

NAMMCO DATABASE: REPORTING OF CATCHES, BY-CATCHES, ENTANGLEMENTS/ENTRAPMENTS, STRANDINGS, SHIP STRIKES

Memo from the Secretariat (090620)

NAMMCO needs/wants to report data for the outside (gallery) to underline its transparency and the transparency of its member countries regarding anything related to marine mammals. At the same time, the “owners” of the data do not want to report data with an accuracy which would allow others to use (and eventually publish) the data.

Defining the purpose of the reporting, i.e., what shall be done with the data and what is the aim of reporting and making public a certain type of data must be clarified before one can define which type of data should be reported and in which detail and format. Three possible scenarios are:

- Only for the “gallery” (transparency, response to an international trend – like e.g. the increased interest to strandings, etc...)
- To be used by a NAMMCO committee – then for which use?
- A combination of both

In November 2019, the new extended excel sheets were circulated to all members requesting their input for the annual reporting of data. The response differed from members, including one using the 2018 template, and also noting that the new extended request for data were too comprehensive and therefore need to be revisited.

The Secretariat has reviewed the database after the this first year with the extended reporting requested from member countries and the less extended response. The following gives some ideas and suggestions for improving the reporting. The memo is also tabled as an input to discuss the future tasks of BYCELS, under agenda item XX.

1. SUGGESTED MODIFICATIONS TO THE CURRENT NAMMCO DATABASE

NAMMCO/BYCELS-2020-01/02-appendix 2 gives the suggested revisions to the excel database.

1.1 GENERAL

To simplify and make reporting less cumbersome we propose to remove the Latin name from all sheets and instead have a separate sheet containing a list of species with English name, Latin name and names in FO, GL, IS and NO.

1.2 CATCH DATA

These are at the core of NAMMCOs existence (sustainable use of marine mammals) and are presumed by NAMMCO to be accurately and reliably reported. Until now, the SC has not used the database in its assessment, but other committees (CHM, CIO) use it. The data is not reported in great detail, mostly numbers and rarely by sex and age.

In an attempt to reconcile the needs for the general reporting (gallery) and the needs of all NAMMCO subsidiary bodies (MCC’s, SC, CHM, CIO), and in particular to enable the SC to use the common database as their base-case database, it has been agreed that member countries should do the catch reporting by management areas, as defined by the SC. This was not done by most members in 2019.

1.3 DATA ON HUNTING METHODS AND EFFORT AND NATIONAL CONTROL EFFORT

For the 2019 reporting by members few have actually submitted the requested information. The question is why and should be addressed by CHM and CIO respectively.

1.4 BY-CATCH

There is a need to define what is considered by-catch and what is considered entanglement/entrapment. Currently the database contains two different sheets for these categories and the data does not need to be repeated. Entanglements/entrapments are in part a subclass of by-catches, indeed GL has until 2019, reported entanglements of large whales under by-catches. Therefore, what should go under entanglement/entrapment and what should go under by-catch needs to be clearly defined. Entanglements can also be non by-catch related, as MM can also be entangled in not fishing-related marine debris, like plastic.

1.5 ENTANGLEMENT/ENTRAPMENT

If NAMMCO wants to follow up with the entanglements issue, the reporting of entanglement events need to be more detailed than that of by-catch events. Maybe entanglement could be defined as events when the animal was first observed alive + when the animals is entangled in non-fishery related marine debris?

- Location should be reported as fjords or of a known land-point. Tromsø e.g. is too vague, it can be in many different fjords.
- Add one column with two options: Owned gear/ lost gear, or something alike, to indicate if the whale is entangled by a gear presently owned by a fisherman and fishing for him - manoeuvred by him (active gear like trawls and seines) or regularly checked by him (passive gear like gillnet and pots) – or by a ghost/lost/derelect fishing gear or piece of fishing gear or other marine debris.
- Combine entrapment with entanglement, to simplify the database. Now it is not stated in which gear the animal is entrapped in. Entrapment would become one of the possibilities for the column “Entangled part of animal”.
- Self-released would become one option to the “disentanglement/entrapment outcome”, as it can happen in both case and is also an outcome. “Outcome” should have 5 possibilities: released, lost-still entangled, euthanised, dead, self-released.
- In column “Entangled - by what”, put
 - poundnet as one option instead of a comment (as it seems to happen regularly in GL (as well as in other parts of the world, especially taking small coastal cetacean like harbour porpoise)
 - ropes (from buoy or pots) as an option, as it also happens regularly, in particular in the Barents Sea – certainly in the Russian pot fishery and certainly off the Canadian and US East coast.

1.6 BY-CATCH

The scientists do not seem willing to report, and therefore make public, the individual by-catch data. Also to be used for by-catch estimation, it needs to be accompanied by effort data, so the observed by-catch can be raised to the whole fishery in order to get a by-catch estimate for a specific fishery.

The level of aggregation of the data will depend on what the aim is of the reporting – gallery or BYCELS use, and if for BYCELS then which use?

Presently the suggestion is that by-catch, and only observed by-catch, is reported by countries at a minimal but still informing level. The estimated by-catch will be reported in the same database on a separate sheet by the Secretariat based on the work of the SC WG for by-catch/SC. The Secretariat will compile the list of estimated by-catch endorsed by the BCWG and the SC.

By-catch should be reported by year, MM species, fishery main target, gear types by Metier level 3 (see Appendix 1 for the definition of the metier level) & information source (Survey, inspection, logbook, fishermen).

Could be added contact/data depository.

1.7 STRANDINGS

- Column sex should be replaced by three columns: male, female / or simply male, females are the total number is also given (and the unknown can be calculated).
- Alive: changed to number of alive (in a mass strandings, some might, some might not be alive when observed)
- Report mass strandings as individual event – especially if there were any live animals.
- Remove latitude and longitude, location is enough for strandings

1.8 SHIP STRIKES

None of the member countries collect ship strike information, and there has been little interest in doing it. The level of reporting has therefore been very simplified (when compared to i.e. IWC). Depending on what BYCELS aim at doing some added data has been proposed like light conditions, speed of vessel etc. The best would likely be to simply follow the IWC reporting, so countries have only one reporting to do.

BYCELS could propose to Council to disseminate general information on ships strikes which includes how and where such incidents should be reported to relevant bodies like national and international maritime organisations and vessel owner's organisation to mention a few.

1.9 GENERAL SUGGESTION

A strong suggestion is that, since some of the NAMMCO Countries report to the IWC, the reporting system for all categories (direct catch, by-catch, entanglement, strandings, ship-strike) be in a similar format than the IWC one, so the countries have only one dataset to prepare. If one of the two organisations (or others) requires more elements, then the most comprehensive dataset can be prepared and then some entries simply deleted to fit each reporting.