ANNEX 2

FIN WHALE ASSESSMENT PLANNING MEETING

Oslo, 25 October, 2004

In 2003 the Scientific Committee recommended that the scheduling of future assessment meetings for fin whales be dependent on the progress made in fulfilling recommendations for research. As recommended by the Working Group on Minke and Fin whales in 2003, a small Task Group (see Section 5,7, p. 351) was convened to review the progress that had been made since the last meeting of the Working Group. The Group reviewed the recommendations that had been made in 2003 and noted what progress had been made.

All stocks

1. ***Additional genetic sampling in all areas, but particularly in areas from which samples are few or lacking, such as East Greenland, northern and eastern Iceland, the Faroes and Norway. Any existing samples from past whaling should be analysed using modern techniques.***

Iceland is extending genetic analyses on *ca* 600 samples that were collected in the 1980's, mostly from Denmark Strait, to include microsatellite analyses. A few samples from other areas (Norway and Canada) will also be included. Norway has about 30 biopsy samples available that were taken during sightings surveys. It was agreed that these should be added to the Icelandic analysis if feasible. The Faroes has 14 biopsy samples that were taken in 2000/2001, and these have been sent to Per Palsbøll's laboratory for analysis. Víkingsson indicated that they were also coordinating their analyses with Dr Palsbøll.

Øien suggested that historical material may be available from museums, and agreed to look into this.

2. ***Satellite tagging to determine habitat use and migratory patterns. If possible, a biopsy should be obtained from all tagged animals for genetic analysis and sex determination.***

No new tagging programmes for fin whales have been carried out, mainly because past attempts have had limited success. The technological problems with this methodology must be addressed before large-scale programmes can be done.

Faroes

1. ***The revision of catch statistics for Faroese and adjacent whaling operations should be completed.***

Dorete Bloch has been working in cooperation with the IWC Secretariat to resolve the inconsistencies in catch data between baleen whaling statistics kept at the IWC office in Cambridge and the material found by the Faroese Museum of Natural History. With funding from the Museum and NAMMCO, the IWC office, different archives in Scotland and England and the Whaling Museum in Sandefjord were visited in 2004 and material copied.

The material contains the baleen whaling taken from the land stations in Ireland,

Orkney, the Shetlands, the Faroes, Norway, and the pelagic Norwegian catch. The material is under preparation now and later the Faroese Museum of Natural History and the IWC office will end up with catch records agreed by both institutions.

2. ***The feasibility of preparing a CPUE index from Faroese and adjacent whaling operations should be investigated.***

The Task Group recommended that Bloch investigate this after the catch series has been corrected.

3. ***Biopsy sampling for genetic analysis from the Faroes and adjacent areas should be continued. Existing biopsy samples should be analysed as soon as possible.***

No samples have been taken in recent years and the Task Group encouraged further biopsy sampling over as wide an area as possible. As noted above the analysis of existing samples is in progress.

4. ***Satellite tagging should continue once methodological/technical issues are addressed.***

See above.

East Greenland-Iceland Stock

1. ***The early CPUE series (1901-1915) should be reanalysed and split between eastern and western Icelandic whaling areas. The possibility of using data prior to 1901 should be investigated.***

No progress has been made on this issue. The Task Group strongly recommended that these analyses should be completed by July 2005.

2. ***If new catches are taken, samples should be taken if possible both within and outside the traditional whaling grounds. The material should be investigated to get an updated view of age structure and sex distribution on and outside the whaling grounds, and biological parameters such as age at sexual maturity and fecundity.***

There have been no catches.

3. ***Additional samples for genetic analysis are required particularly from areas outside the traditional whaling grounds, such as East Greenland and northern and eastern Iceland.***

No new samples are available. The Task Group recommended that the feasibility of conducting biopsy sampling during sighting surveys in these areas be investigated.

4. ***Existing analyses of data on biological parameters from previous commercial and research whaling should be published as soon as possible.***

No progress has been made on this recommendation.

5. ***Satellite tagging should be attempted to investigate the movements of fin whales, particularly between the traditional whaling grounds west of Iceland and areas outside.***

See above.

6. ***To facilitate the development of spatially structured models to better represent the overall dynamics, it was recommended that all data (catch, effort, catch-at-age, sightings survey abundance and mark-recapture) be split into 4 subareas.***

No progress as yet. Pike agreed to work with Gunnlaugsson on splitting the abundance estimates in this way.

Other (Primarily North Norway)

1. ***Preparation of abundance estimates from the 1996-2001 survey series.***

Øien provided a working paper (SC/12/20) that gave estimates for fin, sperm and humpback whales from this survey series. The Task Group recommended that the estimate for fin whales for the areas of overlap with the NASS-2001 survey should be compared and a combined estimate derived if feasible. Pike and Øien agreed to do this in cooperation with Gunnlaugsson.

2. ***Revision of catch statistics.***

The 2003 Working Group recommended that Bloch extend her work on the Faroese data to include Norwegian, Irish and northern British Isles land stations. The catch data includes information on catch position, and therefore can be aggregated by any potential stock division and might provide a basis for valuable CPUE series. Unfortunately no funding was available from Norway to complete this work. The Task Group strongly recommended that this work be funded.

3. ***Preparation of a CPUE series if possible.***

Dependent on above.

4 ***Collection of additional biopsy samples for genetic analysis, and analysis of existing samples in a timely manner.***

As reported above about 30 samples have been collected during Norwegian surveys. Øien reported that more samples would be collected on an opportunistic basis.

5. ***Satellite tagging once methodological/technical problems have been addressed.***

See above.

Critical Items

The Task Group agreed on some high priority tasks that must be completed before a productive assessment meeting can be held. If such a meeting is to be held in Autumn 2005, these tasks should be completed by July 2005.

Faroes

1. Genetic analyses of existing and additional samples, combined with those from other areas;
2. Completion of revised catch series and development of a CPUE series if feasible;
3. Collection of additional samples for genetic analyses, if possible.

EGI

1. Spatial disaggregation of abundance, catch, and mark-recapture data as previously described;

2. Genetic analyses of existing samples combined with those from other areas;

Other (mainly North Norway)

1. Rectification and verification of catch data as described above, and development of a CPUE series. Additional funding is required for both these tasks;
2. Analysis of genetic samples in combination with those from other areas.

5.7
NAMMCO SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE FIN WHALE ASSESSMENT PLANNING MEETING

Dr Douglas Butterworth
Dept. of Mathematics and Applied Mathematics,
University of Cape Town
Rondebosch 7701
South Africa
Tel: +27 21 650 2343
Fax: +27 21 650 2334
E-mail: DLL@maths.uct.ac.za

Mr Daniel Pike
NAMMCO Secretariat
Address see p. 353

Mr Gisli Vikingsson
Marine Research Institute,
PO Box 1390,
IS-121 Reykjavik,
Iceland
Tel.: +354 5520 240
Fax: +354 5623 790
E-mail: gisli@hafro.is

Prof Lars Walløe
Department of Physiology
University of Oslo
P.O. Box 1103, Blindern
N-0317 Oslo
Norway
Tel.: +47 22 85 12 18
Fax: +47 22 85 12 49
E-mail: lars.walloe@basalmed.uio.no

Mr Nils Øien
Institute of Marine Research
P.O. Box 1870 Nordnes
N-5024 Bergen
Norway
Tel.: + 47 55 23 84 21
Fax: + 47 55 23 86 87
E-mail: Nils.oien@imr.no