

Background to the development of Section A of the Joint NAMMCO Control Scheme for the hunting of marine mammals

Council DE (July 1993) established a Working Group (WG) "to consider inspection and observation schemes, in order to harmonise regulations and thereby inter alia ensure that data collected will be compatible".

The Task of the WG, would apply, where appropriate, to the utilization of all marine mammals relevant to NAMMCO.

The WG began its work by reviewing the existing systems that were in place for different hunts in member countries. Based on this review it became clear that (WG 1st meeting September 1993):

- All whale hunts were nationally regulated and apart from Norwegian sealing in Russian zone, all hunting took place within member's own fisheries zones thus only national authorities could exercise action in connection with breaches of regulations.
- Existing control and inspection schemes had developed largely in relation to the nature of the hunts themselves.
- Hunting of larger whales (minke) were licensed, regular reporting systems existed, and some system of control and inspection were in effect.
- Where an inspector is present the opportunity exists to gather a wide range of data in addition to other tasks of the inspector.
- This would be an inspection scheme for coastal minke whaling not small cetaceans or seals.

The WG in its meeting in November 1994 "clarified the reasons for establishing a common inspection scheme. It was considered important to ensure that the basic data collected in the course of inspection schemes on a national basis were compatible for scientific purposes. Furthermore, it was agreed that, while minke whaling operations differed from country to country, it was worthwhile to determine the necessary basic elements for effective control and inspection which were common to all forms of coastal minke whaling in the region, and which could be applied and built upon by national authorities as appropriate".

Following this meeting the WG began developing a list of common elements (checklist) which inspectors should be responsible for checking, i.e. the elements that later became Appendix 1 - Items for inclusion in whaling logbooks.

In its 1995 meeting the WG states "It was agreed that the checklist could only apply to offshore whaling with harpoon guns". However, this must later have been qualified to also include near-coast whaling with harpoon guns although no particular reference to this qualification has been found.

Council DE (March 1996) adopted the **Provisions of the Joint NAMMCO Control Scheme for the Hunting of Marine Mammals**, at that time covering Sections A and B and Appendix 1. It was clearly noted that Section A concerned hunting of whales from vessels with harpoon gun onboard, and that it was not limited to offshore whaling.

In its November meeting in 1996 the WG agenda included "Information from member countries on the work on the implementation of the Inspection Scheme". In the report it is noted: "Regarding the implementation of the National inspection Schemes for coastal whaling in NAMMCO member countries, no member had yet finalised the preparations for the guidelines for the national inspectors. It was noted that it is a precondition for the final implementation of the Control Scheme