

AGENDA ITEM 7: EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN NAMMCO COUNTRIES

NAMMCO manual on whaling

NAMMCO has developed instruction manuals on weaponry and killing for all whale hunts in the member countries. The manuals give basic and vital information on the use and maintenance of weapons and ammunition deployed in whale hunting. The text is descriptive, sometimes giving step by step instructions with corresponding illustrations.

The aim

- Improve the safety for hunters and hunting crew
- Improve the hunters' knowledge and skill regarding use and maintenance of weapons
- Improve animal welfare

Target groups are whalers, gunners, riflemen, whaling inspectors, wildlife officers and international observers, and administrators and others engaged in whaling. See document 18 which contains the full manual on baleen whales.

Regulation

Whaling in all three member countries is subject to strict and detailed regulations concerning all aspects of the hunting activities. There are rules pertaining to hunting season, quotas, equipment and monitoring. The permission to go whaling is given on an annual basis, and certain requirements must be met in order to get a licence.

Norway

Training courses

It is an unconditional requirement for licence holders and gunner to have passed the obligatory training courses arranged by the Directorate of Fisheries.

In these courses professional and technical personnel lecture on laws and regulations governing the hunt. Thorough information is given on all aspects of the hunting activity like weapon maintenance and correct use (rifle, harpoons, harpoon guns), hunters safety and animal welfare, anatomy and physiology of relevance for the killing and the understanding of the behaviour of the whales, and slaughtering and processing of the products from the whale. In addition, hunters are trained in how to report to the authorities and how to take biological samples of the catch for the DNA-register.

The courses are arranged whenever there are new regulations concerning the hunt or new licence holders. However, on a yearly basis prior to the beginning of each hunting season, the hunters (the gunners) are required to pass obligatory shooting tests, both with rifle and harpoon guns. The shooting tests with the harpoon guns take place from the boat at sea and is overlooked and approved by inspectors from the Directorate of Fisheries. The rifle test (identical to ordinary tests required for big game hunters) are done at a shooting range and must be approved by authorised personnel from a gun club.

From 2014 all whaling vessels have received the NAMMCO manual with a request that it is made available on-board and that all hunters familiarise themselves with the manual prior to the actual hunting.

Iceland*Training courses*

Traditionally, education and training of minke whalers took place informally by transfer of knowledge from one generation to the next. Formal courses in the use of harpoon guns and grenades were first held in 1983 by Dr. Egil Ole Øen from Norway and the most recent course to teach hunters to use Whale Grenade-99 was held for minke whalers in 2003.

In order to get a licence for minke whaling, Icelandic regulations require that the gunner undertake a course in handling of harpoons and grenades as well as holding a general licence for firearms. No training requirements exist on an annual basis.

In the fin whale hunt the gunners have been trained in separate courses in 2009 and 2010. Annual courses has been held in 2013, 2014 and 2015.

Greenland*Training courses*

In Greenland, only full-time hunters can apply for a licence to hunt large whales. There are no regulatory training courses or tests on how to shoot and where to aim at the animal. Knowledge is passed down from generation to generation and between captain and crew. However when new whale species become available for hunting, pilot projects including shooting practise and theoretical courses are held by the Ministry with mandatory participation of the relevant hunters and vessel crew.

As in Iceland, there are obligatory special courses in how to handle the grenades in order to buy, handle and use harpoon grenades. The use of penthrite grenades became mandatory for boats equipped with harpoon cannons in 1991. The grenades may only be bought after presenting the certificate from this course together with the licence for whaling.

Licences for whaling with harpoons are only given to captains who have taken the course or have at least one crew member who has passed the course. It is special technical staff at the Hunters Organisation KONFIFA-KNAPK who organizes the courses in cooperation with the Ministry of Fisheries, Hunting and Agriculture. The courses are held once or more times a year depending on demand. The programme of the course includes the mechanics of the Whale grenade 99, security aspects, mounting of the harpoon, storage and handling of the grenade, as well as operations of the harpoon cannon.

KONFIFA and the Ministry also organize courses in mounting and renovating of the harpoon guns. These courses are taken by people who have a technical education on welding and who are working with metal and are employed in a shipyard approved for the mounting and checking of harpoon cannons. The harpoon cannons are, by regulation, examined and approved every other year by a person certified through the before-mentioned course.