

NORTH ATLANTIC MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

Report of the Meeting of the Management Committee for Cetaceans

4 February 2014, Reykjavik, Iceland

1. CHAIRPERSONS'S OPENING REMARKS

Chair Ulla Svarrer Wang welcomed all participants to the meeting.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The agenda was adopted, and the MC noted that agenda Items 6-9 will be discussed during the Joint Session with the MC on Seals & Walruses.

3. APPOINTMENT OF RAPPORTEUR

Jill Prewitt (Scientific Secretary) was appointed as rapporteur, with the help of participants when needed.

4. CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES FOR WHALE STOCKS

For this agenda item, the Chair drew the attention of the MC to the following documents:

- NAMMCO/23/MC/3 (Past proposals for Conservation and Management)
- NAMMCO/23/MC/4 (Summary of Requests to the Scientific Committee)
- NAMMCO/23/5 (Scientific Committee Report, item 8 and ANNEX 1, ANNEX 2) and
- NAMMCO/22/5 (Recommendations to member countries 2014).

4.1 Fin whales

East-Greenland –Iceland stock

West Greenland

Faroe Islands

Requests by Council for advice from the Scientific Committee

There is one active request to the Scientific Committee:

R-3.1.7 (NAMMCO 17 09-2008): The SC is requested to complete an assessment of fin whales in the North Atlantic and also to include an estimation of sustainable catch levels in the Central North Atlantic.

R-1.7.12 (NAMMCO/22 - 2014): Greenland requests the SC to give information on sustainable yield based on new abundance estimates expected from TNASS2015 for all large baleen whales in West Greenland waters (NAMMCO 22).

Update from the Scientific Committee

Fin whale catches in Iceland had a very different distribution from previous years, with low catch rates on the traditional whaling grounds west of Iceland and the bulk of the total catch of 137 fin whales taken south of Iceland.

In 2013 a fin whale/blue whale hybrid was caught in the Irminger Sea west of Iceland. This is the fifth confirmed hybrid between these two species in Icelandic waters.

The SC **noted** that R-3.1.7 has been ongoing for some time while waiting for the IWC review. A Large Whale Assessment Working Group (LWAWG) meeting was previously planned for Fall 2014. This was postponed to Fall 2015, awaiting work to be completed by the IWC on the fin and minke whale *RMP Implementation Reviews*. The hope is that the IWC's work will be finished in spring. However, the SC noted that the LWAWG will meet this fall regardless of IWC progress, since NAMMCO needs to have interim advice.

Comments from the MC

Norway noted that the IWC may not complete their review this year.

The MC discussed why NAMMCO has been waiting for the work of the IWC SC. It was noted that NAMMCO's usual procedure is to avoid duplication of work and to use the work of the IWC SC as a basis for the NAMMCO work, however, the NAMMCO SC does not automatically accept the advice of the IWC SC.

Iceland **noted** that it is very important for the LWAWG to occur this autumn and **proposed** that the MC **amend** request R-3.1.7 to include the following additional text: "While long-term advice based on the outcome of the RMP Implementation Reviews (with 0.60 tuning level) is desirable, shorter term, interim advice may be necessary, depending on the progress within the IWC. This work should be completed before the annual meeting of the SC in 2015." The MC **endorsed** the amendment of R-3.1.7 to include this text.

Status of past proposals for conservation and management

There were no new updates from the past proposals for conservation and management.

Conclusions by the Management Committee

The MC **noted** the SC report, and looks forward to the outcome of the Large Whale Assessment Working Group in Fall 2015 which will address R-3.1.7.

4.2 Humpback whales

Greenland

Requests by Council for advice from the Scientific Committee

There are two active requests to the Scientific Committee:

R-3.2.4 (NAMMCO/15 03-2006): The Commission requested the Scientific Committee to conduct a formal assessment following the completion of the T-NASS.

R-1.7.12 (NAMMCO/22 - 2014): Greenland requests the SC to give information on sustainable yield based on new abundance estimates expected from TNASS2015 for all large baleen whales in West Greenland waters (NAMMCO 22).

Update from the Scientific Committee

The SC **noted** the new request (R-1.7.12) and will consider this again after NASS-2015.

Discussion of the MC

The MC noted that at last year's MC meeting, it was recommended that humpback whales not be considered at the Large Whale Assessment WG. However, the advice for removals in West Greenland is for 2010-2015. Greenland noted that the situation regarding quotas in the IWC is

not stable, and that they do not want to risk a situation where they do not have advice from either the IWC or NAMMCO. Therefore Greenland would like to ask the SC whether there is sufficient data available to conduct an assessment of humpback whales at the upcoming Large Whale Assessment Working Group meeting in Fall 2015.

Greenland referred to the end of SC advice of humpback whales 2009-2015 and the risk of postponement of the NASS. Greenland also noted that a new quota negotiation in the IWC will be in 2018 and due to the uncertainty in allocation of quotas, Greenland proposed that R-3.2.4 is **reiterated** and ask that the assessment of humpback whales is completed at the Large Whale Assessment Working Group in fall 2015. The MC **endorsed** this reiteration of the request.

Status of past proposals for conservation and management

Proposal 3.7.1, regarding the advice for humpbacks for the period 2010-2015, was discussed above.

4.3 Sei whales

There is one request for sei whales:

Requests by Council for advice from the Scientific Committee

R-3.5.3 amended NAMMCO/19 09-2010: to assess the status of sei whales in West Greenland waters and the Central North Atlantic and provide minimum estimates of sustainable yield.

Update from the Scientific Committee

The SC considers R-3.5.3 as ongoing, and had no further updates or future plans for sei whales.

Discussion of the Management Committee

The MC noted that the IWC has been considering whether they will conduct an assessment on sei whales for many years. Most previous sightings surveys have not included sei whales as a priority species, and therefore the survey areas did not cover far enough south to obtain complete abundance estimates. Iceland noted that they were hoping to conduct a separate sightings survey with the primary focus on sei whales in the future. It was suggested that the previous estimates from 1989 and 1995, while acknowledged that they are likely underestimates, could be used as a minimum estimate to base some advice.

Conclusions by the Management Committee

The MC suggested that request R-3.5.3 remains a pending request, and notes that this work will not be completed by the SC in 2015. The MC also notes that there may be future work in the IWC.

There are no past recommendations for Scientific Research or recommendations to member countries.

4.4 Minke whales

Central North Atlantic

*West Greenland*Requests by Council for advice from the Scientific Committee

R-3.3.4 NAMMCO/17 09-2008: to conduct a full assessment, including long-term sustainability of catches, of common minke whales in the Central North Atlantic once results from the 2009 survey become available.

R-1.7.12 (NAMMCO/22 - 2014): Greenland requests the SC to give information on sustainable yield based on new abundance estimates expected from TNASS2015 for all large baleen whales in West Greenland waters (NAMMCO 22).

Update from SC 21

The SC will consider R-3.3.4 at the Large Whale Assessment Working Group meeting planned for fall 2015.

The SC **agreed** to use “common minke whale” as the common name for *Balaenoptera acutorostrata* going forward.

The SC noted the recent work on stock structure and genetics, which give no genetic support to maintain the 5 management areas in the northeast Atlantic. The SC noted that as a part of IWC's RMP Implementation Review, extensive revisions of management areas have been agreed. These include large reductions in the number of management areas. Although the latest genetic evidence suggests that there is only one stock in the North Atlantic, the IWC SC decided to retain the three main medium areas (E, Central, W) as a precautionary measure.

New abundance estimates were available from Norway, based on results from the sixth and last year of the 6-year survey programme 2008-2013 to cover the northeast Atlantic. Estimates were lower in the Jan Mayen area and also in Iceland. It was previously thought that the lower estimates seen in Iceland could be due to a shift in distribution, with the whales moving north to Jan Mayen. and/or toward the coast of East Greenland. Although the Jan Mayen area was surveyed in a different year than the Icelandic area, the lower estimates seen in Jan Mayen do not support a shift from Iceland to Jan Mayen.

Updates from the Management Committee

Iceland **proposed** amendments to request R-3.3.4 to be changed to the following text: “The SC is requested to complete assessments of common minke whales in the North Atlantic and include estimation of sustainable catch levels in the Central North Atlantic. While long-term advice based on the outcome of the RMP Implementation Reviews (with 0.60 tuning levels) is desirable, a shorter-term, interim advice may be necessary, depending on the progress within the IWC. This work should be completed before the annual meeting of the SC in 2015.”

Norway reported on their 2014 catches of minke whales: the quota was set at 1,286, and the catch was 736 animals from 21 vessels.

Proposals for Conservation and Management

There were no updates on the past proposals. The MC **noted** that proposal 3.2.1 is outdated, however 3.2.2 should remain active.

Conclusions by the Management Committee

The MC **noted** the SC's plan to consider minke whales at the Large Whale Assessment WG in fall 2015. The MC **endorsed** Iceland's proposed amendments to R-3.3.4.

4.5 Narwhal

West Greenland

East Greenland

There were two active requests for narwhals:

Requests by Council for advice from the Scientific Committee

R-3.4.9 NAMMCO/14 03-2005: provide advice on the effects of human disturbance, including noise and shipping activities, on the distribution, behaviour and conservation status of belugas [also narwhal and walrus], particularly in West Greenland.

R-3.4.11 NAMMCO/17 09-2008: to update the assessment of both narwhal and beluga, noting that new data warrant such an exercise.

The MC agreed with the SC that R-3.4.10 (future surveys should be planned using hunter knowledge) is now considered completed.

The MC also agreed with the SC that R-3.4.12 (advice on sustainable takes of narwhal in Kane Basin) is included in R-3.4.11 and this request as replaced with 3.4.11.

Update from the Scientific Committee

The SC heard updates on new research projects including satellite tracking, sampling, and collection of stomach temperature data in Greenland.

The Catch Allocation Sub-Group of the NAMMCO-Joint Commission on Narwhal & Beluga met in March 2014 with the main purpose of developing an allocation model that will provide a mechanism for assigning harvested animals (narwhals) to summer stocks (see ANNEX 1 of SC report). Although the model is not yet completed, the SC was presented with the preliminary work of the Catch Allocation Sub-Group. The model will be completed at the upcoming Joint Scientific Working Group meeting in March 2015. The full assessment will be updated at the March 2015 meeting as well.

Updates from the member countries

Greenland confirms report of the SC Chair and noted that the dates for the JCNB Commission meeting have not yet been confirmed, but the meeting will be held sometime before fall 2015.

Greenland informed the MC that in 2014 the Greenland Cabinet added 30 narwhals to the adopted quotas. Greenland noted that the 30 additional narwhals were an anomaly, and before 2014, and again in 2015, they are following the scientific advice.

The MC discussed that some years back there was concern that catches were higher than quotas. Greenland noted that while this may have been a concern in the past, the Department maintains close contact with the municipalities, with contact twice per month. Greenland has no concerns about the catch reporting, and trusts the current system.

Proposals for Conservation and Management

3.3.6: The Management Committee strongly **recommends** that “struck and lost” data be collected from all areas and types of hunt and that all “struck and lost” animals be included in the advice (NAMMCO 19).

Greenland reported that there are no updates on the “struck and lost” issue, however reporting of “struck and lost” is still a requirement of the hunters.

Conclusions by the Management Committee

The MC notes the preliminary work of the Catch Allocation Sub-group and awaits the full model, as well as updated assessment, after the Joint Scientific Working Group of the JCNB meeting in March 2015.

The MC also noted that R-3.4.9 is being addressed by the planning of the Disturbance Symposium, and R-3.4.11 will be addressed at the upcoming JCNB/NAMMCO WG meeting in March 2015 in Ottawa, Canada.

4.6 Beluga

West Greenland

There is one ongoing request (R-3.4.9) and one standing request (R-3.4.11). These are both the same requests as discussed above for narwhal.

Requests by Council for advice from the Scientific Committee

R-3.4.9 NAMMCO/14 03-2005: 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.

R-3.4.11 NAMMCO/17 09-2008: update the assessment of both narwhal and beluga

The MC noted that the SC views R-3.4.10 (future surveys should be planned using hunter knowledge) as now completed/archived.

Update from the Scientific Committee

The SC heard about an ongoing programme in Norway with satellite tracking and collection of blood and blubber sampling for various investigations of pollution, diet and health status of Svalbard belugas. Eight animals were captured for this purpose in the summer of 2014. At least one more field season will be needed before analysis will begin on data that has been collected.

As noted above, the Joint Scientific Working Group of the NAMMCO-JCNB will meet in March 2015. At this meeting they will update the advice for belugas, which will address R-3.4.11.

Updates from Member Countries

As noted above, Greenland informed the MC that the dates for the JCNB Commission meeting have not yet been confirmed, but the meeting will be held sometime before fall 2015.

Proposals for Conservation and Management

The MC noted that some of the past proposals for conservation and management are very old. There are no new updates.

Disturbance Symposium

As discussed in Council, the Scientific Committee **recommended** broadening the scope of the Symposium and including presentations from other species/research and noted that a number of external experts will be required for this meeting.

The SC members attending this meeting discussed a recent offer from a research group from the University of Leeds in the UK to join forces in planning the Disturbance Symposium. This group, and the members of the Disturbance Symposium Steering Committee, recommended to the MC that the Disturbance Symposium Steering Committee discuss with the group from the University of Leeds whether their objectives overlap with the NAMMCO objectives to warrant collaboration on the symposium.

The MC endorsed this suggestion to broaden the scope of the meeting, and continue to discuss the possibility of collaboration with the University of Leeds group.

Global Review of Monodontids Planning

The planning for the Global Review of Monodontids was discussed in the Council meeting previously. The MC noted the current plans, and awaits updated information at next year's meeting.

4.7 Northern bottlenose whales

Update from the Scientific Committee

There is an ongoing project being conducted in Norway related to sonar noise disturbance on bottlenose whales. The SC noted that NAMMCO does not have an endorsed abundance estimate for the most recent sightings surveys. The latest available abundance estimate from the Icelandic and Faroese blocks of the ship-based part of the NASS-2001 survey were presented to the SC in 2003, but has not been formally endorsed.

Proposals for Conservation and Management

There is one very old proposal for conservation and management, 3.5.1. The MC noted that this conclusion is still valid as far as sustainability of any takes. However, the Faroes noted that the wording of the proposal is incorrect- there is not a direct traditional coastal drive hunt, but rather stranded animals that are found alive are permitted to be taken. The Faroes also noted that strandings are rare and in very low numbers.

Greenland updated the MC regarding the catch data that previously included bottlenose whales. The Department contacted the hunters and it was confirmed that bottlenose whales were a mistake in reporting, and that those catches were actually harbour porpoises. Greenland has now updated their catch records where this was possible.

Conclusions of the Management Committee

The MC endorses the changing of the wording in the proposal to remove "traditional coastal drive hunt" and replace this with "strandings".

The MC also noted the SC report.

4.8 Killer whales

Greenland

Requests by Council for advice from the Scientific Committee

R-3.7.2 NAMMCO/13 03-2004: review the knowledge on the abundance, stock structure, migration and feeding ecology of killer whales in the North Atlantic (particularly W Greenland and E Canada), and to provide advice on research needs to improve this knowledge.

Update from the Scientific Committee

A 3-year research project on feeding behaviour, movements and acoustics of killer whales in Icelandic waters conducted by the MRI will be finalized in 2015. Photo-identification has revealed several instances of movement of killer whales between the Shetland Islands and Iceland.

Killer whales in SE Greenland were found to have tooth wear that looks like they are fish eating killer whales but seals were found in the stomachs. Ten years of observational and photo-identification data of a population of killer whales that follows the Norwegian spring-spawning stock of Atlantic herring were predominantly observed feeding upon herring. One pod of herring-eating whales was also observed interacting with seals. This supports the hypothesis based on the long-term markers, of a degree of specialization, with a small number of groups persistently feeding upon mammals, but switching between herring and seals. Playbacks of herring-eating killer whale sounds to harbour seals at haulout sites on the herring spawning grounds caused changes in behaviour consistent with an anti-predator response.

Concerning R-3.7.2, the SC noted that there is still not enough information to answer the request. Unfortunately, catch information in Greenland was not available for review by the SC at this meeting.

Updates from member countries

Greenland updated the MC that the work on validation of catch reporting is ongoing.

The MC notes that there is still not enough information for the SC to consider R-3.7.2. The MC also notes that it is important that the SC receive the National Progress Reports in a timely manner in order to give the best advice possible.

4.9 Long-finned pilot whales

Faroe Islands

Greenland

Requests by Council for advice from the Scientific Committee

R-3.8.3 NAMMCO/13 03-2004: to develop a proposal for the details of a cost-effective scientific monitoring programme for pilot whales in the Faroes.

R-3.8.4 NAMMCO/16 02-2007: to make sure that both the methodology and the coverage of T-NASS take into account the need for reliable estimates for pilot whales. In addition, priority should be given to the analysis of data on pilot whales after the completion of T-NASS.

R-3.8.5 NAMMCO/19 09 2010: to assess the status of long-finned pilot whales in West Greenland waters and provide minimum estimates of sustainable yield.

R-3.8.6 NAMMCO 20 09 2011: to continue work to complete a full assessment of pilot whales in the North Atlantic and provide advice on the sustainability of catches, and to provide a general indication of the level of abundance of pilot whales required to sustain an annual catch equivalent to the annual average of the Faroese catch in the years since 1997.

Update from the Scientific Committee

Efforts have increased in the sampling programme of harvested animals, prioritizing obtaining teeth for ageing, skin samples, and reproductive parameters for each animal. A total of 270 animals were sampled in 2013. This sampling scheme is related to R-3.8.3.

The SC noted that all of the requests regarding pilot whales are ongoing, and the next assessment will not occur until after the next sightings survey.

The SC also noted that pilot whales are a priority species for NASS-2015, and the planning includes increased the survey effort and new techniques such as drones in order to obtain the best abundance estimate possible.

Proposals for Conservation and Management

With regards to proposal 3.6.1 and R-3.8.3, part of which concerned continuing with sampling of pilot whales, the MC notes and welcomes the update from the SC that the sampling program has been prioritised and many samples were collected in 2013.

Conclusions by the Management Committee

The MC notes the SC report and welcomes the progress on the sampling programme in the Faroes. The MC also awaits new abundance estimates resulting from NASS-2015.

4.10 White-beaked, white-sided and bottlenose dolphins

Requests by Council for advice from the Scientific Committee

R-3.9.6 NAMMCO/13 03-2004: to carry out assessments of these species

Update from the Scientific Committee

With regards to R-3.9.6, the SC noted that there is no new information for bottlenose dolphins from the Faroes and the analysis of the data from white sided dolphins in the Faroes is awaiting completion.

Updates from member countries

The Faroes noted that with respect to harvest of white-sided dolphins, in previous years there were stable catches from year to year, however in more recent years, catches have been close to zero. Interest in dolphins has waned, and therefore new research has not been prioritised. The previous work will be completed.

Conclusions by the Management Committee

There are no proposals for conservation and management. The MC notes the SC report and awaits the analysis of the dolphin data from the Faroe Islands.

4.11 Harbour porpoise

Greenland

Norway

Iceland

Requests by Council for advice from the Scientific Committee

R-3.10.1 NAMMCO/7 05-1997: comprehensive assessment of the species throughout its range...including distribution and abundance, stock identity, biological parameters, ecological interaction, pollutants, removals and sustainability of removals.

Update from the Scientific Committee

Satellite tagging continues in West Greenland. Greenland also sampled about 150 porpoises from the hunt from June-October to complement previous sampling efforts from September 1995 and 2009 and to look at possible seasonal changes. The porpoises seem to react positively to climate change in terms of increased body mass. Stomach contents showed increased diversity of prey between 1995–2009, with large amounts of cod in 2009.

A future harbour porpoise WG will be scheduled after a report from the By-catch WG, new data from T-NASS2015, and progress on research requests from the 2013 HPWG.

Proposals for Conservation and Management

Regarding the recommendations to member countries from 2014, Greenland informed the MC that they hope that new tagging data and surveys will help inform the SC on the assessment work. Greenland also noted that the work on catch history validation data is ongoing.

There was no new information from Norway.

Conclusions by the Management Committee

The MC noted the SC report.

4.12 Sperm whale

Update from the Scientific Committee

There was no updates or future work reported at the SC.

Conclusions by the Management Committee

There are no proposals for conservation and management, and the MC notes the SC report.

4.13 Bowhead whale

East Greenland - Svalbard

West Greenland

The only request relating to bowheads is R-1.7.12 (regarding all baleen whales in West Greenland), which awaits the results from NASS-2015.

Update from the Scientific Committee

A new abundance estimate for the population in West Greenland using genetics is larger than from aerial surveys, probably because of segregation of animals that mostly summer in the Canadian High Arctic. These results confirm an earlier assumption based on data that showed 83% of the whales passing through West Greenland were females, and older than 40 years, therefore the population must consist of more animals.

The programme using passive acoustic monitoring devices for bowhead whales in Framstredet and north of Svalbard is ongoing. Four units were deployed in 2013 and 3 retrieved and redeployed in 2014.

Updates from Member Countries

Greenland informed the MC that there were no catches of bowhead whales (none of the annual quota of 2 whales was used) between 2012 and 2014, but they wish to keep part of this shared Canadian/Greenlandic quota based on the advice from the Scientific Committee of the IWC.

Conclusions by the Management Committee

There are no proposals for conservation and management, so the MC notes the SC report.

4.14 Blue Whale

This species is new on the agenda this year, but it was discussed at the SC so it has been added here. There are no requests to the SC.

Update from the Scientific Committee

Animals identified earlier via photo-id off West Iceland in mid-summer were identified north of Iceland in mid-summer in recent years. One blue whale was satellite tagged in 2013 and two in 2014 north of Iceland. The whale tagged in mid July 2013 travelled southwards to 59° N. The whales tagged in 2014 travelled north of Iceland towards 73° N. There has been a notable increase in the numbers of blue whales seen in Svalbard over the last 2–3 years. This year there were also many sightings during the Norwegian Sightings survey and the Arctic part of the Ecosystem survey. Perhaps those whales moving north from Iceland to the Svalbard area.

Iceland has been collecting biopsies and has 10-20 samples currently being stored in the MRI archive.

Conclusions by the Management Committee

The MC notes the SC report and welcomes the new information on this species.

5. T-NASS 2015 AND SURVEY PLANNING

R-1.7.11: NAMMCO/16 02-2007: ...to develop estimates of abundance and trends as soon as possible, with the primary target species (fin, minke and pilot whales) as a first priority, and secondary target species (e.g. sei whales) as a second priority.

R-1.7.12 NAMMCO/22 02-2014: to give information on sustainable yield based on new abundance estimates expected from TNASS2015 for all large baleen whales in West Greenland waters (NAMMCO 22).

Update on status of NASS-2015

The MC notes and agreed with the SC recommendation that the “T” will be dropped from TNASS2015, reflecting the reality that the planned survey is not a “Trans-Atlantic” survey.

The MC noted the previous update on the status of NASS-2015 during the Council meeting. The main points were:

- Faroe Islands have full funding for national and extension surveys
- Iceland has received approval for ¾ of their requested funds to cover the national and extension survey
- Norway has approval for the funds for the national portion of their survey, but not the extension survey
- Greenland will not have updated funding information before June 2015
- NAMMCO will submit a proposal to the government of Norway for funding for the extension surveys. A decision on this is expected in mid-March
- The Steering Committee noted that while it may be possible to conduct a survey with this late of a funding decision, survey platforms such as ships and aircraft may not be available

Iceland also informed the MC that it is hoped that by installing double platform observation effort on fisheries research surveys, they hope to have comparable coverage as in the last NASS in 2007.

Iceland and Greenland **proposed** that the MC **reiterate**, and **amend** R-1.7.11 to include humpback whales, to read as follows: “Once the survey has been completed, the Scientific Committee is requested to develop estimates of abundance and trends as soon as possible, with the primary target species (fin, common minke, humpback and pilot whales) as a first priority, and sei whales as a secondary species.”

MC **endorsed** both the reiteration and amendment to R-1.7.11.

MC also noted the interval between sightings surveys is approaching the maximum recommended and hopes that NASS-2015 will continue as scheduled in 2015. The MC notes that results from NASS-2015 will take some time but hopes that results will come as soon as possible.

6-9. Joint Session

Discussions on these agenda items can be found in the Report of the Management Committee on Seals and Walrus (NAMMCO/23/8).

10. Any other business

10.1 Elections

Iceland proposed that the Faroe Islands (Ulla Svarrer Wang) serve a second term as Chair of the Management Committee for Cetaceans. Ulla Wang thanked Iceland for the proposal and agreed to continue with another term.

Norway proposed that Greenland (Nette Levermann) continues as Vice Chair, and Greenland accepted the proposal.