



## FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

19 March, Skype  
14:00 to 16:00

<b>DOCUMENT 03rev</b>	<b>WORKPLANS OF NAMMCO COMMITTEES</b>
<b>Submitted by</b>	<b>Secretariat</b>
<b>Action requested</b>	Take note when reviewing the budgets for 2020 and 2021 under agenda item 4.3 and 4.4.
<b>Background</b>	The proposed workplans relate to activities with financial implications and were adopted by the Committees at their last meetings.  Detailed planned costs for these activities can be found in the budget

## 1. SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

2020	2021	2022
<p><b>Working Groups:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- By-catch</li> <li>- Coastal Seals</li> <li>- NAMMCO/JCNB JWG on Narwhal and Beluga (Planning meeting for next NASS via correspondence)</li> </ul> <p><b>Workshops:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Model development for assessment of seals (collaboration with ICES)</li> <li>- North Atlantic humpback whale tagging workshop/collaboration</li> </ul>	<p><b>Working Groups:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pilot Whale</li> <li>- Narwhal in East Greenland (spring)</li> <li>- Abundance Estimates (for killer whales)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Working Groups:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bearded Seal</li> <li>- Ringed Seal</li> <li>- Harbour Porpoise</li> </ul>

The next SC meeting will be hosted by Greenland. Date to be decided.

Highlighted below are the new aspects of the proposed SC work plan, compared to the Work Plan for 2020 adopted by NAMMCO 27, that the Council is asked to specifically note and consider, including an elaboration of the reasons why the changes have been made and new items have been included.

***- Workshop on model development for the assessment of seals to be co-organised with ICES in autumn 2020.***

During the 2019 meeting of the ICES/NAFO/NAMMCO Joint Working Group on Harp and Hooded Seals (WGHARP), it became clear that the population models used by WGHARP were performing inadequately and needed to be further developed to provide a reliable basis for future assessments.

Specifically, for the harp seal population in the White Sea/Barents Sea, the assessment model provided a poor fit to the pup production survey data. This, combined with the fact that this a data poor population according to ICES requirements, meant WGHARP used the approach of Potential Biological Removals (PBR) to generate catch recommendations, rather than the assessment model. For harp seals in the Greenland Sea, the assessment model demonstrated a poor fit to all historical pup production estimates, creating significant uncertainty regarding the model-based trajectories and projections. WGHARP concluded that management recommendations should not be based on the model projections and PBR was also used for this population, despite it being data rich.

During the meeting, the inclusion of ecosystem drivers into the model was investigated (e.g. the inclusion of historical estimates of cod and capelin biomass) to assess if this would allow the model to better fit the data. This work was deemed promising but too preliminary to be used in the assessment at this time.

The WG therefore recommended that an expert workshop be convened to further develop and improve the model used for future seal population assessments. These

developments may also prove useful for seal modelling and management in general and not necessarily be completely specific to harp and hooded seals.

The SC agreed with WGHARP that it was important to revise and improve the seal population assessment model and that NAMMCO should convene a workshop in cooperation with ICES dedicated to this. ICES offered to cover the costs of the Chair and some invited experts, and NAMMCO would also cover the cost of some of the needed expertise.

It has been proposed that this workshop could be held in St. Andrews in September 2020, back to back with the meeting of the UK Special Committee on Seals (SCOS), as some of the relevant experts would be attending the SCOS meeting and this could therefore reduce costs but increase the expertise present.

**- A second meeting of the Ad hoc Working Group on Narwhal in East Greenland in 2021**

The SC recognised that the issue of narwhal in East Greenland is a particularly complex and sensitive one and noted that there were a range of recommendations for research stemming from the Ad hoc Working Group on Narwhal in East Greenland (NEGWG). On the basis of this, the SC recommended that a new meeting of the WG be scheduled for 2021.

The aim of this meeting would be to review the latest data (e.g. on catch data and genetic research) and update the assessment using both this new data and the revisions currently underway on the model to allow for time variation in some of the parameters. Work that should be done prior to this new meeting would include the review of the abundance estimate by the NAMMCO/JCNB joint working group, reconsideration of the mark-recapture data, and an investigation of the potential correlation between ice coverage and narwhal presence in Scoresby Sound.

**- The proposed delay of working group meetings on ringed and bearded seals until 2022**

In the endorsed workplan from SC/25 (2018) it was proposed that ringed seal and bearded seal working group meetings be run back to back in 2021. SC/26 has however proposed to delay both meetings. This proposed delay is due to the ongoing studies and analyses and difficulties associated with producing reliable abundance estimates in the near term.

The SC noted that since ringed seals are a hunted species in NAMMCO countries, it was important that an assessment be conducted, even if there was no immediate cause for concern regarding the populations. However, since there are ongoing studies on within Greenland and planned studies within Norway, it was considered worthwhile to delay the ringed seal WG until the information generated from this work is available. The SC proposed that the ringed seal WG be postponed and that SC/27 (2020) set a new date based on an assessment of the sufficiency of the data available at that time.

For bearded seals, the SC was informed that there is ongoing analysis of the multi-species aerial surveys conducted in Greenland and that passive acoustic research in Norway is picking up bearded seals in a wide range of locations. To allow for the ongoing research to be finalised and additional data to be made available, the SC proposed that the bearded seal WG also be delayed and take place in 2022 at the earliest.

It should be noted however that the Performance Review Panel emphasised the importance of adopting a precautionary approach and strongly recommended that the assessment of ringed seals and bearded seals not be postponed as both species are hunted and data poor.

The Performance Review Working Group also recommended following a precautionary approach and that the assessment of both species, and therefore the holding of the WGs, should not be delayed.

A review of the status of ringed seals has been conducted by NAMMCO in 1996, i.e., 24 years ago, while the status of bearded seals has never been reviewed (See MC09). Meanwhile the SC

has recommended the importance of working towards an assessment for over a decade. Both these WGs have been delayed for several years, based on a lack of data and ongoing studies.

The General Secretary proposes that one way to proceed may be to agree to convene the WGs in 2022 at the latest and task them to conduct a thorough review of the existing data. If they still consider that the necessary data for conducting an assessment of the stocks is not available, they should then and identify which data essential to the different stock assessment are still missing and for which collection should be prioritised by the parties involved.

## 2. COMMITTEE ON HUNTING METHODS

2020	2021	2022
<p>Finalising instruction video on handling Whale grenade 99 – narratives in English</p> <p>Planning the Expert group meeting (EGM)</p>	<p><b>EGM</b> Hunting efficiency of small cetaceans and hunting methods where the combined use of harpoon and rifle is not one weapon</p>	

The next CHM meeting is planned for 26 and 27 August 2020. Generally, one annual meeting planned each calendar year.

NAMMCO 27 had endorsed the proposal to convene two events in 2020:

- An EGM on hunting efficiency of small cetaceans as a follow up to the 2011 EGM
- A Workshop or EGM on methods where the combined use of harpoon and rifle is not one weapon.

They should be organised back to back due to overlap in participation and focus. NOK 100 000 was tentative set aside on the 2020 budget.

The CHM saw it as beneficial to combine the two events. The EGM on small cetaceans would address members responses to recommendations given in the 2011 EGM and review possible new information on hunting methods for small cetaceans. Special focus would be on hunting methods where death is not immediate, e.g. types of hunts requiring harpooning before killing in order not to lose the animal, or netting. The WS/EGM would have the same focus but be extended to also include large whales.

CHM discussed the format, whether this should be a WS or an EGM, or a combination of the two. EGMs dealing with assessment of killing methods considering inter alia time to death data have been smaller events. Participation of experts (veterinarians, biologist, statisticians and hunters) have been by invitation only. Workshops on all other aspects than assessment of TTD have typically been open for all interested parties and have attracted a larger group of people. The WS have been open to ensure transparency as this has been viewed as valuable and important towards the outside world. Members held different opinions regarding format but concluded that it should be organised as an EGM.

CHM urged Greenland to finalise the analysis of TTD data for beluga and narwhal prior to the EGM and recommended that the Faroe Islands undertake structured examinations and develop a spinal lance blade that will improve the dolphin hunt.

In line with the above the **CHM propose a revised concept and structure including budget (NOK 240 000) of an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) with scope:**

- To improve hunts where the animal is harpooned and shoot in separate sequences deploying two different types of weapons. In NAMMCO, this would pertain to small cetaceans' hunts, the rifle hunt for minke whales, seal- and walrus hunts.

The EGM is scheduled to late spring 2021. (NAMMCO/28/08, page 3 and FAC-2020-04, Excel Budget sheet CHM)

### 3. COMMITTEE ON INSPECTION AND OBSERVATION

The next CIO meeting is planned for 25 August 2020. Generally, one annual meeting planned each calendar year.

### 4. COUNCIL WORKING GROUP ON BYCELS

BYCELS will meet online in June 2020.