

BACKGROUND

Council 28 endorsed the idea to produce short, professionally made training videos for hunters for free and easy access on www.nammco.org. 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 sites 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 (<https://nammco.no/hunting-manuals/>) and showed the safe handling of the 50 mm Kongsberg whaling cannon with loaded pusher shell (cartridge), the harpoon and the Whale grenade 99. 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 EG (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 visualising 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, this proposal focusses on different elements/sequences 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 chase

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 2010 and later reiterated in 2015. To illustrate the issue:

Excerpt from the EG meeting (2015) pertaining to Japan

“The EG noted that IDR continues to be substantially lower than in other comparable hunts (Norway, Iceland) where the penthrite grenade is used as the primary weapon. The EG reiterated the advice given in 2010 that the use of sonar and high-speed boats 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.

2. Target area and shooting angle a

The design of the explosive grenade is such that the hunter should preferably aim at the thorax from the side of the animal.

- aiming at target area (give anatomical directions – display optimal area)
- shooting angle: 45 – 135° relative to the animal's longitudinal axis

3. Assessing the effect of the shot

- Reaction to the shot
- IWC criteria

4. Back-up rifle

- Caliber and ammunition
- Target organ – brain – localization in situ

When rifles are used as a backup weapon the bullet trajectories change when traveling through water. Therefore, it is important to not shoot the animal before the head has surfaced. The video must therefore communicate the importance and significance of comprehending the relationship of ballistics to achieving successful and effective hunting.

Video

It will be an animation video and the target audience are hunters using harpoon grenades to kill large whales in NAMMCO member countries and other interested regions.

Participation and funding

In 2010, 2011 and 2015 Japan request NAMMCO to review and give advice on their whale killing data, resulting in recommendations for improvement related to the chase, target area and angle of shot in their large whale hunts. At Council 28 Japan expressed its continued interest and especially noted that the training videos could represent opportunities for consideration of financial support. It is therefore suggested that Japan should be invited to contribute to the current video.

It is proposed that the current chair of CHM, Dr Kathrine A. Ryeng lead the project in liaison with the Secretariat. Likewise, it is suggested that Dr Egil Ole Øen is asked to participate to the project with his expertise.

Main steps for developing a project proposal for the Council to consider at NAMMCO 29 (2022):

- Finalise project description and develop a preliminary budget
- Informal talks with Japan on possible participation and what kind of participation i.e. in developing the project and/or financially contribution

CHM is asked to:

- **Give their consent to the project**
- **Discuss the main steps forward and identify who does what**