

# ICELAND

## PROGRESS REPORT ON MARINE MAMMALS IN 2018

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### I INTRODUCTION

The following text reports on studies on marine mammals in Icelandic and adjacent waters in 2018. The studies were conducted by the following research institutes: Marine and Freshwater Research Institute, Reykjavík, Háskóli Research Centre (HRC), Háskóli Whale Museum (HWM), Físaffili Cetacean Research project (FCR), Innovation Centre, Iceland (ICI), Keldur, Institute for Experimental Pathology (KIEP); The National University Hospital of Iceland; The Institute of Natural History (INIE); University of Iceland (UI), University of British Columbia in Canada, University of Barcelona in Spain, University of St Andrews in Scotland, Icelandic Seal Centre (ISC), BioPol, Hólar University College, the University of Stockholm, Natural History Museum of Sweden, Natural History Museum of Denmark, Maine University and University of Aarhus, Denmark, University of Potsdam. Queries for information on research were sent to all offices, individuals and private commercial platforms such as whaling and whale watching companies known to have been involved in marine mammal research or data collection during the period.

### II RESEARCH BY SPECIES 2018

#### Fin whale

The long-term biological sampling program of fin whales was continued in 2018 by the MFRI after a two-year halt in the whaling operations. The total catch of 144 fin whales was sampled at the whaling station in addition to two humpback/fin hybrids. This data collection includes measurements of morphometrics, body condition and sampling for age determination, reproduction, feeding ecology, genetics and various chemical analyses. For the first time two finback whale hybrids were caught in a single season. Previously four such hybrids had been caught in the fin whaling operations since 1983, and two more identified from biopsy samples in Icelandic waters. A whale research team from the University of British Columbia has conducted various research projects on fin whales at the whaling station in Hvallfjarður in recent years. The research program is wide ranging and has i.a. focused on analysis of anatomical features related to engagement feeding and diving in fin whales. This includes a study of many structures in the head and thorax including diaphragm, arteries, nerves and muscles in the ventral groove blubber and tongue, esophagus, pharynx, lung and buccal.

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