



NORTH ATLANTIC MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

TWENTY FOURTH MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

10 - 11 February 2016, Grand Hotel, Oslo, Norway

**DOCUMENT 13-
REV REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON HUNTING
METHODS**

Submitted by: Committee on Hunting Methods

Action required:

Council is asked to note the report from the Committee on Hunting Methods and endorse the following conclusions and recommendations the Committee has drawn attention to arising from the Expert Group meeting on assessing TTD data on large whales:

- Concern that the rifle hunt in Greenland seems to be increasing as a result of demand for meat that is not being met by the harpoon cannon hunt.
- In general, to recognise the importance of increasing hunters awareness through training, of the angle of the shot relative to the animals body position in order to reduce TTD.
- To monitor TTD at 10 years intervals.
- To organise a Workshop on alternatives for collecting standardised TTD data that is more economical and also makes it possible to compare TTD between countries.
- To review underlying reasons for struck and lost with the aim of decreasing it.

Council is also asked to give guidance as to how to proceed with the recommendations.

Council is asked to advice how issues related to bycatch, strandings and entanglement of whales can best be addressed.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON HUNTING METHODS

The Committee on Hunting Methods held its annual meeting on 6 February 2016 back to back with NAMMCO 24. In addition a meeting was held on 6 February 2015. Reports from these meetings are found below.

The Committee also held 4 telephone meetings; 17 April, 28 May, 7 October and 29 October. These meetings were exclusively dealing with the organizing of the Expert Group Meeting on assessing TTD data from large whales that was held 4 – 6 November in Copenhagen. The report from the Expert Group meeting is presented in document NAMMCO/24/12.

Members of the Committee in 2015: Amalie Jessen and Nette Levermann (Greenland), Ulla Svarre Wang replaced by Signar Petersen in February 2016 (Faroe Islands), Hild Ynnesdal, Kathrine Ryeng and Egil Ole Øen (Norway), Guðni Magnus Eriksson and Kristján Loftsson (Iceland). Nette Levermann has chaired the Committee.

REPORT OF THE 6th FEBRUARY 2016 MEETING

The Committee on Hunting Methods met on 6 February 2016 at the Ministry of Fisheries, in Oslo, Norway. Present were Guðni Magnus Eriksson and Kristján Loftsson (Iceland), Alessandro Tøvik Astroza, Kathrine Ryeng and Hild Ynnesdal (Norway), Amalie Jessen and Nette Levermann (Greenland), Signar Petersen (Faroe Islands) and Charlotte Winsnes from the Secretariat.

1. Introductory Remarks and Adoption of Agenda

The Chair of the Committee, Nette Levermann, welcomed the Committee members to the meeting, especially the new member Signar Petersen. The draft agenda was adopted, and meeting documents were reviewed. Charlotte Winsnes acted as rapporteur.

2. Update on hunting methods in member countries

Greenland

Levermann informed the meeting that there is a revision to the Executive Order regulating the hunt on large whales (2014) pertaining to the hunting period for minke whales. The new hunting period is March to November. The change in period is reflecting change in observed behavior of the minke whales.

Also a revision of the two executive orders on hunting licenses (2014) has been made because a change in the price of a hunting license has been approved.

Finally a revision to the Executive Order regulating the hunt on narwhal and beluga (2016) is recently approved. It is based on the newest scientific information of stock status, area and hunting grounds.

One new reference on reporting of catch data of large whales have come in 2015.

Whaling

The national quotas for large whales in 2015-2016 is based on the advice from the IWC Scientific Committee and approved by the IWC Commission in 2014.

Quota 2015-2016: West Greenland: 164 minke whales, 19 fin whales, 10 humpback whales and 2 bowhead whales. East Greenland: 12 minke whales. Carry-over numbers have been added for both years.

Active hunting boats: There were 32 approved whaling boats with harpoon guns and 425 smaller boats were active in whaling activities in Greenland in 2015.

Catch including struck and lost: West Greenland: 11 fin whales, 130 minke whales including 3 struck and lost, 6 humpback whales and 1 bowhead whale. East Greenland: 6 minke whales.

Hunting period: The hunting period for 2015-2016 is for fin whale and humpback whale from 1. January to 31. December and for minke whale and bowhead whale 1. March to 31. December.

Entanglements: 10 humpback whales was reported entangle in fisheries gear in 2015. 9 along the coast of West Greenland and 1 in East Greenland. 5 died of which 4 were permitted euthanized and one drowned.

Strandings: No reported strandings.

Irregularities: Quality control is ongoing. In 2015, there were 2 reported infractions of national legislation on large whales. The infractions were related to the use of rifle as secondary weapon for the humpback whales.

Hunt of small cetaceans, narwhal and beluga

Quota 2015 beluga: West Greenland: 330. Qaanaaq: 20; technical 5 year quota block is given of 100 animals, first year starting in 2014.

Quota 2015 narwhal: West Greenland: 144. Inglefield Bredning: 85; technical 5 year quota block is given of 485 animals, first year starting in 2014. Melvin Bay: quota 81. East Greenland: 88 plus an extra political allocated quota of 10.

Catch including struck and lost 2015 beluga: West Greenland: 120. Qaanaaq: 7.

Catch including struck and lost 2015 narwhal: West Greenland: 72. Inglefield Bredning: 75. Melvin Bay: 71. East Greenland: 94.

The catch numbers for beluga and narwhal includes struck and lost without specifying the actual numbers of S & L.

Hunting period: The hunting periods for 2015 for all small cetaceans are from 1. January to 31. December.

No stranding, entanglements or irregularities have been reported.

There are no quota regulations on other small cetaceans in Greenland. For catch numbers please refer to the national progress reports.

Hunt of pinnipeds, walrus

Quota 2015 walrus: West Greenland: 69. Northwater: 86. East Greenland: 18.

Catch including struck and lost 2015 walrus: West Greenland: 53. Northwater: 74. East Greenland: 4.

The catch numbers for walrus includes struck and lost without specifying the actual numbers of S & L.

Hunting period: The hunting period for walrus in West Greenland is from 1. March to 30. April and in Northwater and East Greenland it is from 1. October to 30. June. The hunting period for harp seal, ringed seal, hooded seal and bearded seal are from 1. January to 31. December.

No stranding, entanglements or irregularities have been reported.

There are no quota regulations on other legally hunted pinnipeds in Greenland. For catch numbers please refer to the national progress reports.

Norway

Ynnesdal informed the meeting of the following:

Whaling

Quota: 1286 minke whales

Active hunting boats: 21

Catch including struck and lost: 660

Hunting period: 1. April – 28. September

Strandings: Norway do not record strandings

Irregularities: Quality control is ongoing.

Sealing:

Quota: 21.270 harp seals

Catches of harp seals: 1165 harp seals including 8 taken for research

Catches of hooded seals: no commercial hunt allowed, 11 hooded seals taken for research

Hunting period: 1. April – 30. June

Active hunting boats: 1 vessel

No irregularities reported.

Norway stopped to subsidise the seal hunt in 2014 resulting in only one vessel going out. Previously it used to be 3 – 4 vessels each season. For the season 2016 no decision has been taken on either sealing or whaling pending upcoming meetings between the authorities and the industry.

Faroe Islands

Petersen informed the meeting of the following:

There are no regular quota system in the pilot whale hunt, but the Sysselmann has the authority to decide if the hunting should be stopped. The hunt can take place around the year and therefore no particular season.

In 2015 there were 6 drives and 501 pilot whales were taken. In addition two bottlenose whales were also caught. No irregularities were reported.

A new whaling regulation was introduced in 2015 " Løgtingslóg um grind og annan smáhval, sum seinast broytt við løgtingslóg nr. 93 frá 22. juni 2015", on pilot whales and other small cetaceans. The law enables the authorities to prosecute persons exhibiting disruptive behaviour and interference in the hunt and also making training courses on the use of the spinal lance.

There will be made a slight improvement to the design of the spinal lance based on experiences with this new equipment. There was a minor problem with the curving of the blade that did not prolong TTD but damaged the equipment. However the overall evaluation is that the lance is working as intended and has improved the killing technique. All hunters are obliged to undertake a training course built on the NAMMCO manual, and so far around 2 700 hunters have completed this course.

Iceland

Eiriksson informed the meeting of the following:

Minke whales

Quota: 275 minke whales – incl. carry over from 2014

Catch: 29 taken by 1 vessel. No struck and lost

Hunting period: 9 May – 30 August

No irregularities have been reported.

Fin whales:

Quota 171 fin whales – incl. carry over from 2014

Catch 155 incl. 1 struck and lost 2 active hunting vessels.

Hunting period: 29 June – 28 September

No irregularities have been reported.

Two new references on TTD on minke and fin whale hunt have come in 2015.

Eiriksson informed the meeting that the Directorate has advised the Ministry that more TTD data should be collect in order to complete the TTD assessment of minke whales. The collection of TTD in 2014 and 2015 represents too few animals to draw firm conclusions.

The Committee took note of the presented information, and agreed that for future meetings it would be beneficial to present the information on quota, catch and scientific advice in a table format. The Secretariat was also tasked to look into ways of improving the List of references.

The Committee furthermore discussed at length problems related to bycatch, strandings and entanglement of whales. It recognised that its terms of reference was focused on direct takes but at the same time the mentioned issues have great animal welfare consequences something that is of concern for the Committee. It therefore agreed to ask the advice of Council on how best to address these questions.

3. TTD expert group meeting 6 – 8 November 2015

The report from the expert group meeting on assessment of whale killing methods for large whales held in November 2015 was presented under this agenda item.

Council, at NAMMCO 23, had tasked the Committee to organise an expert group meeting for the presentation of TTD data on large whales with the terms of reference:

The expert group meeting shall undertake a review and evaluate the whale killing data submitted to NAMMCO by member countries and associated hunting nations, as well as data and information on recent and ongoing research on improvements and technical innovations in hunting methods and gears used for the hunting of large whales.

The meeting had assessed information on hunting methods and TTD data from NAMMCO member countries (Iceland, Norway and Greenland) in addition to Japan, Canada and USA.

All members of the EWG were invited in a personal capacity as experts in fields related to the issue of killing mammals.

The meeting was successful with indebt and informed discussions, and resulted in specific conclusions and recommendations.

In its evaluation of the expert group meeting the Committee on Hunting Methods agreed to that next time more time should be set aside for discussion of recommendations in plenum and also for the committee drafting the recommendations.

The Committee endorsed the report with its conclusions and recommendations and agreed to in particular to draw the attention of the Council to the following issues:

- The Expert groups concern that the rifle hunt in Greenland seems to be increasing as a result of demand for meat that is not being met by the harpoon cannon hunt.
- In general, to recognise the importance of increasing hunters awareness through training, of the angle of the shot relative to the animals body position in order to reduce TTD.
- To monitor TTD at 10 years intervals.
- To organise a Workshop on alternatives for collecting standardised TTD data that is more economical and also makes it possible to compare TTD between countries.
- To review underlying reasons for struck and lost with the aim of decreasing it.

4. Next meeting

The Committee agreed to get back to the date for the next meeting after Council had met. The Committee also agreed to hold skype meetings. However, the Committee will evaluate a need of face to face meeting in relation to topics to be discussed and solved.

5. Adoption of the report

The report was adopted by correspondence on 8 February 2016.

REPORT OF THE 6th FEBRUARY 2015 MEETING

The Committee on Hunting Methods met on 6 February 2015 at the Fisheries Directorate in Havnafjordur, Iceland. Present were Guðni Magnus Eriksson and Kristjan Loftsson (Iceland), Kathrine Ryeng and Hild Ynnesdal (Norway), Nette Levermann (Greenland), and Christina Lockyer and Charlotte Winsnes from the Secretariat.

1. Introductory Remarks, Adoption of Agenda and Appointment of Rapporteur

The Chair of the Committee, Nette Levermann, welcomed the Committee members to the meeting. The draft agenda was adopted with the addition of one information item under any other business. Charlotte Winsnes acted as rapporteur.

2. Expert group meeting for presentation of TTD data

The report from the expert group meeting on assessment of whale killing methods for large whales from 2010 was presented as a background document.

Council, at NAMMCO 23, had endorsed the idea of organising an expert group meeting for the presentation of TTD data on large whales with the terms of reference:

The expert group meeting shall undertake a review and evaluate the whale killing data submitted to NAMMCO by member countries and associated hunting nations, as well as data and information on recent and ongoing research on improvements and technical innovations in hunting methods and gears used for the hunting of large whales.

NAMMCO member countries (Iceland, Norway and Greenland) and hunting nations like Japan, Canada, USA and Russia will be invited to participate and to inform about their hunting practises and present their data.

The Committee discussed and agreed upon the agenda as described in Appendix 1.

Anticipated duration of the meeting is two days and suggested venue is either in Copenhagen or in Reykjavik, in week 45 (2 – 6 November) 2015.

The Committee also reconfirmed the list of experts to be invited agreed on at the last meeting, and included two more persons. The present list of experts consists of 10 persons. One of these were added by correspondence after the meeting. Furthermore, the Committee identified a possible chair.

The Secretariat was tasked to proceed with invitations of both hunting nations and experts.

3. Practical internal seminar on data collection, processing, analysing and presentation of TTD data

After the last meeting in the Committee it became clear that members had different understandings of what the practical seminar on TTD data should entail. An intersessional meeting was therefore held during NAMMOC 23 to clear up misunderstandings. This meeting was followed by a planning meeting between the Chair, the Secretariat and Lars Walløe, where the following was agreed to:

- To organise a two-day seminar just prior to the planned TTD expert Group meeting.

- One day will deal with the Greenlandic data and the other with Icelandic and Norwegian data.
- These seminars will NOT deal with the collection of data, but will focus on the analysing process of data already collected.
- Lars Walløe has agreed to produce three different analyse protocols prior to the seminar; one for Greenlandic data, one for fin whale and one for minke whale.
- Greenland will supply Lars Walløe with data from 30 – 50 individuals so that he can evaluate how to best analyse and present this data.
- Participants to the seminar must be people with a relevant background (mathematicians, statisticians) so that they will be able to undertake these analyses in the future. It is up to Greenland and Iceland to find these people. In addition members of the Committee may participate.
- The period suggested for both expert group meeting on TTD and the seminar is the first week of November, so that it lies back to back with the annual Scientific Committee meeting.

Iceland emphasised that their primary interest in this seminar is to understand and get a description of the process of how these particular data analysis are carried out.

The Committee welcomed the update and was especially pleased to hear that Walløe will produce written protocols. Documentation is essential to ensure the transfer of knowledge from the present to new generations. The Committee also agreed that for 2016 the next project could be to produce a protocol for data collection.

4. Update on Tajii workshop

Prior to NAMMCO 23 the Japanese representatives to the meeting had asked for a meeting to discuss the plans for a workshop on small cetaceans hunting in Tajii. The Chair and the Secretariat met on Sunday 1 February and prepared a possible programme and a list of budget items that were distributed to all members of the Committee for comments. This was later sent to the Japanese as an input to the meeting, together with the handbook on pilot whaling.

The meeting was held Thursday 5 February after the close of NAMMCO 23. It was attended by Mr Sakamoto and Mr Iino from Japan, The Chair and Charlotte Winsnes from NAMMCO.

Sakamoto expressed appreciation for the programme and budget, and informed that he had forwarded these to Tokyo. Levermann expressed that NAMMCO was pleased to be of help and that we would be happy to continue to do so. It was also emphasised that NAMMCO would not be in a position to contribute economically or personnel wise without a formal request being sent and approved by the NAMMCO Council. It was furthermore advised that Justines Olsen from the Faroe Islands and Egil Ole Øen from Norway would be important experts should such a workshop take place.

The Committee took note of the information.

5. Follow up from NAMMCO 23

Agenda items 3 and 4 above were the two follow up issues from NAMMCO 23.

6. Follow up from the last Committee meeting

At the last meeting the Committee raised the idea of reviving the workshop on handling, processing and utilisation of hunted marine mammals that had been on the agenda in 2009. There was no new information or ideas presented at the meeting.

The Committee agreed to ask the Secretariat to keep this in mind in relation to the project on marine mammals and food security.

7. Next meeting

The next meeting will be a telephone meeting before Easter.

8. Any other business

Iceland informed the meeting that there were discussion internally pertaining to when and how the report of the TTD should be published.

9. Adoption of the report

The report was adopted by correspondence on 13 March 2015.