

BACKGROUND

Council 28 endorsed the idea to produce short, professionally made training videos for hunters for free and easy access on www.nammco.no. The aim is that such videos clearly communicate which factors are essential to ensure successful hunts, illustrating technical information regarding the weapons and their use and maintenance, including optimal target sizes and shooting angles. It was envisaged to use a combination of animation, illustrations, and filmed footage. It was also envisaged to not exclusively look at hunts carried out by NAMMCO member but include where possible other hunting countries in line with the importance NAMMCO puts on cooperation and knowledge sharing not only between, but also beyond its Member Countries.

All videos should have an English version as well as versions in the native language of the hunters.

The first video supplemented the manual (bjergei.nammco.no/hunting-manual/) and showed the safe handling of the 50 mm Kongsberg whaling cannon with loaded pusher shell (cartridge), the harpoon and the Whale grenade W. The current proposal will represent the 2nd in this series of training videos and will be presented to Council 29 for its approval.

PROPOSAL

Generally, for hunting of large whales with explosive grenades the IG (2015) strongly emphasised that successful and rapid kills are dependent on both equipment, target area and the angle of the shot i.e., to shoot the animal from the side towards the thorax.

The general aim is to achieve optimal animal welfare outcomes in large whale hunting through illustrating best practice and the optimal use of equipment for increasing instant death rate (IDR) and decreasing time to death (TTD) in marine mammal hunts.

Specifically, the proposal focuses on different elements/requests when using whaling cannon and the explosive grenade in large whale hunts and the rifle as a back-up weapon.

Four aspects will be highlighted:

1. The shot

The chase and how it is conducted has been documented to play a significant role with respect to TTD and IDR. Different regions and hunts exercise different approaches, something that has been reported and discussed in the NAMMCO Expert Group meetings on hunting of large whales first in 2009 and later reiterated in 2015. To illustrate the issue:

Excerpt from the EG meeting (2015) pertaining to harpoon

"The EG noted that IDR continues to be substantially lower than in other comparable hunts (blowing, trawling, trawling) where the pusher grenade is used as the primary weapon. The EG reiterated the advice given in 2010 that the use of slower and high-speed loads to chase the whales has effects on behaviour of whales. It is probably counterproductive in relation to achieving a high IDR. Chasing the whales usually results in shots at too narrow an angle from behind and the tail instead of from the side, and it is well documented that this reduces the efficiency of the grenade detonation and hence reduces the IDR and increases TTD."

Also, if an opportunistic way of following the whale with no stress inflicted prior to killing is not implemented in a particular hunt, assessing the duration of stress prior to killing, such as "chase time", defined as the time between initial avoidance behaviour and the impact of the first shot would be essential to fully appraising welfare outcomes in hunts.