



NAMMCO & the By-catch of Marine Mammals

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1. By-Catch under the purview of the Management Committee (MC)

Monitoring of by-catch in NAMMCO parties has been initiated following the recommendations of the SC (See report of SC 4, [8.6 Grey seals] 8.6.1 Review and assessment, pp. 113, parag. 5&6).

NAMMCO established its first WG on By-Catch in 1997 under the remit of the Management Committee [i.e., outside the purview of the Scientific Committee] to support the acquisition by Parties of reliable data on bycatch.

Council 7 (1997), 4. MC, 4.3 Other business (pp. 28)

By-catch of marine mammals

The Council noted the decision of the Management Committee to establish a Working Group to work intersessionally to consider how the issue of by-catches of marine mammals could be addressed at its next meeting, noting the duties of States under article 61.4 of UNCLOS in this respect.

The WG met for the first time in August 1998 and therefrom annually.

The MC WG had mostly short meetings (often telephone meetings). Its focus was to review

- (i) the information regarding ongoing monitoring and by-catch management outside the NAMMCO area
- (ii) the progress in monitoring in NAMMCO countries
- (iii) the potential risk of marine mammal by-catch within the NAMMCO area.

The SC had, however, by-catch on its agenda every year from 2005 (SC13) onwards and was informed of the progress of the WG. Noting that estimates of all removals, including by-catch, are required for stock assessments, the SC formulated and reiterated the recommendation that all member countries establish by-catch monitoring systems for their fisheries for estimating by-catch risks and rates.

Following the recommendation of the SC, arguing that estimates of all removals, including by-catch, are required for conducting reliable stock assessments and that by-catch issues were therefore of scientific character, the Bycatch Working Group was transferred under the remit of the Scientific Committee in 2009.

2. By-Catch under the purview of the Scientific Committee (SC)

The first step of the SC was to propose to the ICES WGBYC to organise a joint WS on by-catch monitoring

2.1 Joint ICES-NAMMCO Workshop on Bycatch, Copenhagen, 28 June – 1 July 2010

Terms of Reference for the Workshop were:

1. *Review and describe the advantages and disadvantages of existing observation schemes for marine mammals and seabirds;*
2. *Recommend best practice when establishing and implementing by-catch observation schemes.*

Conclusion of WKOSBOMB

The WS on Observation Schemes for Bycatch of Mammals and Birds (WKOSBOMB) reviewed ways of monitoring by-catch (both direct and indirect and best practice), data collection management, fleet effort data needed for raising by-catch rates and raising procedures (ICES WKOSBOMB 2010). The newly developed by-catch monitoring method using CCTV cameras was presented and its potential underlined and welcomed.

One of the main outputs of WKOSBOMB should have been to develop guidelines describing best practice for conducting marine mammal and seabird by-catch monitoring, but these guidelines were never finalised.



2.2 After WKOSBOMB

Since then the SC had by-catch on its agenda at every annual meeting, mainly getting an update on monitoring process. Considering that the progress accomplished in by-catch monitoring and estimates warranted a thorough examination, SC 21 (2014) decided to establish a by-catch WG.

General TORs for the NAMMCO BYC WG, as established by SC/21:

- (i) Identify all fisheries with potential by-catch of marine mammals*
- (ii) Review and evaluate current by-catch estimates for marine mammals in NAMMCO countries.*
- (iii) If necessary, provide advice on improved data collection and estimation methods to obtain best estimates of total by-catch over time.*

It was also stressed by the SC, that the WG should establish some link with the ICES WGBYC.

2.2.1 SC WG on By-Catch, Reykjavík, 29 February 2016

TOR specific to that meeting:

1. *Establish the framework of the WG work*
2. *Identify:*
 - a) *what data and other information were available and which data were missing to be able to evaluate current by-catch estimates in NAMMCO countries,*
 - b) *identify possible Chairs, and*
 - c) *scheduling the next meeting and its specific TOR.*

Results

Review of the art in the different member countries.

Kimberly Murray (NOAA/NFSC) was asked to be Chair, while **Marjorie Lyssikatos** (NOAA/NFSC and Chair of the ICES WGBYC) and **Simon Northridge** (Scottish Oceans Institute University of St Andrews, former Chair of the ICES WGBYC) were invited as experts.

2.2.2 SC WG on By-Catch, Copenhagen, 2-4 May 2017

ToR specific to that meeting:

1. *Review the Norwegian harbour and grey seals and harbour porpoise by-catch data and estimates;*
2. *Review the Icelandic lumpfish and cod gillnet fishery by-catch data and estimates;*
3. *Review the situation in the Faroese mid-water trawling - precise fleet description, by-catch risk and reporting; methods for improving the situation;*
4. *Review the information from Greenland on reporting of by-catch for the different species.*

Results

The Norwegian and Icelandic by-catch estimates were not endorsed by the WG and recommendations were provided for further analysis.

The situation in Faroes and Greenland were reviewed, and the WG started a risk examination, considering fisheries kind and overlapping with marine mammal distribution, and recommendations were provided for progressing in getting the most needed information on by-catch.

2.2.3 SC WG on By-Catch, Video Conference, 4 April 2018

ToR specific to that meeting:

1. *Review the Icelandic lumpsucker and cod gillnet fishery by-catch data and estimates;*
2. *Updates on answers to BYCWG recommendations from 2017*

Results

Iceland

The by-catch estimates for the Icelandic lumpsucker gillnet fishery were endorsed by the WG, although recommendations were provided for a more transparent presentation of the result.



The by-catch estimates for the Icelandic cod gillnet fishery was not endorsed by the WG and recommendations were provided for further analysis.

Updates

Faroës: No progress on recommendations given by the WG

Faroës & Iceland (& Norway): Both countries were asked to collect information on foreign vessel fisheries and effort, as well as if possible by-catch, and present them to the next WG meeting.

2.2.4 SC WG on By-Catch, ?, ? fall 2018

ToR specific to that meeting:

1. *Review the Icelandic and Norwegian cod gillnet fishery by-catch data and estimates;*
2. *Updates on answers to BYCWG recommendations from 2017 & 2018.*

Results

Iceland

The by-catch estimates for the Icelandic cod gillnet fishery was not endorsed by the WG and recommendations were provided for further analysis.

Norway

The by-catch estimates for the 2006-2015 Norwegian cod and monkfish gillnet fisheries were not endorsed by the WG and recommendations were provided for further analysis.

Updates

Faroës: No progress on recommendations given by the WG, and the WG reiterated the recommendations formulated by BYCWG 2017.

Faroës & Iceland & Norway: Both countries were asked to collect information on foreign vessel fisheries and effort, as well as, if possible, by-catch, and present them to the next WG meeting.

All: Countries should improve the reporting framework in the logbook to ensure better species identification.