



## NAMMCO ANNUAL MEETING 28

22-25 March 2021

Online

# MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE FOR CETACEANS

## ANNOTATED DRAFT AGENDA

### 1. Chair's Opening Remarks

#### Relevant Documents for this Meeting:

**NAMMCO/28/MC/05:** List of Proposals for Conservation and Management and Recommendations for Research, with Responses from the Parties.

**NAMMCO/28/MC/06:** List of Active Requests from the NAMMCO Council to the Scientific Committee, with Responses from the Scientific Committee.

**NAMMCO/28/08:** Summary of the Scientific Committee Reports from 2019 & 2021.

*This meeting will focus on:*

- a) *Reviewing new management advice regarding hunting quota,*
- b) *Considering the new proposals for conservation and management and recommendations for research (with implications for Member Countries) made by the Scientific Committee during their meetings in 2019 and 2021, and*
- c) *Determining whether any requests for advice maybe considered completed and closed.*

*Given the time constraints generated by the online format, only information related to the above bullet points will be presented, and only the species for which this type of information is available will be discussed. Additional information and updates are available in the SC reports (see NAMMCO/28/08).*

### 2. Adoption of Agenda

*It may be proposed that item 3.5 on conservation and management measures for narwhal stocks be taken as the last item for discussion to facilitate the discussions on this issue and the presentations from both the Chair of the Ad hoc Working Group on Narwhal in East Greenland (based in the USA), and the hunters from East Greenland (based in Greenland).*

### 3. Conservation and Management Measures for Whale Stocks

**The MCC is specifically asked to discuss and decide whether to:**

- **endorse new SC management advice regarding hunting quota,**
- **endorse new SC proposals for conservation and management,**
- **endorse new SC recommendations for research (with financial implications)**
- **recommend to Council that the requests the SC considers answered be closed.**

### 3.1. Baleen Whales

#### Requests for Advice Considered Answered by the SC

*Does the MCC agree with the SC that this request for advice has now been answered and therefore recommend to Council that the request for advice be closed?*

**Request R-3.2.4:** “To conduct a formal assessment of humpback whales following the completion of the T-NASS. In addition, to investigate the relationship between the humpback whales summering in West Greenland and other areas and incorporate this knowledge into their estimate of sustainable yields of West Greenland humpback whales”.

*SC24 recommended annual strikes of no more than 25 humpback whales off West Greenland as sustainable for 2019–2024 and noted that this level of removals would also allow for an increase if the population was depleted. SC24 also recommended that the strike limit algorithms (SLAs) developed in the IWC be used to provide advice on sustainable yields for Greenland. SC25 clarified that the advice of the SC was based on the humpback SLA without any use of a needs statement and reiterated that SLAs provide the best scientific basis for advice on sustainable takes of large whales in Greenland so long as they are applied without the use of needs statements. SC26 provided further information on how SLAs may be used without needs statements (see NAMMCO/28/08).*

**Request R-1.7.12:** “To give information on sustainable yield based on new abundance estimates expected from TNASS-2015 for all large baleen whales in West Greenland waters.”

*SC27 noted that it had previously recommended that SLAs (used under the IWC ASW framework) are the best method to provide advice on sustainable removals for all large baleen whales in West Greenland waters. At SC26, it also provided more information and further clarification of how these SLAs may be used without needs statements (see NAMMCO/28/08). The SC therefore considers this request to now be answered.*

#### Request Older than 10 Years - Renew or Retire?

*Requests that are older than 10 years are retired unless the MCs choose to renew them. The following request will be retired this year unless it is specifically renewed by the MCC.*

**Request R-3.5.3:** “To assess the status of Sei whales in West Greenland waters and the Central North Atlantic and provide minimum estimates of sustainable yield.”

*The SC has regularly noted that there is insufficient data to answer this request and recent surveys have not had enough sightings to generate abundance estimates.*

### 3.2. Beluga

#### Summary from the 2020 NAMMCO-JCNB Joint Working Group on Narwhal & Beluga (JWG)

*Given by NAMMCO Chair of the JWG, Rod Hobbs (USA).*

#### New Management Advice on Hunting Quota

For the North Water stock (north of Cape York), SC27 recommended an annual landed catch of no more than 37 individuals north of Cape York. For the West Greenland stock (south of Cape York and north of 65°), SC27 recommended an annual landed catch of no more than 265 individuals. The SC also reiterated its recommendations that there be seasonal closures and no hunt south of 65°.

See [page 18 of the SC27 report](#) for more information on the assessment of beluga.

#### New Recommendations for Research

- New surveys for beluga be carried out in Somerset Island in the summer and West Greenland in the winter.
- A half day workshop be held (in connection with a JWG meeting) to exchange information on effective tagging practices for belugas.

### Requests for Advice Considered Answered by the SC

*Does the MCC agree with the SC that this request for advice has now been answered and therefore recommend to Council that the request for advice be closed?*

**Request R-3.4.9:** “To provide advice on the effects of human disturbance, including noise and shipping activities, on the distribution, behaviour and conservation status of belugas, particularly in West Greenland.”

*SC26 noted that this request had been answered through the disturbance workshop organised by NAMMCO in 2015.*

*The MCC may wish to note that SC27 endorsed a recommendation from the Joint Working Group on narwhal and beluga that a workshop on disturbance from the Mary River Mine be organised and include impacts on narwhal, beluga and walrus. The SC has, however, asked the JWG to provide more specific terms of reference of this workshop at its next meeting. This recommendation will be discussed under the Environmental Issues item of the MCJ meeting. Regardless of the MCJ discussion of this new proposal, a decision may still be taken regarding whether the disturbance workshop from 2015 answered request 3.4.9 on beluga.*

### 3.3. Narwhal

#### Summary from the 2019 Ad hoc Working Group on Narwhal in East Greenland (NEGWG)

*Given by Chair of the NEGWG, Rod Hobbs (USA).*

#### Presentation from Hunters in East Greenland

*Given by Åge Hammeken (Ittoqqortoormiit, GL) and Tobias Ignatiussen (Kuummiut, Tasiilaq, GL).*

#### New Management Advice on Hunting Quota

SC26 recommended that there be an immediate reduction to 0 catches in all three management areas of East Greenland (i.e., Ittoqqortormiit, Kangerlussuaq, and Tasiilaq), at least until a new abundance estimate is generated.

*See section 9.5.2 from [page 40 of the SC26 report](#) for further information on the assessment, and section 7.5.1 from [page 34 of the SC27 report](#) for updated information on current hunt quota and a reiteration of concern.*

#### New Proposals for Conservation and Management

- A new meeting of the Ad hoc Working Group for Narwhal in East Greenland be held in 2021 to review the latest data and update the assessment.
- Greenland include information on body length in reports of any landed animals.

#### New Recommendations for Research

- Abundance estimates in East Greenland be reviewed by the JCNB at the next JWG.

#### Greenland

- Investigate ways to improve reporting of user observations to inform future assessments.
- Recognise and include the negative impact of climate change on narwhals in management decision-making on all stocks.
- Hunters receive payment for assisting scientific research to clarify stock structure and abundance.

### 3.4. White-beaked, white-sided and bottlenose dolphins

#### New Proposal for Conservation and Management

- Greenland develop a way to distinguish between white-sided and white-beaked dolphins in reporting.

### 3.5. Harbour porpoise

#### Summary of the 2019 meeting of the Harbour Porpoise Working Group (HPWG) and the Joint NAMMCO-IMR International Workshop on the Status of Harbour Porpoises in the North Atlantic

*Given by the Chair of the Scientific Committee, Bjarni Mikkelsen (FO).*

#### New Management Advice on Hunting Quota

For West Greenland, SC26 endorsed a recommended annual catch (animals reported landed) of no more than 1,869 harbour porpoises. Given the demonstrated importance of reliable and complete reporting of removals, it also strongly recommended that Greenland work to eliminate underreporting and validate catch statistics.

See section 9.11.4 from [page 50 of the SC26 report](#) for further information on the assessment.

#### New Proposals for Conservation and Management

- Greenland work to eliminate underreporting and validate the catch statistics for harbour porpoises.
- Greenland ask hunters in East Greenland to provide samples to scientists when harbour porpoises are caught.
- Norway expand its reference fleet as part of an effort to obtain more reliable by-catch estimates.
- Conduct a formal assessment for Norway with updated by-catch estimates when new abundance estimates become available.
- Conduct a formal assessment for Iceland following a full review of available data, including the use of close-kinship genetic analysis to arrive at abundance estimates.
- Update the West GL assessment as soon as a new abundance estimate becomes available and no later than 2029.

#### New Recommendations for Research

- All assessment areas provide samples to support a multidimensional investigation into population structure and stock identity and allow for all datasets to be merged into a common analysis.
- New surveys for harbour porpoises be carried out in NAMMCO areas, and particularly off Iceland since the last dedicated survey there was now over 12 years old.
- Greenland conduct follow up research to investigate how widespread underreporting of catches is in the Piniarneq system.
- Greenland support the research required to establish a West Greenland sub-population and take the case forward within the IUCN.
- Iceland and Norway carry out tagging and tracking studies to help answer questions about stock identity and the appropriate management units.
- Faroe Islands work to obtain reliable removals data, update abundance survey, and conduct tagging studies to provide the information required to perform an assessment.

### 4. Any Other Business