



NAMMCO ANNUAL MEETING 28

22-25 March 2021

Online

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

DOCUMENT 09	SUMMARY OF THE COMMITTEE ON HUNTING METHODS (CHM) MEETING REPORTS
Submitted by	CHM/Secretariat
Action requested	<p>To note the reports and consider the forwarded recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greenland to carry out analysis of TTD for beluga and narwhal • The Faroe Islands to develop a spinal lance blade to improve the dolphin hunt • To develop an instruction video on handling of harpoon guns and explosive grenades • To develop ideas of additional instruction videos to be presented to Council for future consideration
Content	<p>Part 1 and 2: Summary of the CHM activities March 2019 to March 2021</p> <p>Appendix 1: Proposal for training videos</p> <p>Annex 1: Overview of recommendations and responses</p>

1. MEETINGS AND MEMBERS

CHM meetings and reports (click on link):

- 2019: [3 October](#)
- 2020: [9 February](#), [11 June](#) and [14-15 October](#)
- 2021: [23 and 25 February](#)

Committee members:

- FO: Signar Pettersen and Ulla Svarrer Wang
- GL: Sofie Abelsen, Jesper Ødegaard Jakobsen, Amalie Jessen and Nette Levermann (to July 2020)
- IS: Guðni Magnús Eiríksson and Kristján Loftsson
- NO: Guro Gjelsvik (from 2021), Kathrine A. Ryeng and Hild Ynnesdal

Chair: Kathrine A. Ryeng

2. OVERVIEW OF MAIN DISCUSSIONS AND DECISIONS

The discussions and considerations informing the recommendations reflected below are found in the reports from the meetings – linked under item 1 above.

2.1 WORKSHOP (WS)/EXPERT GROUP MEETING (EGM)

The Council 27 had endorsed the proposal to convene two events:

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

The CHM decided 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 cetaceans.

The CHM continued the work of organising the EGM through 2019 and up to September 2020 when Greenland informed NAMMCO that due to personnel changes and the pandemic it would not be able to allocate the required resources to ensure a successful outcome. The meeting, which was predominantly focused on Greenlandic issues, would depend on a comprehensive Greenlandic input both in terms of data collection and analyses. Participation from hunters and others with knowledge regarding specific hunts and weaponry would also be essential to meet the aims of the EGM.

The Council-HoDs meeting 10 September agreed to postpone the event and the CHM has put the meeting on hold until it is feasible to convene the meeting.

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

2.2 INSTRUCTION VIDEOS FOR MARINE MAMMAL HUNTERS

NAMMCO member countries have put, and continues to put, substantial effort into improving hunting methods, both from the perspective of the hunters and the authorities. In extension of the manuals

developed in 2013 and the Greenlandic animation video on the penthrite grenade, the CHM discussed a proposal put forward by the Secretariat of producing short training videos (appendix 1).

Previously, the CHM had recommended amending the animation video made by Greenland. Revisiting the content of the video it was **concluded** that it was too technical and detailed pertaining to the grenade's interior components and their functionality, and this might create confusion rather than clarity.

The proposal is to produce a series of short professional training videos for hunters and have these easily accessible on the NAMMCO website. All videos would have an English version as well as versions in the native language of the hunters. They would illustrate technical information regarding the weapons and their use and maintenance, including optimal target sites and shooting angles, in a clear and engaging manner. It is envisaged to use a combination of animation, illustrations, and filmed footage. To be user friendly, the video(s) should be short, professionally produced, and cover different aspects of hunting operations.

The videos, as the manuals before them, could become an integrated part of the hunters' training courses. Having this information available in both written and visual forms is extremely important for effectively communicating with multiple audiences and people with different learning styles. Given the visual nature of our current culture (i.e., the prevalence of TV, films, and online videos as a means of communication), having information available in short video form is likely to be both popular and effective. Extending this project to include other hunting nations would also emphasise / underline the importance NAMMCO puts on cooperation and knowledge sharing not only within, but also beyond its member countries.

Discussing the proposal, the CHM welcomed the initiative and agreed **to recommend** to Council to make an instruction video on the process and different steps involved in using the harpoon gun and explosive grenades. It would be advisable to record the film during the upcoming whaling season in Norway, while the equipment is installed and in place on board the boats. The CHM considered such a video as potentially the first of several future instruction videos, bearing in mind that a series of videos would be a long-time endeavour where the content and financial implications of future videos would be discussed and forwarded to Council for approval as appropriate.

2.3 INCLUDING PRESENTATIONS FROM HUNTERS IN THE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The CHM noted that a wealth of information is available in reports from Workshops and Expert Group meetings on hunting methods. It was also discussed and acknowledged that there has been a generation shift in the CHM member composition and that this shift will continue. It was noted that it might be particularly helpful for new members to learn how hunts are being carried out directly from hunters.

The CHM agreed that the online meeting platforms represented an interesting avenue for new ways of acquiring information and conducting meetings. It was acknowledged that it might not be feasible to get input from all hunts taking place in NAMMCO due to technical and translation challenges. It was agreed that Norway be tasked with identifying a hunter to present either sealing or whaling operations at either the next, or a special meeting. The final practicalities would be agreed upon via correspondence.

2.4 ACTIVE RECOMMENDATIONS AND FOLLOW UP

Document NAMMCO/CHM-recommendations (Annex 1) provides an overview of recommendations to member countries and their responses generated from all Expert Group meetings and Workshops organised by the committee since 1999. The document, which is a working document, consists of two parts:

- Active recommendations with responses – consisting of only ongoing recommendations.
- All recommendations with responses – consisting of both the active and the closed and completed recommendations.

The CHM began a review process of the document in February 2020, with the aim of identifying recommendations that were completed/closed and active ones. Completed are recommendations that have not been, and will not be, followed-up in the foreseeable future because they are too comprehensive and resource demanding to be carried out. The active recommendations include both the ones that have been started and are pending more action, and those that have not yet been started but where the member country's intention is to follow it up within a foreseeable future.

This review process has now been concluded, and within the remaining active recommendations, the following overall categories have been identified:

- Recommendations pertaining to struck and lost issues,
- Recommendations pertaining to the municipal rifle hunt in Greenland,
- Recommendations pertaining to training/education and safety issues for hunters.

As a next step, the Chair and the Secretariat will compile and structure those active recommendations belonging to one of the abovementioned categories together to simplify the overview for future reference.

2.5 PANEL REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS

The CHM had been asked by the Working Group (PRWG) reviewing and following up on the recommendations from the Performance Review Panel to address 13 recommendations. The CHM reviewed and discussed the forwarded recommendations in their meeting on 3 October 2019 and the responses can be found under agenda item 4 of that report.

The CHM welcomed the Performance Review Panels assessment of its work and its role in NAMMCO, noting with appreciation that the Panel concluded that CHM "together with the approval of its recommendations by the Council and implementation of these recommendations by member countries is one of the key elements that have made NAMMCO a credible organization".

2.6 WEBSITE – QUALITY CHECK

As part of the follow up to recommendations, see 2.4. above, the CHM had agreed to a 3-step process to ensure the quality of the content on the website:

1. To review all current text and information related to CHM on the website by 31.12.2019
2. To have review of new information on the website as a standard agenda item for the annual meeting of the committee. If needed this may also be done by correspondence intersessionally
3. To consider how to make the work of CHM more visible

With regards to step 1, all members have now reviewed the information and the Secretariat is currently updating the website accordingly.

2.7 UPDATE ON REGULATIONS AND REFERENCES

An overview of laws and regulations pertaining to marine mammals in members countries has been published on the website. The listings are linked to the original law/regulation text with translations when available, or otherwise with unauthorised summaries in English. This work is ongoing in the sense that a few summaries are lacking. Likewise, the list of references is online and has links to the various papers/articles. These overviews are updated once a year in relation to a meeting of the CHM.

2.8 DATABASE AND DATA REQUIREMENTS

The CHM has discussed and finalised the annual data requirements pertaining to data such as catch, struck and lost, hunting periods, hunting methods and effort. Member countries have submitted their 2019 and 2020 data accordingly.

Generally, the CHM has stressed the importance of including adequate, explanatory remarks where information may potentially be misunderstood. This was especially noted for data on quota and carry over numbers, given the existence of several different systems that are not self-evident.

2.9 WORKPLAN 2021 -2022

2021

- Continue the review of active recommendations
- Produce the instruction video on handling of harpoon gun and grenade, if given approval from the Council

2022

- Monitor annual reporting from member countries
- Identifying possible new video projects to present to Council

APPENDIX 1: Proposal for training videos for marine mammal hunters

THE IDEA

To produce a series of short professional training videos for hunters, which are made easily accessible on the NAMMCO website. All videos would have an English version as well as versions in the native language of the hunters (FO, GL, IS, NO). The videos would illustrate technical information on the weapons and their use and maintenance in a clear and engaging manner. This would be done with a combination of animation, illustrations, and filmed footage. To be user friendly, the video(s) should be short, professionally produced, and cover different aspects of hunting operations. For this reason, the production of a series of short videos is proposed.

Example of video sequences for the hunt of large whales using a harpoon gun with explosive grenades:

- Optimal use of equipment for **increasing *instant death rate (IDR)*** and **decreasing *time to death (TTD)*** - i.e., optimal approach, target sites and shooting angle. Technical explanation of how the bullet/grenade trajectory changes when traveling through water;
- Optimal use of secondary weapon;
- Safe handling of harpoon guns, grenades and secondary weapons;
- Maintenance of equipment.

Possible target hunts:

- Harpoon gun with explosive grenades - common to Greenland, Iceland, Norway;
- Small whale hunt - common to Faroe Islands, Greenland;
- Seal hunting with rifle - common to Greenland, Iceland and Norway;
- General video(s) on bullet behaviour in water, importance of hit point and angle of shot, etc.

BACKGROUND FOR THIS SPECIFIC PROPOSAL

In NAMMCO, the management of marine mammals has always emphasised that catches should be (biologically) sustainable and hunting should be responsible. The pursuit of responsible hunting has been targeted through the improvement of hunting methods according to three identified criteria: increased efficiency of the operations (e.g., not losing any struck animals), increased safety for the hunters, and minimised animal suffering.

NAMMCO is currently the only international organisation actively working towards improving marine mammal hunting methods. This work is therefore something that is unique to NAMMCO and an area in which we have world leading expertise.

NAMMCO has previously formulated recommendations on the best ways to improve TTD and IDR for large whales using harpoon guns with explosive grenades. The recommendations build on the results from the Norwegian research and development programme on minke whaling, which resulted in the impressive improvement in IDR from 17% to 82% over the period 1983–2014.

In addition, all Workshops and Expert Group meetings (EGM) have strongly emphasised the importance of training and experience in conducting a successful hunt. Indeed, NAMMCO/CHM has repeatedly and consistently emphasized that training, experience, and transfer of knowledge are prerequisites to responsible hunting practices.

Acknowledging this, the Council agreed to develop user manuals to aid hunter training and knowledge transfer. This work, finalised in 2014, resulted in three manuals: one on whale hunts deploying harpoon guns with explosive grenades, one on small cetacean hunts using rifles and harpoons or lances, and one on the pilot whale hunt in the Faroe Islands. The production of these manuals required considerable effort and was sponsored by NORA and the Norwegian Foreign Ministry. The manuals have been welcomed by users, are integrated as one of the main elements in national training courses

for whalers. They have increased the international recognition of NAMMCO as a body committed to the dual pillars of sustainability and responsibility in the utilisation of marine mammals.

Inspired by the manuals, Greenland, in collaboration with Henriksen Mekaniske Verksted (manufacturers of the grenade) started developing an instruction video on handling of the penthrite grenade-99 in 2016. The video, which was screened at NAMMCO 25, was well received and the Council subsequently allocated NOK 10,000 for its finalisation, so that it would be usable for all NAMMCO countries. Working towards this finalisation, it became evident that professionals needed to be involved at all levels (animations and footage, voiceover, message to be communicated etc) to ensure an optimal product, and that this would require a substantially larger budget and time investment. This means that although the finalisation of the video remained a recommendation of the CHM, there is currently no concrete or clear pathway for achieving this.

BENEFITS TO NAMMCO

Continue to provide high-level training materials to support responsible hunting practices and maintaining its visibility as a world leader in this regard

It would extend NAMMCO's excellent work and further strengthen the efforts NAMMCO member countries have put into improving hunting methods, both from the perspective of the hunters and the authorities. The videos, as the manuals before them, could become an integrated part of the hunters' training courses. Having this information available in both written and visual forms is extremely important for effectively communicating with multiple audiences and people with different learning styles. Given the visual nature of our current culture (i.e., the prevalence of TV, films, and online videos as a means of communication), having information available in short video form is arguably also likely to be both popular and effective.

Professionally made training videos that are freely and easily available online and that communicate clearly which factors are essential to ensure a successful hunt will add to NAMMCO's international reputation, credibility and visibility as a significant and responsible organisation, genuinely concerned with improving animal welfare and hunter's safety. Extending this project to include other hunting nations would also emphasise / underline the importance NAMMCO puts on cooperation and knowledge sharing not only within, but also beyond its member countries.

FINANCES

It is envisaged that to develop the sought-after information into an easily accessible visual form will require substantial funding and it will be dependent on external funding.