



## North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission

27<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

3-4 April 2019

Press Release

### **Sustainable whaling and sealing are fully in line with the UN SDGs**

The Council of NAMMCO held its 27th annual meeting in Tórshavn, Faroe Islands, on 3 and 4 April. NAMMCO is an international organisation for regional cooperation on the conservation, management and study of marine mammals in the North Atlantic, with the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland and Norway as members.

In his welcome address on behalf of the Government of the Faroe Islands, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Poul Michelsen underlined the fact that sustainable whaling and sealing is fully in line with United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 14 – to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. He also stressed the shared objectives of NAMMCO member countries: "Our common goal is to make sure that our use of whales and seals is sustainable. We do not need to make unnecessary distinctions between commercial and non-commercial activities. We just need to base our decisions on the best available scientific advice."

#### **Highlights from the meeting:**

##### **The NAMMCO Performance Review**

During 2018 and 2019 an international panel of experts convened by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (NAFO) and International Whaling Commission (IWC) has assessed the performance of NAMMCO as a regional body for cooperation on the conservation management and study of marine mammals in the North Atlantic.

The report with recommendations was presented to the Council by the chair of the panel, Dr Caterina Forbani, Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA), former chair of the IWC Scientific Committee. In general, the Performance Review concluded that NAMMCO is meeting its overall objective, to contribute through regional consultation and cooperation to the conservation, rational management and study of marine mammals in the North Atlantic. NAMMCO will now review the detailed conclusions and recommendations of the panel and consider relevant follow-up action.

##### **Work of the Scientific Committee**

The member countries of NAMMCO are pleased with the comprehensive and professional work conducted by the Scientific Committee, including the consideration of marine mammal fisheries interactions, and environmental impacts and production of stock assessments. In particular, the NAMMCO Council welcomed the progress made in estimating the abundance of marine mammal stocks in the North Atlantic. There are now updated estimates, based on recent sighting surveys, for most stocks of cetaceans. The latest reviews by the IUCN of the status of the fin whale and the long-finned pilot whale have resulted in a downlisting of these species on a global level. A new assessment in 2018 confirmed the status of humpback whales as LC (least concern) on the global IUCN redlist. The reviews by IUCN are i.a. based on the data from the NASS surveys coordinated by NAMMCO.

##### **The NAMMCO Observation Scheme**

The NAMMCO Observation Scheme provides a mechanism for overseeing whether recommendations made by NAMMCO are implemented and national regulations adhered to. This scheme has gone through a comprehensive internal review to assess its performance. The recommendations of this review were presented and adopted at the Council meeting.

**NAMMCO**

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