



TWENTY SEVENTH MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

3 - 4 April 2019, Tórshavn, Faroe Islands

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Submitted by	Secretariat
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Background	

1. OVERVIEW OF OBSERVATION ACTIVITIES IN 2018

1.1 Government and IGOS events attended by the Secretariat on behalf of NAMMCO

Month	Meetings	Venue	Staff	Contribution
7-8 May	(NEAFC-OSPAR) Collective Arrangement (CoAr)	Berlin, DE	GD	Presentation: “Contributing to a sustainable North – 26 years of Regional Marine Mammal Management in the North Atlantic”
21-22 June	Sustainable Use of Aquatic Living Resources	Tokyo, JP	GD invited	Presentation: “Case study: Arctic Sealing and seal bans in a blue perspective”
7 July	Regional Fisheries Body Secretariats’ Network (RSN)	Rome, IT	CW	Presentation: “NAMMCO: Contributing to a sustainable North through regional management of marine mammals”
3-15 September	International Whaling Commission (IWC)	Florianopolis, BR	CW	Interventions
8 & 12 October	CAFF / CBMP Marine Strategy Group and Expert Network	Rovaniemi, FL	GD	Interventions
9-11 October	CAFF / Arctic Biodiversity Congress	Rovaniemi, FL	GD	Presentation: “Reconciling conservation and sustainable harvest”
25-26 October	Sjøpattedyrutvalget [Norwegian marine mammal advisory board]	Tromsø, NO	CW, FW, SE invited	Interventions and a presentation on the upcoming harbour porpoise workshop
20-21 November	NMFA-IMR Science for Ocean Actions Conference	Bergen, NO	GD invited	Interventions

1.2 IGOs events attended by a Member Country on behalf of NAMMCO

Month	Meeting	Venue	Represented by
June	North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation (NASCO) 35th Annual meeting	Portland, Maine, USA	Faroese
September	Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (NAFO) 40th Annual meeting	Tallinn, EE	Iceland
November	North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) 37th Annual meeting	London, UK	Norway

1.3 Skype meetings meeting IGOs Secretariats

Date	Skype with	Topics	Participation from NAMMCO
April 2018	OSPAR	Upcoming CoAr meetings and NAMMCO presentation	GD
November 2018	FAO / Bycatch mitigation team	Following COFI 33 recommendation to FAO to include IWC and NAMMCO in their bycatch related work on the development of best practices in the form of technical guidelines: Cooperation on by-catch	GD, CW, FW
January 2019	FAO / FIRMS	NAMMCO's participation in the FIRMS Partnership	CW, FW
March 2019	IWC	Upcoming Council 27 and focus on exchange of information on issues of common interest and possible areas of strengthened cooperation.	GD, CW
March 2019	ASCOBANS	Upcoming Council 27 and representation at future meetings	GD

2. OBSERVER' REPORTS

Report of NAMMCO Observer (SEC) to the 4th meeting under the Collective Arrangement

Desportes attended on behalf of NAMMCO. It was the first time that NAMMCO was represented to a meeting under the '**Collective Arrangement between competent international organisations on cooperation and coordination regarding selected areas in areas beyond national jurisdiction in the North-East Atlantic**' which is a formal agreement between legally competent authorities managing human activities in the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction in the North-East Atlantic.

The foremost objective of the CoAr is to facilitate cooperation and coordination on area based management between legally competent authorities, promoting the exchange of information on each other's activities and achievements and taking into consideration all conservation and management measures taken in relation to the North-East Atlantic. It contributes to delivering an ecosystem approach to the management of all relevant human activities in the marine environment.

The fourth meeting under the collective arrangement was held 7-8 May 2018, Berlin, Germany, at the kind invitation of the Federal Republic of Germany; Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture and the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety.

The meeting was attended by representatives of OSPAR and NEAFC Contracting Parties and Secretariats. Besides NAMMCO, observers from the Abidjan Convention, the Cartagena Convention, ICCAT, ICES were also present and presented their respective scope of work. **Desportes described the work of NAMMCO through the presentation: "Contributing to a sustainable North – 26 years of Regional Marine Mammal Management in the North Atlantic".**

The meeting provided a forum for achieving better concerted actions and improving regional and cross-sectoral dialogue and the opportunity to discuss subjects of common interest and concern.

It was reiterated that the intention of the CoAr had always been to include a wide group of competent international organisations. The continued aim is to expand it to other organisations therefore the attendance of other Secretariats to the meeting from ICCAT, NAMMCO and the Abidjan and Cartagena Conventions was welcomed.

An aide memoire and key actions resulting from the meeting as well as the list of participants and agenda can be found [here](#).

Report of NAMMCO Observer (SEC) to the Meeting on Sustainable Use of Aquatic Living Resources

Desportes attended on behalf of NAMMCO, she was invited with the specific aim of giving a presentation similar to that given at Council 26. Her presentation **“Case study: Arctic Sealing and seal bans in a blue perspective”** was well received.

Over 45 countries were represented at the two-day closed meeting as well as several fisheries organisations. The meeting started with an overview of sustainable use of Aquatic Resources and the developments that are currently occurring on a regional and global basis, in terms of use, conservation, regulations and are restrictions and campaigns. Then the themes discussed were Sustainable Use issues in each region/country, the IWC67 and the present dysfunctional situation and ways forward, CITES CoP18 and FAO COFI33. Recommendations to Ministers and fisheries management bodies.

Report of NAMMCO observer (SEC) to the 7th Meeting of the Regional Fisheries Body (RFB) Secretariats' Network (RSN)

Winsnes attended on behalf of NAMMCO. The meeting was attended by 41 members of the Network.

RSN, established in 1999 as an FAO-initiative, consists of 54 RFB Secretariats (intergovernmental organisations both with advisory and mandatory mandate). RSN is a coordination mechanism which facilitates sharing experiences, data and information, and provides a forum for discussion on emerging issues of common concern among the RFB Secretariats; it does not engage in policy development, nor take decisions of a binding nature. The Network provides an ever-evolving RFB collaboration framework and is the focal point between the RSN members and FAO.

Winsnes gave described the fundament for NAMMCO's work, presenting today's status and pointing to future challenges in the presentation “NAMMCO: Contributing to a sustainable North through regional management of marine mammals”. Special attention was given to the importance of international cooperation and to the project “Marine Mammals - a multifaceted resource” which highlighted the potential of marine mammals as a food resource in a “Blue Economy” perspective.

During the RSN meeting, emphasized was put on the need for RFMOs/RFBs to fully participate in the rapidly enhanced global/UN initiatives to ensure that UN bodies are fully aware of the work and role of RFMOs/RFBs in coordinating the outputs of their global initiatives. Other topics addressed included data standardization and sharing, bycatch, the International Year of the Salmon in 2019, marine mammals as food resource and the State of the Ocean Initiative.

The 1st day of the RSN meeting was just prior to COFI 33 and the Chair of the RSN gave a statement on behalf of the Network to COFI 33 based on discussions from the meeting. A special edition of the RSN Newsletter was launched for COFI 33, sharing the RFBs' work on Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), and a guidance article of the UN Special Envoy for Oceans. In addition, a video had been produced together with FAO on the role of RSN and to promote the work of RFBs and RFMOs in achieving SDG and contributing to food security.

Report of NAMMCO Observer (SEC) to the 67th Meeting of the IWC

Winsnes attended on behalf of NAMMCO. Participating were representatives from 75 of 89 contracting parties, 4 IGOs and 80 NGOs.

NAMMCO gave five interventions, one in the ASW and four during the Commission meeting. The interventions focused on NAMMCO work in support of the proposed Schedule Amendment for ASW, the continued effort in improving hunting methods to reduce struck and lost animals, the importance of strengthening scientific and other cooperation across organisations to meet the challenges faced by marine mammals from the effects of climate change and other environmental changes, and the importance of by-catch and NAMMCO's efforts to obtain reliable estimates and identify mitigation measures.

Items of special interest to NAMMCO:

Resolutions

The "Florianopolis Declaration on the role of IWC in the Conservation and Management of Whales in the 21st Century" was adopted reaffirming the importance of maintaining the moratorium on commercial whaling. The *"Way forward for the IWC"* which formed one part of the IWC Reform Proposal by Japan failed. A resolution on Food security, first tabled at IWC 66 was redrawn yet again when it was clear that consensus could not be reached. Two resolutions on ghost gear entanglement and anthropogenic underwater noise respectively were adopted.

Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling

The proposed block Schedule amendment for all ASW hunts including a limited automatic renewal provision (occurring when quota requests are unchanged, there is positive scientific advice and information is provided according to agreed timeline) for after 2025 was adopted. IWC also agreed to a workplan to further improve killing methods for ASW hunts. Of special concern for Greenland was the endorsement to remove the minimum length limit for West Greenland fin whales and the 9-month season limit for common minke whales off Greenland.

Unintended anthropogenic impacts

IWC progress, both under the remit of the SC and the Conservation Committee, on pollution, marine debris and noise were welcomed and endorsed. Recommendations from the Bycatch Mitigation Initiative were endorsed, notably the Strategic Plan for Bycatch, the Bycatch Mitigation Initiative workplan and the continuation of the Bycatch Coordinator position. Also endorsed was the Ship Strike Strategic Plan and its work programme.

During the session on whale killing and welfare issues, NAMMCO and its members were acknowledged for their substantial efforts dedicated to improvements of hunting methods.

The full report from the meeting may be downloaded from the IWC homepage.

Report of NAMMCO Observer (SEC) to the meeting of the CAFF / CBMP Marine Strategy Group and Expert Network

Desportes attended on behalf of NAMMCO. The Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Programme (CBMP) is an international network of scientists that work together to improve detecting, understanding and reporting of arctic biodiversity trends, to shorten the time before identification of trend and management response.

One of the original aims was to produce periodical reviews for CAFF, approximately every 5 years, of which the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment (ABA) could be seen as the first (2013) and State of the Arctic Marine Biodiversity Report (SAMBR), to which NAMMCO contributed, as the second (2017). So far,

the CBMP work has focused on endemic arctic species (bowhead, narwhal, beluga, walrus and ice-breeding seals), but is contemplating the possibility of adding migrating species as well.

Possible future tasks were discussed at the meeting and are awaiting decisions from the CAFF board. Possibilities include a report about circumpolar harvest of marine mammals and a circumpolar analysis of passive acoustic monitoring (PAM) data. Other candidates for collaboration include health assessments, beluga life history comparisons and telemetry data. A core challenge though is that CBMP has no dedicated funding, so the work is supposed to be based on existing national monitoring schemes. A scoping workshop to identify ecosystem drivers important for arctic change is planned in Greenland in November 2019. The goal of this workshop will be to focus the future tasks of CBMP-Marine.

Report of NAMMCO Observer (SEC) to the CAFF Arctic Biodiversity Congress ABC

The 2018 Arctic Biodiversity Congress, hosted by the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF), the biodiversity working group of the Arctic Council, and the Ministry of the Environment, Finland, aimed at promoting the conservation and sustainable use of Arctic biodiversity. It was relevant to all wishing to make specific and significant contributions to the conservation of Arctic biodiversity through dialogue among scientists, Indigenous peoples, policy-makers, government officials, industry, academia, media and civil society.

The Congress program was organized along six main themes that are critical to meet common challenges in the Arctic and reflect the policy recommendations of the 2013 Arctic Biodiversity Assessment: climate change, ecosystem-based management, mainstreaming biodiversity, addressing stressors, identifying and safeguarding important areas, and improving knowledge and public awareness. The Congress was a mix of plenary presentations and panel, panel debate and thematic sessions, as well as other related events and dialog forum.

Desportes was member of the Program Advisory Committee. She attended the Congress on behalf of NAMMCO and gave the following presentation *“Reconciling conservation and sustainable harvest”* in the session EBM11: Conservation and sustainable harvest.

The Congress was a unique opportunity for networking with Arctic actors.

Report of NAMMCO Observer (SEC) to the meeting of the Sjøpattedyrutvalget

Winsnes, Wickson and Enoksen attended on behalf of NAMMCO. This is an annual meeting for all Norwegian actors dealing with marine mammals. Information on all research and management issues are given and discussed, and the meeting gives recommendations to the authorities. It is attended by representatives from the ministry, directorate for fisheries and relevant research institutes. Although this is a national forum, NAMMCO has been invited to participate in recent years.

Enoksen informed on the upcoming NAMMCO Workshop on Harbour Porpoises. For the 2019 meeting NAMMCO was asked to present its work on hunting methods and generally how user knowledge is incorporated into NAMMCO work.

Report of NAMMCO Observer (SEC) to the NMFA-IMR Science for Ocean Actions Conference

The Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg took the initiative to establish the High-level Panel on Building a Sustainable Ocean Economy and has got support in UN and G7 for her initiative. The Institute for Marine Research (IMR) was responsible for organising a science conference with

only invited participants, NAMMCO being one of them, to share new knowledge. The main objective of the conference was to identify challenges and opportunities relating to the sustainable

management of biological resources in different oceans (both data-rich and data-poor areas) of the world, and to suggest action points to the High-level Panel.

On 20-21 November 2018, 150 invited ocean experts from more than 50 countries met to discuss critical science-based actions in response to the problems facing the oceans. The conference addressed five areas of serious concern, aiming to make a contribution towards achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals: 1) Impacts of climate change on marine ecosystems, 2) Ocean health, 3) The state of fisheries resources, 4) Sustainable aquaculture, 5) The importance of seafood for human nutrition. discussion was followed by round tables discussion, the tables being responsible for providing action points related to the topic.

The findings and conclusions of the conference focus on challenges and opportunities and propose common goals, regional solutions, and best practices for achieving them (action points) and feed directly into the work of the High-level Panel and the G7 countries work for a sustainable bio economy. The report from the Science for Ocean Action Conference can be found [here](https://www.hi.no/resources/Science-for-Ocean-Actions-rapport-1.pdf) at <https://www.hi.no/resources/Science-for-Ocean-Actions-rapport-1.pdf>. On March 5, Sissel Rogne, Managing Director of the Institute of Marine Research (IMR), submitted the conference report to Prime Minister Erna Solberg. See [here](https://www.hi.no/en/hi/news/2019/march/handed-over-advice-on-the-worlds-oceans) <https://www.hi.no/en/hi/news/2019/march/handed-over-advice-on-the-worlds-oceans>.

Desportes attended on behalf of NAMMCO, which was the only body representing the top predator level, pointing to it as one of the marine resources in different discussions, and calling for the respect of what different peoples and cultures consider resources. FAO representatives (M. Barange and M. Camilleri) and Desportes discussed ways of increasing the cooperation FAO-NAMMCO, in particular regarding the by-catch issue.

Report of NAMMCO Observer (SEC) (Faroe Islands) to the 35th Annual Meeting of NASCO

The 35th Annual Meeting of the NASCO took place from 12 to 15 June in Portland, Maine, USA.

During the meeting NASCO adopted two important measures to regulate fisheries - one around the Faroe Islands and the other off West Greenland. The decision applicable to the Faroe Islands acknowledges that the fishery will be managed from 2019-2022 taking into account scientific advice. The three-year measure adopted for the internal use fishery at West Greenland strengthens monitoring and control and sets a total catch of 30 t. The return by NASCO to setting a total catch as part of the multi-year measure is essential to the effective management of the fishery.

Factors that affect the health of Atlantic salmon extend well beyond fisheries, and NASCO and its scientists are engaged in cutting edge work to identify and address those causes. Determining why salmon are dying at sea before they can come back to their natal rivers to spawn is a key area of research. A new innovative approach to oceanic acoustic monitoring, ROAM, will allow salmon to be tracked through the marine environment. The approach will overcome many of the significant challenges associated with tracking Atlantic salmon throughout their extensive marine migration. Another area of critical international research is the "Likely Suspects" project, which aims to identify ocean areas where salmon are disappearing to help prioritize and effectively target additional scientific work. A data workshop is currently in the planning stages with the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea to advance this project.

NASCO is a key partner in the International Year of the Salmon (IYS). IYS is a bold multi-year effort undertaken in cooperation with the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission that is intended to create a hemispheric partnership to facilitate an intense burst of outreach and research that will fill knowledge gaps and catalyse new ways to generate and share knowledge necessary for the resilience of salmon and people in a changing world. The focal year for the initiative is 2019, and a number of IYS-related activities and projects are already underway. Two signature projects previously mentioned are ROAM and "Likely Suspects" Given the importance of IYS, NASCO held a workshop to progress the

planning of this important initiative. In addition, an IYS symposium entitled *Salmon in a Changing World* will be held just prior to the 2019 NASCO Annual Meeting in Tromsø, Norway.

Harvests of endangered and threatened populations of North American origin salmon in the St. Pierre and Miquelon mixed stock fishery were also discussed, and NASCO continued to urge France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) to cooperate in the management of, and research on, its fishery. While France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) explained it was not in a position to join NASCO, it expressed its commitment to take NASCO recommendations on catch by its communities into account.

As well as this NASCO continues to look for ways to improve implementation of its agreements on fisheries management, habitat protection, and aquaculture and related activities. A workshop was held again this year to review critically and publicly how well NASCO members are meeting their commitments. Holding members accountable in this way is essential to the effectiveness and credibility of the organization. A new reporting cycle has begun in 2019 and possible improvements to the review and evaluation process are under consideration.

Report of NAMMCO Observer (Iceland) to the 40th Annual Meeting of NAFO

The 40th Annual Meeting of the NAFO took place from 17 to 21 September 2018 in Tallinn, Estonia.

The 40th Annual Meeting of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) took place from 17-21 September in Tallinn, Estonia. Delegates from all the 12 NAFO Contracting Parties were present at the meeting.

At the meeting, NAFO accepted the Performance Review Panel Report and its 36 recommendations to further improve its functioning. This second comprehensive Review that NAFO undertakes addressed conservation and management; compliance and enforcement; governance; science; international cooperation; and financial and administrative issues. NAFO also established a working group to develop an action plan to address all the recommendations.

In addition, to the traditional total allowable catch (TAC)* and quota decisions, decisions were made regarding the following:

NAFO adopted an exceptional circumstances protocol for NAFO's Greenland halibut management strategy evaluation.

NAFO continued its commitment to the conservation of marine biodiversity in NAFO waters by implementing measures to prohibit the directed fishing of Greenland shark and for Contracting Parties to report on efforts to minimize incidental catches and mortalities.

NAFO adopted a comprehensive revision to the NAFO Observer Program to enhance the quality of data being collected by NAFO observers.

NAFO agreed to a schedule for the management strategy evaluation (MSE) plan for cod in the Flemish Cap (Division 3M), including setting a Harvest Control Rule (HCR) for the stock, for the next Annual Meeting.

NAFO continued its efforts towards further developing its ecosystem approach to fisheries management by requesting that the NAFO Scientific Council develop a 3 to 5-year workplan to ensure its prioritization and support. In this context, NAFO looks to further progress in the implementation of its Ecosystem Approach Roadmap

Report of NAMMCO Observer (Norway) to the 37th Annual Meeting of NEAFC

The 37th annual meeting of NEAFC was held in London from 13 to 16 November 2018.

At the meeting, conservation and management measures for the year 2019 were adopted for a number of fish stocks. These include blue whiting, herring, mackerel, redfish and haddock.

NEAFC is continuing its work on the conservation and management of deep-sea species and the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs), such as corals. NEAFC has already closed bottom fisheries in all areas where VMEs are known to occur or are considered likely to occur according to scientific advice from ICES. Current measures in place include prohibiting fisheries directed at deep-sea sharks, rays, chimaeras. In addition, catch limits were set for several species of grenadiers in two separate areas. Bans on fisheries targeting basking shark and porbeagle remain in effect with the ban on spurdog being renewed for a further two years.

NEAFC continues to place great emphasis on action against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fisheries. A major step to enhance monitoring, control and enforcement was agreed by adoption of amendments to the NEAFC Scheme of Control and Enforcement to start implementation of NEAFC's new Electronic Reporting System (ERS). The ERS will allow detailed 'live' information of fishing activities in the NEAFC area being available to fisheries inspectors. The NEAFC Contracting Parties are scheduled to roll out the system over the coming years.

NEAFC's role in regional fisheries management and cross sectoral cooperation in oceans governance, was strongly highlighted by the Commission. Continued representation of NEAFC's approaches and achievements at international meetings taking forward global developments on fisheries and oceans governance was encouraged. One example of NEAFC's cooperation with other international organisations is with the OSPAR Commission for the protection of the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic under the collective arrangement. The Annual Meeting welcomed a major practical step forward in this cooperation, in agreeing a joint request for scientific advice from ICES on deep sea sharks, rays and chimaeras.

NEAFC's good cooperation with several other organisations, including the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United States (FAO) was also welcomed. In addition, NEAFC agreed a statement regarding the conclusion of the Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fishing in the Central Arctic Ocean.

The cooperating non-Contracting Party status of the Bahamas, Canada, Liberia and New Zealand was renewed for the year 2019. In addition, Curaçao and Panama became new cooperating non-Contracting Parties. These States will cooperate with NEAFC and, in some cases, deploy vessels for transshipment operations in the NEAFC area.