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REPORT OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE WORKING GROUP ON BY-CATCH

Teleconference 19 February 2004

Droplaug Ólafsdóttir, chair of the Working Group, welcomed the participants (Appendix 1) to the meeting.

1. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The draft agenda (Appendix 2) was adopted with minor changes. The List of Documents is provided in Appendix 3.

2. APPOINTMENT OF RAPPORTEUR

Daniel Pike, Scientific Secretary of NAMMCO, was appointed as Rapporteur.

3. INFORMATION REGARDING ONGOING MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT OF MARINE MAMMAL BY-CATCHES OUTSIDE THE NAMMCO AREA

3.1 European Union initiative

Bjørge presented proposed new regulatory measures to take effect in the EU designed to reduce the by-catch of dolphins and porpoises in selected EU fisheries (COM(2003)451). This regulation is sent to the Council and the Parliament for consideration and implementation.

The proposed Council regulation contains three specific technical measures, designed to address by-catch in EU waters and by EU vessels:

- Restrictions on Baltic Sea drift-net fisheries, to a maximum length of 2.5 km. The use of drift nets is to be prohibited altogether in the Baltic from 1 January 2007.
- Mandatory use of acoustic deterrent devices (pingers) in bottom-set gillnet, entangling net and gillnet fisheries in the Baltic Sea, North Sea and south western approaches.
- Use of on board observers in 'high risk' fisheries (including high opening, and single and pair pelagic trawl fisheries, as well as drift-nets, gillnets and entangling nets) in the North Sea, Baltic Sea, Mediterranean Sea, and in waters west of the British Isles, France and Spain. A minimum percentage of observer coverage for each fishery is specified in the proposal, being either five or ten per cent. It will be the Member States' responsibility to design and implement a monitoring scheme and appoint 'independent, properly-qualified and experienced' observers. Member States are required to take the necessary measures to ensure that vessels too small to accommodate on board observers are still covered, such as employing an inspection vessel to accompany fishing vessels.

It is proposed that this regulation will come into force on 1 July 2004, but could be subject to delays.

In discussion it was noted that no country appears to have a by-catch monitoring

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system that covers all fisheries where by-catch potentially occurs. Monitoring efforts are generally concentrated on “high risk” fisheries. Pre- and post-implementation data would be required to evaluate the success of the proposed mitigation measures.

4. REVIEW PROGRESS IN MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT OF MARINE MAMMAL BY-CATCHES WITHIN THE NAMMCO AREA

4.1 Progress in monitoring marine mammal by-catches by NAMMCO Member Countries

Mikkelsen noted that there had been no changes in the by-catch reporting system in the Faroe Islands. Fishery logbooks are mandatory for all vessels larger than 110 BRT, and no logbook system is in place for smaller boats. The logbook reporting system is not formatted for by-catch reporting, but fishers are instructed to report all by-catch as supplementary comments. Reporting is not mandatory for foreign vessels fishing in Faroese waters.

Motzfeldt reported that there had been no new developments in by-catch monitoring in Greenland over the past year.

Bjørge reported that the reporting of marine mammal by-catch in fishery logbooks has been mandatory for 1 year on larger fishing vessels in Norway. However there is no system in place to collect and analyse the data from the logbooks, so the effectiveness of the program is not known. The database program used by fishery observers in some fisheries has been modified to include recording of marine mammals, but these data have not been looked at as yet. There is presently no program in place to obtain data from small vessel (Sjark) fisheries.

Ólafsdóttir noted that the reporting of marine mammal by-catch in fishery logbooks is mandatory on all vessels in Iceland. These obligations were however not met by fishermen and no effective official control was in function until 2002. An effort to facilitate and introduce a procedure for reporting marine mammal by-catch through the log book system was initiated for the gillnet fishing fleet in 2002. The system is unchanged from last year.

4.2 Evaluation of procedures developed and implemented by NAMMCO Member Countries

The Working Group noted that, with the exception of Iceland, there had been little progress in developing and implementing procedures for monitoring by-catch in NAMMCO member countries. Although some by-catch is reported in the Faroes and Greenland, it is unlikely that this reflects the total amount of by-catch in these areas. Norway does not have a reporting system in place for non-observed fisheries. The Icelandic system is beginning to deliver some data but the coverage in terms of the proportion of vessels reporting remains low.

The Working Group considered that one way to move forward in improving by-catch monitoring would be to have each jurisdiction prepare a working document on the existing knowledge about marine mammal by-catch. These documents would be evaluated by the Working Group and used to develop recommendations and priorities for by-catch monitoring in member countries. Detailed terms of reference for the documents were not developed but at a minimum they should include:

- description of area fisheries, including species, areas, season and gear type; regulatory regime;
- description of existing by-catch monitoring programs, including methodology and coverage;
- known or estimated magnitude of marine mammal by-catch by species and fishery, using direct and indirect evidence;
- future plans to improve by-catch monitoring.

These documents should be prepared as working papers for the next meeting of the Working Group.

The by-catch monitoring system in Iceland has been operational for 2 years and it is now feasible to estimate total by-catch using these data. The Working Group decided that it would be useful at this point to have the Scientific Committee of NAMMCO evaluate the data collection procedures, data analysis and uncertainties associated with by-catch estimation using these data. This evaluation should be completed in time for the next meeting of the Working Group.

5. REPORTING OF BY-CATCH TO NAMMCO

5.1 Reporting in 2002.

Pike reviewed the by-catch information in the National Progress Reports for 2002. Norway did not use the revised format and hence did not report by-catch. The Faroe Islands reported no by-catch, but did not include a description of the methodology used, the fisheries covered or the extent of coverage. Greenland reported by-catch of humpback, fin and minke whales in the year 2001 and provided a brief description of how the data were collected. Iceland used the required format and provided a complete description of their monitoring program and the reported by-catch.

In the discussion the Working Group noted the continued lack of adequate reporting by some member countries and reiterated its recommendation from 2002 and 2003 for member countries to report their by-catch to NAMMCO through the new National Progress Report format.

6. OTHER ITEMS

No other items were discussed.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- I. The Working Group, noting that the reporting of by-catch to NAMMCO was still not adequate, reiterated its recommendation from 2002 and 2003, that NAMMCO member countries report their by-catch to NAMMCO through the new National Progress Report format.
- II. Noting the lack of progress in implementing monitoring programs for marine mammal by-catch in NAMMCO member countries, the Working Group recommended that the Management Committee should encourage member countries to increase their efforts in this area.
- III. Member countries should prepare working documents outlining the existing knowledge about marine mammal by-catch in their jurisdiction, for the

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consideration of the Working Group at the next meeting. The documents should include, but not be limited to, the points noted under 4.2 above.

- IV. The Scientific Committee should be requested to carry out an evaluation of the data collection and estimation procedures used in the Icelandic monitoring program.

8. FURTHER MEETINGS

The Working Group recommended that they meet in person in advance of the 14th meeting of the Council. At this meeting, the Working Group will evaluate the extent of marine mammal by-catch in member countries, based on the working documents noted above, and develop recommendations and priorities to improve monitoring programs. In addition the Working Group will consider the evaluation of the Icelandic program carried out by the Scientific Committee.

9. ADOPTION OF REPORT

The Report was adopted by correspondence on 24 February 2004.

Appendix 1 - **LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

Ms Droplaug Ólafsdóttir (Chair, Iceland)
Dr Arne Bjørge (Norway)
Mr Bjarni Mikkelsen (Faroe Islands)
Ms Ulla Wang (Faroe Islands)
Ms Karen Motzfeldt (Greenland)
Mr Daniel Pike (NAMMCO)

Appendix 2 - **AGENDA**

1. Adoption of agenda
2. Appointment of rapporteur
3. Information regarding ongoing monitoring and management of marine mammal by-catches outside the NAMMCO area
 - 3.1 European union initiative
4. Review progress in monitoring and management of marine mammal by-catches within the NAMMCO area
 - 4.1 Progress in monitoring marine mammal by-catches by NAMMCO member countries
 - 4.2 Evaluation of procedures developed and implemented by NAMMCO member countries
5. Reporting of by-catch to NAMMCO
 - 5.1 Reporting in 2002.
6. Other items
7. Recommendations
8. Further meetings
9. Adoption of report.

Appendix 3 - **LIST OF DOCUMENTS**

NAMMCO/13/MC/BC/1 List of participants
NAMMCO/13/MC/BC/2 Draft agenda.
NAMMCO/13/MC/BC/3 List of documents
NAMMCO/13/MC/BC/4 National Progress Reports: By-catch reporting for 2002.
NAMMCO/13/MC/BC/5 Bjørge, A. Update on the European Union initiative.
NAMMCO/13/MC/BC/6 Ólafsdóttir, D. By-catch data on marine mammal from the sink net fishing fleet in Iceland 2002 and 2003

