beyond 2022.*

1. **NASS Planning**

*Update to be presented by the Chair of the planning sub-group Rikke Hansen, including what information is required to advance in the planning. It is hoped that the SC/planning group can arrive at a timeline for the future planning efforts (including consideration of new methods and involvement of external experts) through to the planned conduct of the survey in 2023 - this timeline can be worked on between plenary sessions and delivered later in the week if necessary.*

1. **Collaboration between SC Members - Supertag Project**

*Update to be presented by the Secretariat, including the possibility for funding from Norway, the Faroes and Japan and the request from the Finance and Administration Committee that the SC provide an updated project description including the quantification of the expected in-kind participation of the four member countries - this updated project description can be worked on between plenary sessions and delivered later in the week if necessary.*

1. **Review of Management Areas**

*The SC is asked to review the appropriateness of the NAMMCO management areas overview - if changes or further developments are required, these may be advanced between plenary online sessions.*

1. **Review of Abundance Estimates Overview**

*Genevieve Desportes will present the endorsed abundance estimates overview that has been published within Volume 11 of the NAMMCO Scientific Publications. The SC is asked to consider the appropriate procedure for endorsing new abundance estimates that have been updated and/or amended in publications after they have been endorsed in an earlier form by the AEWG/SC.*

###### Tuesday 26th January (13:00-16:00 CET)

*If any advancements have been made on items from day one overnight, these can be presented at the start of the meeting.*

1. **Working Group Reports**
   1. By-Catch Working Group

*Convenor Genevieve Desportes will provide an overview of the BYCWG Report, noting that the report was not made publicly available until it has been reviewed by the SC following a request from the Faroe Islands that it be withheld.*

* 1. NAMMCO-JCNB Joint Working Group

*Convenor Rikke Hansen will provide an overview of the JWG Report, including noting the establishment of a quantitative subworking group to work intersessionally before management advice is provided for narwhal.*

1. **Website Updates & Quality Review**

*Following the procedure agreed at SC26, the SC is asked to review and provide corrections/updates for the information on the NAMMCO website regarding 4 species: Minke whales, Pilot whales, Harbour Seals, Walrus. This can be performed prior to the meeting and if necessary, between online plenary sessions, with updates emailed to the Secretariat directly.*

###### Wednesday 27th January (13:00-16:00 CET)

*If any advancements have been made on items from day one or two overnight, these can be presented at the start of the meeting.*

1. **Working Group Reports Continued**
   1. Coastal Seals Working Group

*Chair Kjell Nilssen will provide an overview of the short CSWG Meeting held in January 2021, including noting the plans for the WG following its rescheduling due to COVID-19.*

1. **Workshop Reports**
   1. NAMMCO-ICES Workshop on Seal Modelling

*Martin Biuw will provide a summary of the NAMMCO-ICES Seal Modelling Workshop, including an explanation of how it is intended to feed into a benchmarking meeting to take place before the next WGHARP meeting in the autumn of 2021.*

1. **Ecosystem Issues**
   1. Consumption of resources by marine mammals

***Request (R) -1.1.5*** *To periodically review and update available knowledge related to the understanding of interactions between marine mammals and commercially exploited marine resources.*

* 1. Multi-species approaches to management and modelling

***R-1.2.1*** *To consider whether multispecies models for management purposes can be established for the North Atlantic ecosystems and whether such models could include the marine mammals compartment. If such models and the required data are not available then identify the knowledge lacking for such an enterprise to be beneficial to proper scientific management and suggest scientific projects which would be required for obtaining this knowledge.*

1. **Other Environmental Issues**

***R-1.5.3*** *To monitor the development of the Mary River Project and assess qualitatively or if possible quantitatively the likely impact and consequences on marine mammals in the area.*

1. **NAMMCO Scientific Publications Update**

*Volume Editors Rikke Hansen and Genevieve Desportes will present information regarding the completion of Volume 11 and publication of the NASS analyses. Series Editor Fern Wickson will highlight the open call for Volume 12.*

###### Thursday 28th January (13:00-16:00 CET)

*If any advancements have been made on items from previous days, these can be presented at the start of the meeting.*

1. **Species Updates**
   1. Narwhals (in East Greenland)

*Greenland has requested time to provide an update on narwhals in East Greenland and it will also be relevant for the SC to develop ToR for the next meeting of the NEGWG planned for 2021.*

* 1. Ringed Seal

*Updates on this species are requested as there is a Working Group scheduled in the workplan.*

* 1. Bearded Seal

*Updates on this species are requested as there is a Working Group scheduled in the workplan.*

* 1. Bottlenose whale

*New abundance estimates available (if the AEWG has been able to review these by correspondence).*

* 1. Killer whale

*New abundance estimates available (if the AEWG has been able to review these by correspondence).*

* 1. Pilot whale

*Updates on this species are requested as there is a Working Group scheduled in the workplan.*

* 1. Dolphins

*Updates on dolphin species are requested given the SC26 response to R-3.9.6 (see below)*

* 1. Others?

*SC members are welcome to provide updates on other species if information is available.*

1. **Review of Species-Specific Requests**

The request is in blue and the answer from SC26 (where possibly also relevant for SC 27) is in grey.

* 1. **Pinnipeds**
     1. Harp seal

*R-2.1.4 …to regularly update the stock status of North Atlantic harp and hooded seals as new information becomes available.*

*R-2.1.10 To provide advice on the total allowable catches for the management of harp seals*

The work to answer both of these requests is carried out by WGHARP and will therefore be updated again in the next meeting of the group, which is planned for autumn 2021.

* + 1. Hooded seal

*R-2.1.4 …to regularly update the stock status of North Atlantic harp and hooded seals as new information becomes available.*

The work to answer this request is carried out by WGHARP and will therefore be updated again in the next meeting of the group, which is planned for autumn 2021.

*R-2.1.9 To investigate possible reasons for the apparent decline of Greenland Sea stock of hooded seals…*

With the information available to date, neither WGHARP nor the SC is able to answer this question.

* + 1. Ringed seal

*R-2.3.1 To advise on stock identity of ringed seals for management purposes and to assess abundance in each stock area, long-term effects on stocks by present removals in each stock area, effects of recent environmental changes (i.e. disturbance, pollution) and changes in the food supply, and interactions with other marine living resources.*

There is a plan to advance on this request through a dedicated ringed seal working group.

* + 1. Grey seal

*R-2.4.2 To provide a new assessment of grey seal stocks throughout the North Atlantic.*

This will be done through the CSWG, which was initially planned to meet in April 2020 but due to COVID-19 has now been rescheduled for autumn 2021.

* + 1. Harbour seal

*R-2.5.2 To conduct a formal assessment of the status of harbour seals around Iceland and Norway as soon as feasible.*

This will be done through the CSWG, which was initially planned to meet in April 2020 but due to COVID-19 has now been rescheduled for autumn 2021.

* + 1. Walrus

*R-2.6.3 Provide advice of the effects of human disturbance, including fishing and shipping activities, tourism, hydrocarbon exploration and mineral extractions on the distribution, behaviour and conservation status of walrus in Greenland*

This request was partly answered by the walrus working group (WWG) in 2018. However, the SC reiterated its concern about mining in the Wolstenholme Fjord and advances in the Mary River project (and note new recommendation for disturbance workshop focused on Baffinland Mary River mine to include walrus from JWG?)

* 1. **Cetaceans**
     1. Fin whale

*R-1.7.12 To give information on sustainable yield based on new abundance estimates expected from TNASS2015 for all large baleen whales in West Greenland waters (NAMMCO 22).*

No work has been done within NAMMCO to answer this request for fin whales.

* + 1. Common minke whale

*R-1.7.12 To give information on sustainable yield based on new abundance estimates expected from TNASS2015 for all large baleen whales in West Greenland waters (NAMMCO 22).*

No work has been done within NAMMCO to answer this request for minke whales.

* + 1. Beluga

*R-3.4.11 To update the assessment of both narwhal and beluga, noting that new data warrant such an exercise*

This work is done within the context of the joint working group with the JCNB and was updated during the 2020 meeting (see section xx).

* + 1. Narwhal

*R-3.4.11 To update the assessment of both narwhal and beluga, noting that new data warrant such an exercise*

This work is done within the context of the joint working group with the JCNB. At the 2020 meeting…

* + 1. Sei whale

*R-3.5.3 (amended) To assess the status of sei whales in West Greenland waters and the Central North Atlantic and provide minimum estimates of sustainable yield.*

*R-1.7.12 To give information on sustainable yield based on new abundance estimates expected from TNASS2015 for all large baleen whales in West Greenland waters (NAMMCO 22).*

There is still insufficient data to answer these requests.

* + 1. Pilot whale

*R-3.8.6 To continue work to complete a full assessment of pilot whales in the North Atlantic and provide advice on the sustainability of catches, as soon as necessary further information becomes available, with particular emphasis on the Faroese area and East and West Greenland. In the short term, the SC was requested to provide a general indication of the level of abundance of pilot whales required to sustain an annual catch equivalent to the annual average of the Faroese catch in the years since 1997.*

* + 1. Dolphins

*R-3.9.6 The SC was asked to carry out assessments of these species but to date insufficient information has been available on stock delineation, distribution, abundance and biological parameters to initiate the work…The Committee endorsed the plan of the SC to proceed with the assessments once the above mentioned studies have been completed.*

SC26 recommended that member countries collate all the data available for these species for consideration at SC/27, after which plans to answer R-3.9.6 and carry out an assessment will be discussed.

* + 1. Harbour porpoise

*R-3.10.1 (Renewed) The Council noted that the harbour porpoise is common to all NAMMCO member countries, and that the extent of current research activities and expertise in member countries and elsewhere across the North Atlantic would provide an excellent basis for undertaking a comprehensive assessment of the species throughout its range. The Council therefore requested the SC to perform such an assessment, which might include distribution and abundance, stock identity, biological parameters, ecological interaction, pollutants, removals and sustainability of removals.*

The SC is progressing with this task and has now completed the assessment for West Greenland. It has also provided recommendations for the other areas regarding the data needed to conduct such assessments and given advice on how to obtain reliable information. Harbour porpoise assessments for Norway and Iceland are now tentatively scheduled for 2022, with final confirmation pending the availability of the necessary data.

*R-3.10.1 (Renewed)* *The Management Committee recommends that total removal estimates are made for all areas, and that abundance estimates from the 2007 survey in Iceland and the 2010 survey in the Faroe Islands are available before a WG meeting. (NAMMCO 19).*

The SC is progressing in assessing removals. The BYCWG will meet in spring with a particular focus on reviewing new/revised by-catch estimates of harbour porpoise from Iceland and Norway. The SC has also **recommended** that better reporting of harbour porpoise catch be implemented in Greenland, with effort dedicated to eliminating underreporting.

1. **Future Workplans**

*Revision of this workplan from SC26 is required to include existing plans for activities in 2021 in red*

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **2020** | **2021** | **2022** |
| **Working Groups:**  - By-catch  - Coastal Seals  - NAMMCO/JCNB JWG on Narwhal and Beluga  (Planning meeting for next NASS via correspondence)  **Workshops:**  - Model development for assessment of seals (collaboration with ICES)  - North Atlantic humpback whale tagging workshop/collaboration | **Working Groups:**  - Pilot Whale  - Narwhal in East Greenland (spring)  ~~- Abundance Estimates (for killer whales)~~  - WGHARP +  - Benchmarking Meeting  - CSWG  - NAMMCO-JCNB JWG  - NASS Planning | **Working Groups:**  - Bearded Seal  - Ringed Seal  - Harbour Porpoise |

1. **Budget 2021-22**

*Charlotte Winsnes from the Secretariat will provide an overview of 2020 expenses and the projected budget for 2021 activities. The SC is asked to consider the sufficiency of the proposed budget for the planned activities, including the invitation of external experts to join WG meetings.*

###### Friday 29th January (13:00-16:00 CET)

*If any advancements have been made on items from previous days, these can be presented at the start of the meeting.*

1. **Any Other Business**
2. **Review of Report**
3. **Meeting Closure**