

**FAROE ISLANDS
PROGRESS REPORT ON MARINE MAMMALS 2021**

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I. INTRODUCTION

This report summarises research on cetaceans and pinnipeds conducted in the Faroe Islands in 2021, by the Faroese Marine Research Institute and the Environment Agency.

II. RESEARCH BY SPECIES 2021

II.a Species/Species studied

- Grey seals (*Halobiosus grypus*) – abundance surveys
- Pilot whales (*Globicephala medusa*) – banded animals
- White-sided dolphins (*Lagenorhynchus acutus*) – banded animals

II.b Field work

In 2021, biological samples for age and reproduction analysis were collected from 154 and 309 **pilot whales**, respectively, by the Faroese Marine Research Institute, in 10 dives. In addition, 37 stomachs and 274 necropsies were stored for diet, genetic and contaminant studies. Also, 123 samples for age and reproduction analysis were collected in one dive of **white-sided dolphins**.

In 2021, the Environment Agency took samples of **pilot whales** in connection with grinds in Havnsmannan on 28 April, Leynar on 27 June, Sandvíga 7 July, Skálabotnur 10 August, Leynar 16 August and Leynar 1 September. In all, 71 individual samples of muscle and blubber, and approximately same number of liver and kidney tissue were taken. In addition samples of ear tissue (symptomatic complex) from 5 whales were sampled.

The Marine Research Institute has initiated a field study for estimating the abundance of **grey seals** in the Faroes. The survey is carried out from boat, surveying the coastline, with emphasis and increased effort around main haul-out sites. In 2021 all islands were visited, except the southernmost island. The plan is to complement the abundance census with tagging and camera monitoring, for applying a correction of animals outside the survey area during the counts.

II.c Laboratory work

The biological material collected from **pilot whales** in 2021, and material collected in previous years, together with samples of **white-sided dolphins**, is under processing for analysis of age, reproduction and diet.