



TWENTY EIGHTH MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

17 - 19 March 2020

Oslo, Norway

DOCUMENT 12	EXTERNAL RELATIONS // OBSERVERS' REPORT
Submitted by	Secretariat
Action requested	Take note Make suggestions
Background	NAMMCO maintains relationships with a number of other governmental and inter-governmental organisations working on marine management. This document describes the events of these organisations that NAMMCO participated in during 2019.

This document on external relations presents an overview of the events organised by government or inter-governmental organisations that were attended by the Secretariat or representatives of member countries on behalf of NAMMCO during 2019. The information on the events and NAMMCO's involvement is presented in overview tables, followed by of the observer reports.

1. OVERVIEW OF OBSERVATION ACTIVITIES IN 2019

GOVERNMENT AND IGOS EVENTS ATTENDED BY THE SECRETARIAT ON BEHALF OF NAMMCO

Month	Meetings	Location	Staff	Contribution
28-29 May	5th meeting of the (NEAFC-OSPAR) Collective Arrangement (CollAr)	Gothenburg, SE	GD	Interventions
5-7 June	NASCO 36th Annual Meeting	Tromsø, NO	GD, CW	Opening Statement
19-20 June	NO Workshop on Marine Mammal By-catch Monitoring and Mitigation	Ålesund, NO	GD	Interventions
11-12 July	Sustainable Use of Aquatic Living Resources	Tokyo, JP	GD invited	Presentation: "Impact of food choices"
17-19 September	FAO By-Catch Workshop	Rome, IT	GD	Interventions
24-25 October	Sjøpattedyrutvalget [Norwegian marine mammal advisory board]	Tromsø, NO	CW, FW invited	Presentation on animal welfare issues in NAMMCO
27 November	3rd meeting of the reference group for UN negotiations towards a new agreement on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdictions (BBNJ)	Tromsø, NO	CW, SH, BK	Opening and closing remarks

IGOs EVENTS ATTENDED BY A MEMBER COUNTRY ON BEHALF OF NAMMCO

Month	Meeting	Location	Represented by
23-27 September	Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (NAFO) 41st Annual meeting	Bordeaux, FR	Iceland
12-14 November	North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) 38th Annual meeting	London, UK	Norway

2. OBSERVER' REPORTS

Report of NAMMCO Observer (SEC) to the 5th meeting under the Collective Arrangement

Desportes attended this meeting on behalf of NAMMCO. This was the second time that NAMMCO was represented at 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 (CollAr)**', 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 CollAr 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 also contributes to delivering an ecosystem approach to the management of all relevant human activities in the marine environment.

The fifth CollAr meeting was held on 28-29 May 2019 in Gothenburg, Sweden, at the invitation of the Swedish Ministry of Environment. It was attended by representatives of OSPAR and NEAFC Contracting Parties and Secretariats. Representatives of FAO, HELCOM, ICCAT, ICES, NAMMCO and UNEP participated as observers and to present their scope of work.

Information regarding initiatives of relevance to the CollAr were shared by OSPAR and NEAFC, as well as the other organisations. These updates concerned (among other things): the promotion of the CollAr arrangement (which was discussed at length by OSPAR, NEAFC, FAO and UNEP – see more details below); the ongoing negotiations on an international legally binding instrument on biodiversity beyond national jurisdictions (BBNJ) (including information on the STRONG High Seas Project); activities related to marine litter and derelict gear; vulnerable marine ecosystems and a review of related fisheries closures by NEAFC; development in the nomination proforma for the 'North Atlantic Current and Evlanov Seamount Marine Protected Area' (NACES MPA) by OSPAR together with a presentation of the very critical review by ICES and updates related to specific groups of species.

The CollAr is extensively showcased and promoted by OSPAR and NEAFC but also FAO and UNEP, as a regional arrangement that is successful in establishing effective collaboration between Regional Seas Agreements and regional fishery bodies/regional fisheries management organisations (RFBs/RFMOs) and thus supporting a cross sectorial dialogue between the fisheries/use and environmental/conservation sides of marine management.

Under **Item 2.4 Developments on the expansion of the collective arrangement to other competent organisations**, NAMMCO made an intervention to underline that NAMMCO parties believe in and strongly support regional cooperation and management. Therefore, a possible Memorandum of Understanding with OSPAR and the joining of the Collective Arrangement had been positively considered by the Parties, but more time was needed for further internal consultations (Report Council 27). The intervention is reported as point 2.26 and 2.27 in the Aide Memoire of the 5th Meeting under the CollAr.

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

Following this meeting and the reiteration by OSPAR of its request to the participating organisations to provide comments on its draft nomination proforma of NACES MPA, the NAMMCO Scientific Committee was asked to comment at its 2019 annual meeting on the scientific aspects of the proposed area for the conservation of cetaceans. The NAMMCO Scientific Committee provided comments on the likely contribution of the NACES MPA to the conservation of cetaceans in the North Atlantic (NAMMCO 2018), comments which were forwarded to OSPAR on the 15th January 2020.

Report of NAMMCO Observer (SEC) to the NO Workshop on Marine Mammal Bycatch Monitoring and Mitigation

Desportes attended this workshop on behalf of NAMMCO. The workshop was distinctively interesting in the way that it gathered a wide range of by-catch stakeholders, including scientists, statisticians, modellers, fishers, managers and gear and pinger manufacturers.

The workshop provided a review of the state in the art in Norway regarding the by-catch of harbour porpoises, in terms of by-catch monitoring, estimation and mitigation efforts. Scientists from the US, UK and Denmark all shared their experience in these domains. The group provided advice to Norway on by-catch estimation and modelling, as well as optimisation of sampling design and effort, and pinger deployment design, modelling and mitigations.

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

Desportes attended this meeting on behalf of NAMMCO. She was invited with the specific aim of presenting and putting in perspective the results of the pilot life cycle analysis (LCA) study initiated by NAMMCO and presented at Council 27 “*Local seal or imported meat? Sustainability evaluation of food choices in Greenland, based on Life Cycle Assessment*”. Her presentation “**Impact of food choices**” was well received and generated many questions, as well as requests for more information from several countries.

Over 45 countries and several fisheries organisations were represented at the two-day closed meeting. The meeting reviewed the current situation regarding sustainable use of aquatic resources and the developments occurring on a regional and global basis in terms of use, conservation, regulations and restrictions, and campaigns. The primary focus of the meeting was, however, Japan’s withdrawal from ICRW/IWC (effective from 1st July 2019) and the resumption of commercial whaling activities in its waters. The future actions of Japan and other countries supporting sustainable use, as well as the consequences of different options for the IWC itself, were discussed at length. Japan underlined its willingness to continue its cooperation and contribution to the scientific work of the IWC. The development of the newly established Japanese catch limit (CL) was succinctly presented (although neither the report of the Japanese CL group nor the report of the external review group were made available to the participants).

The meeting reaffirmed the sustainable use of aquatic living resources based on scientific evidence as a universal principle. Recommendations from the meeting were agreed upon and provided to ministers and fisheries management bodies of sustainable use countries.

Report of NAMMCO Observer (SEC) to the FAO By-Catch Workshop

Following the organisation of the ***Expert Workshop (EWS) on Means and Methods for Reducing Marine Mammal Mortality in Fishing and Aquaculture Operations*** in March 2018, the FAO convened the ***Expert Meeting (EM) to Develop Technical Guidelines to Reduce Bycatch of Marine Mammals in Fisheries*** in September 2019, to which the NAMMCO Secretariat was invited. Desportes attended this workshop from the NAMMCO Secretariat.

The principal output expected from the EM was an agreed draft of the provisional “**FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries: guideline to reduce bycatch of marine mammals in capture fisheries**” requested by the FAO. These technical guidelines should support the implementation of the FAO 1995 Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.

Document NAMMCO/28/15 provides a longer observer report and summarises the output of the meeting and of NAMMCO input prior to and during the meeting.

The meeting report (with the draft technical guidelines in appendix C) was published as FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report No. 1289 and is available [on-line](#). It is now being circulated to COFI members for any final comments and suggestions for improvements to the draft technical Guidelines. These suggestions need to be provided to the FAO before Friday 20 March 2020. Any final comments/suggestions should be sent to the following e-mail address: Mammal-Bycatch@fao.org.

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

Wickson and Winsnes attended this meeting 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 provides recommendations to national 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.

Winsnes gave a presentation on “Hvilke aspekter ved dyrevelferd knyttet til fangst og bifangst blir behandlet i NAMMCO og hvordan er arbeidet organisert”.

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

This meeting was organised by the Norwegian delegation working on a proposed new international agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdictions (BBNJ). The meeting was held in collaboration with the faculty of the Law of the Sea at UiT the Arctic University of Norway on 27th November 2019. Hansen, Kamban and Winsnes attended the meeting on behalf of NAMMCO.

The objective of the meeting was to provide input to the Norwegian delegation involved in the BBNJ process prior to the third and final UN negotiation meeting planned for March 2020 in New York. In addition to members of the negotiating team and representatives of the Ministry of Foreign affairs, participants included representatives from academia, the Fridtjof Nansen Institute, the Norwegian Shipowners' Association and Greenpeace.

Introductions were given by the State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jens Frølich Holte, and the Head of the Norwegian delegation, Kristjan Egge, followed by two panel presentations with discussions. The introduction covered the interests of the Norwegian government towards BBNJ, the status of the process and work of the delegation, and the objectives of the meeting. Particular points of emphasis included:

- Norway is committed to the principle of securing the right to utilise marine resources, and at the same time, promoting global obligations to protect ecosystem biodiversity.
- Norway places emphasis on international cooperation and being loyal to the UN
- Norway places emphasis on the need to have sufficient data and knowledge to secure good management of BBNJ and promoting the sharing and transferring of data, knowledge and skills across borders.
- Important issues currently being discussed in the process include:
 - o Regional vs National management of BBNJ
 - o Clarification of responsibilities and consequences with respect to national legislation and regulations

The first panel and discussion of the meeting focused on area-based management in marine protected areas in a new global agreement. Points made during this panel included:

- The presence of existing regulations on BBNJ areas developed by the International Maritime Organisation. Concerns were presented that the delegation should investigate these existing regulations to make sure the new agreement would complement rather than complicate existing regulations.

- Questions regarding how the success or failure of marine protected areas is measured were raised and a more holistic perspective towards *sustainable ecosystem management* involving regional and national entities was promoted.
- The issue of monitoring BBNJ areas was raised in relation to legal action and follow-up opportunities.

The second panel focused on man-made environmental changes and if/how this could be incorporated into the Norwegian negotiations. This included the following topics of discussion:

- There was a general acceptance that environmental change is an issue that needs to be dealt with. However, the delegation was not convinced that this should be on a state level or rather if it should be handled on a regional level. It was noted that this would be a strategic decision for the delegation.
- A *precautionary principle* approach was promoted as a way to prevent any disturbance regarding the ecological systems in BBNJ areas.
- The need for the agreement to have a degree of openness in order to secure that it is future proofed and won't become outdated and need corrections in the near future.
- The need for data, knowledge and skill sharing across borders and entities was promoted.

Report of NAMMCO Observer (Faroe Islands) to the 36th Annual Meeting of NASCO

Desportes and Winsnes attended the 36th Annual Meeting of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO), held in Tromsø, Norway 5- 7 June 2019.

Parties highlighted ongoing work to assess the health of wild Atlantic salmon stocks and better understand the threats and pressures they face.

The meeting was particularly significant given that 2019 was the focal year of the International Year of the Salmon (IYS) initiative. IYS's aim was to bring people together to share and develop knowledge more effectively, raise awareness and take action to establish the conditions necessary to ensure the resilience of salmon and people throughout the Northern Hemisphere. Highlights from the [State of Salmon report](#) were presented. The report is a key IYS outreach and education tool for several audiences.

The annual meeting was preceded by a two-day multi-disciplinary Symposium featuring a series of talks and discussions related to 'Managing the Atlantic salmon in a Rapidly Changing Environment – Management Challenges and Possible Responses'. This symposium, not attended by Desportes or Winsnes, went beyond a typical series of scientific presentations by incorporating various perspectives on the value of Atlantic salmon and opportunities to raise awareness and increase the resiliency of populations throughout their range. Presenters challenged participants to incorporate new approaches and ideas as they moved forward with conservation, management and science initiatives. The Symposium Steering Committee presented a set of recommendations to NASCO related to how the organization and its members can work to ensure salmon and their habitats are conserved and restored.

NASCO continues to look for ways to improve implementation of its agreements on fisheries management, habitat protection, and the impacts of aquaculture on wild Atlantic salmon.

Report of NAMMCO Observer (Iceland) to the 41th Annual Meeting of NAFO

Not available at the time of uploading meeting documents

Report of NAMMCO Observer (Norway) to the 38th Annual Meeting of NEAFC

Not available at the time of uploading meeting documents