

NAMMCO



# COMMITTEE ON INSPECTION AND OBSERVATION

*16 September 2021  
Online meeting*

**REPORT**



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**Please cite this report as:**

NAMMCO-North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (2021). Report of the Committee on Inspection and Observation, September 2021, Online meeting

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## 0. SUMMARY

The Committee on Inspection and Observation (CIO) met online on 16 September 2021.

Present were Hild Ynnesdal, Chair (Norway) and Guro Gjelsvik (Norway), Guðni Magnús Eiríksson (Iceland), Ulla Svarrer Wang (Faroe Islands), Sofie Abelsen, Amalie Jessen and Masaana Dorph (Greenland) and Charlotte Winsnes and Martin Binachon from the Secretariat.

Actions arising from the meeting:

- The Secretariat, in liaison with the Chair and Greenland, will plan the upcoming season, finalise its draft budget and present to the members of the CIO a list of observers to be hired.

## 1. ADOPTION OF AGENDA AND REVIEW OF DOCUMENTS

The Chair, Hild Ynnesdal, opened the meeting for comments to the agenda. The agenda was adopted as amended under AOB, and meeting documents reviewed (Appendix 1). The Secretariat remarked that Document CIO-2021-02/07, a draft checklist for the hunt of large whales, was not ready yet. This will however not impact the upcoming season as only walrus, beluga and narwhal hunts will be observed.

Martin Binachon participated to the meeting in his capacity as intern at the Secretariat.

## 2. OBSERVATION ACTIVITY

### 2.1 SCOPE AND RANGE OF OBSERVATIONS 2022

Document CIO-2021-02/02 contained the proposal recommended to and approved by Council 28 regarding the 2022 season. The scope is walrus, beluga and narwhal hunts in West Greenland. Sisimiut and Upernavik during the period March – May have been identified as the best locations and times based on previous years catch data. The Council allocated NOK 431,000 for the activities, estimating sending 3 observers over a period of 13 weeks in total.

Greenland confirmed that these locations and period remained the best options with respect to probability of observing hunts. Statistics from the previous years showed that it was between March and May that the narwhal hunt in Upernavik, and the beluga and walrus hunts in Sisimiut, were at their peak. National holidays around Easter were not thought to be affecting the hunters' practices, as all hunts were opportunistic, and the most decisive factor would be the weather and ice condition.

Greenland informed the CIO that the wildlife officers in previous years were often appointed as designated contact person for observers. Upernavik did not have a wildlife officer stationed anymore but Sisimiut had.

Greenland further explained that the narwhal and beluga hunts are carried out using dinghies or smaller motorboats. This excludes the possibility for an observer to participate in the chase and kill onboard the hunting boats out at sea. Discussing this the CIO agreed that it would be important to facilitate boat transportation for the observer for instance by renting a boat.

It was also pointed out that wildlife officers represented important contact persons for the observers as they had the equipment (radio) and knowledge necessary to be informed on the location and timing of hunts. This would be particularly helpful in connection with the beluga and narwhal hunts given their very spontaneous and opportunistic character. Upernavik as observation location represented an extra challenge due to the lack of a wildlife officer as potential contact person for the observer. The CIO discussed and agreed that it would be reasonable and important to engage a national observer together with a non-national for observation in this area to enhance the probability of observing out at sea during the actual hunt.

Greenland confirmed that the Secretariat would receive the name of a contact person to help with the planning of the observations and related practicalities. The CIO thus tasked the Secretariat in cooperation with Greenland to continue developing the implementation plan and to keep the CIO informed on major issues.

## **2.2 HUNT SPECIFIC CHECKLISTS**

The guidelines of the Observation Scheme require the observers reporting to include an overview report of the assignment as well as detailed checklists for each species observed.

The Secretariat presented Document CIO-2021-02/03 which contained a draft overview/summary report. It noted that this was a working document that would need to be adjusted before being finalised. The CIO was asked to consider and did agree to the main principles and tasked the Secretariat to liaison with the Chair and relevant contact persons to further develop and finalise the report.

The Secretariat had also produced specific check lists, shared as Document CIO-2021-02/04, Document CIO-2021-02/05 and Document CIO-2021-02/06. Greenland informed that it would verify whether the wording of the present checklists, written in Norwegian, corresponded to the wording of the checklists produced by Greenland and written in Danish.

## **2.3 OBSERVERS**

An overview of the members of the Observers Corps organised by country was available in Document CIO-2021-02/08. The Secretariat informed the CIO that all members of the corps had been approached and asked to inform on their availability for the upcoming season. Based on the responses received there were observers from all member countries who had confirmed their availability for the upcoming season.

Greenland informed that Per Nukaraaq Hansen had retired as a wildlife officer and also as a NAMMCO observer. He would therefore be removed from the list of observers.

The Chair remarked that while the employment of foreign observers was to be prioritised, the new guidelines made it possible to hire national observers in specific situations, and that hiring a Greenlandic observer may be desirable for the upcoming season. The CIO agreed that the conditions for the upcoming season would be special and difficult, not only in terms of language and logistics but also because of the current pandemic, and that hiring a Greenlandic observer could be a good solution.

Greenland echoed the Chairs view and noted that the language barrier could be a real obstacle for a non-native observer in Upernavik. To meet the Upernavik situation it was suggested to employ a

Greenlandic observer working together with a foreign observer; and in Sisimiut a foreign observer who would be able to have the wildlife officer as his contact person. However, it was also noted that if NAMMCO was to hire a tourist boat, the operator would most likely speak good English and would be able to translate information for the observers. This will have to be confirmed and may cost extra expenses.

Regarding the hiring of national observers, Greenland declared that it would be useful for the Greenlandic observers to have visible NAMMCO “tags”, as to clearly explain their status.

The CIO thus concluded that different criteria should be considered when hiring observers for the upcoming season: nationality (prioritise foreigners), language barriers, travel restrictions, past recruitments, budget constraints, etc.

Acknowledging that there are various and often very different considerations to take into account when deciding on the final implementation plan and who to employ, the CIO agreed that the Secretariat should come with a recommendation for the consideration of the CIO.

## **2.4 EQUIPMENT**

The CIO had previously agreed that NAMMCO should store survival suits and binoculars at the Department for the use of NAMMCO observers coming to Greenland. The Chair thus asked Greenland whether that was still possible, and under which conditions.

Previously it had been thought that Nuuk would be the ideal storage place as observers always started their assignment with a meeting with representatives at the Department. However, with the current experience on the efficiency and usability of online meetings, this might not be the best solution anymore when taking into consideration financial implications of traveling via Nuuk. Greenland offered alternative solutions and it was agreed that Greenland and the Secretariat collectively decide on this. Greenland also mentioned the restructured organisation of the *Greenland's Fisheries License Control Authority* with three centres: Nuuk, Sisimiut and Ilulissat.

## **3. NEXT MEETING**

At its previous meeting the CIO had agreed that it would re-evaluate the different data categories requested for the annual reporting from members as some might be open for discussion with reference to usability on a general level, i.e., not applicable for all member countries. The CIO agreed that this was still an important matter which could simplify the current process. Greenland shared its concern on the increasing demand on data-sharing, that is more and more pressing on the staff of the member-countries.

Previously the CIO had agreed to have its annual meeting prior to the Council meetings and after the members submission of the annual progress reports. The Chair argued that a face-to-face meeting would be desirable, and it was agreed to meet in early February 2022 in Copenhagen.

## **4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Ulla Svarrer Wang gave general information on the hunt of 1,400 white-sided dolphins in the Faroe Islands on September 12.

## APPENDIX 1: AGENDA AND LIST OF DOCUMENTS

### AGENDA

1. Adoption of agenda and review of documents
2. Observation activity
  - 2.1 Scope and rand of observations 2022”
  - 2.2 Hunt specific check lists
  - 2.3 Observers
  - 2.4 Equipment
3. Next meeting
4. Any other business (AOB)

### LIST OF DOCUMENTS

NAMMCO/CIO-2021-02/01	Draft annotated agenda and list of documents
NAMMCO/CIO-2021-02/02	Proposal for observation activities 2022
NAMMCO/CIO-2021-02/03	Draft summary report form
NAMMCO/CIO-2021-02/04	Draft checklist for walrus
NAMMCO/CIO-2021-02/05	Draft checklist for beluga and narwhal
NAMMCO/CIO-2021-02/06	Draft checklist for seals
NAMMCO/CIO-2021-02/08	NAMMCO Observer Corps