



NORTH ATLANTIC MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION
TWENTY FOURTH MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

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

DOCUMENT 24 Observer reports from meetings attended

Submitted by: Secretariat

Action required: For information

Background:

NAMMCO holds reciprocal observer status with several IGO's. This document is a compilation of reports from meetings attended in 2015 by members of the Secretariat or representatives of NAMMC member countries on behalf of NAMMCO.

The document also contain the reports from individual conferences, symposiums or meetings attended by the Secretariat in 2015.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Reports from meetings of organisations NAMMCO has reciprocal observer status with

- NAMMCO/24/24-1** IWC 66th Annual Scientific Committee meeting, 22 May – 3 June 2015, San Diego, USA
- NAMMCO/24/24-2** IWC Expert Workshop on Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling, 14-18 September 2015, Maniitsoq, Greenland
- NAMMCO/24/24-3** Arctic Council SCTF, 19-20 August 2015, Copenhagen, Denmark
- NAMMCO/24/24-4** Arctic Council Working Groups (PAME, CAFF, AMAP, ACAP) Board Meeting, September 15-17, 2015, Tromsø, Norway,
- NAMMCO/24/24-5** Arctic Council, CAFF Working Group (MEN), 3-5 November 2015, Pasvik, Norway
- NAMMCO/24/24-6** ASCOBANS Advisory Committee meeting, 29 September – 1 October 2015, The Hague, Netherlands
- NAMMCO/24/24-7** NEAFC, 34th Annual Meeting, 9-13 November 2015, London, UK
- NAMMCO/24/24-8** NAFO, 37th Annual Meeting, 21-25 September 2015, Halifax, Canada – no report submitted.
- NAMMCO/24/24-9** NASCO, 32nd Annual Meeting, 2–5 June 2015, Goose Bay, Canada – no report submitted.

Report from other conferences and meetings attended by the Secretariat

- NAMMCO/24/24-10** Symposium on Ethical Dilemmas, 27-28 August, 2015, Helsinki, Finland
- NAMMCO/24/24-11** Society for Marine Mammalogy (SMM) 21st meeting, 13-18 December 2015, San Francisco, USA

NAMMCO/24/24-1

IWC 66th Scientific Committee meeting, 22 May – 3 June 2015, San Diego, USA

Scientific Secretary Jill Prewitt attended the sub-committees for the Revised Management Procedure (RMP) and Aboriginal Whaling Management Procedure (AWMP) which are of most relevance to the work of the NAMMCO Scientific Committee. These sub-committees were of particular relevance this year since NAMMCO had a Large Whale Assessment Working Group scheduled in October 2015. Much of the work used in the NAMMCO WG was presented in these IWC SC sub-committees. It was beneficial to get a greater understanding of how the assessments are completed in the IWC, and how these procedures may or may not fit with NAMMCO's management goals. Meetings were held with colleagues involved in the planning of the Global Review of Monodontids meeting including Arne Bjørge (IMR, Norway), Robert Suydam (North Slope Borough Alaska, USA) and Randy Reeves (Canada). In general, informal contacts were made with other scientists discussing the work of the NAMMCO Scientific Committee. These discussions are important to keep NAMMCO known and relevant to the scientific community and demonstrate our commitment to the best scientific advice in our management.

Extraordinary meetings and discussions on TNASS were held during this period in response to the news that Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs would fund the project. Solutions to accommodate at this late stage the existing projects to the now funded original proposal were

discussed and an implementation plan securing the scientific goals of NASS was developed, thanks to the flexibility of the scientists in charge of the Greenlandic and Norwegian parts of the survey.

NAMMCO/24/24-2

IWC Expert Workshop on Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling, 14-18 September 2015, Maniitsoq, Greenland

Deputy Secretary Charlotte Winsnes attended the workshop on behalf of NAMMCO. The purpose of the workshop was to provide advice to the IWC on its work on subsistence whaling. The last IWC Commission meeting (through its Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling (ASW) Working Group) had identified a series of long term issues for improving the Commission's management of subsistence whaling and the meeting was asked to specifically address issues surrounding needs statements and the relationship between needs and consumption patterns, including amongst other things, use and extent of monetary transactions.

Invited experts on Indigenous people's rights and international law highlighted progress made on the rights of Indigenous peoples under a variety of bodies including the United Nations, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Convention for Biological Diversity and how these are recognised and implemented at the international level. In addition invited expert in anthropology and economics/statistics were invited to highlight issues of culture, subsistence, economy and nutrition.

Points of interest:

- Indigenous people have substantial rights embedded in customary international law. Notably is the right to self-determination and what is stated as "in no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence". Many IWC member states have signed and ratified declarations and treaties to that extent (UN Charter on Human rights, the UN declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the ILO 169 among others). Denying quotas and insisting on need statements was seen as being in violation of these internationally acknowledged rights.
- Culture and society is not static and fixed in time but change due to external factors like climate, politics, economics and even religion. Just like any other societies, Indigenous people's societies have a right to develop and change. It does not negate their status or rights under international law. Discussing the level of cash and monetary transactions is irrelevant in connection with indigenouness. Having a distribution system that is a 100% cash oriented does not make a group less indigenous.
- All AWS hunts have been described sufficiently already to be considered ASW, and this information can be made available on the IWC webpage. Only major changes should be considered by the IWC. The term 'need statement' should be replaced by the term 'Information (or Description) on the hunt relevant to quota requests' and it should take into account the need for flexibility; the need to avoid any indication of prescription or compulsion; minimising the effort involved and avoiding duplication; and take into account the Indigenous rights.

- In discussions, many voiced that the only manner in which nutritional needs should be considered in IWC is that the Commission reviews and notes the recommendations put forward by the ASW country in question. The argumentation and decision on a certain quota should be made in a dialogue between the hunter communities and the country in which they live. The IWC should only consider the sustainability of the hunt. Also the meeting recommended a policy of “early dialogue and no surprises” for future ASW processes.
- Discussion on how to interpret legal text brought forward the point that in contemporary international law there is little interest in what the founding fathers intention may have been. With reference to the IWC convention text the legal expert stated that the most correct interpretation would be to look at the IWC as it is described through its recent consensus resolutions.

Remarks

The meeting was exceptionally interesting in its inclusion of “the outside of the IWC world” – by placing cultural, subsistence and nutritional issues in the broader world context of internationally recognised Indigenous people’s rights. In adherence to and as a result of these rights most of what has been debated in IWC related to questions of ASW quota becomes uncalled for.

Also noteworthy is the fact that many IWC member states are committed to uphold the rights of Indigenous peoples through ratification and adherence to various international instruments. It will therefore be interesting to observe how this potential conflict/challenge will be dealt with at the next IWC meeting.

There was a strong willingness and motivation to get rid of the « need statement » and several recommendations were agreed to that extent.

The majority of the participants were representing ASW communities or countries and as such shared the same concerns and views. Interestingly when discussing the report and recommendations the Netherlands agreed to consensus but Argentina and the two observers from the Animal Welfare Institute (AWI) could not.

The report from the meeting is available at

file:///C:/Users/gde/Downloads/RS5664_ASW%20Workshop%20Report.pdf

NAMMCO/24/24-3

Arctic Council’s 6th Task Force for Enhancing Scientific Cooperation in the Arctic (SCTF), 19-20 2015 August, Copenhagen, Denmark

General Secretary Geneviève Desportes attended the meeting on behalf of NAMMCO.

Fifty delegates attended the meeting, including representatives from the eight [Arctic Council Member States](#), the [Aleut International Association \(AIA\)](#), the [Saami Council](#), and [Working Group AMAP](#) (Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme). [Observers](#) in attendance included France, Germany, Japan, South Korea, the United Kingdom, the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC), the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO),

the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM) and the University of the Arctic (UArctic). The European Union also attended.

The SCTF works towards an arrangement on improved scientific research cooperation among the eight Arctic States, and among others a legally-binding agreement on scientific cooperation. The sixth meeting of the SCTF focussed on drafting the text of the agreement. Delegations discussed the terms to be used, access to scientific data, infrastructure, and simplification of movement of scientists and their equipment. In addition to the text negotiations, the delegations received statements on scientific cooperation from those Observers that were present at the meeting. The European Union also gave a presentation on the EU's Arctic Research Policy, including its current programs and financial mechanisms.

This meeting was the first AC meeting attended by Desportes as new General Secretary for NAMMCO. Attendance allowed establishing contact with the AC Secretariat, as well as with representatives from Greenland, UArctic, the Canadian Embassy in Oslo and the NCM Senior adviser on Arctic Cooperation and cooperation to the West.

NAMMCO/24/24-4

Arctic Council WGs (PAME, CAFF, AMAP, ACAP) Board Meeting, September 15-17, 2015, Tromsø, Norway,

General Secretary Genevieve Desportes attended two Working Group meetings, PAME (September 15) and CAFF (September 16 and 17) and also the joint meeting of the four WG, PAME, CAFF, AMAP, ACAP (September 16am).

The information brought up to the PAME WG, although interesting was mostly not directly relevant to the present work of NAMMCO, except for the discussions related to Ecosystem-based Approach and Ecosystem-based Approach. One interesting presentation though was on a new arctic initiative, the Arctic Future Initiative (AFI)¹, of which NAMMCO may want to follow the development.

Several agenda points of the CAFF WG were more relevant. Among the interesting points were:

- "Provisional Ideas for Studies of Ice-Associated Marine Mammals", prepared by the US and Norway.
- Discussion on the development towards integrated sets of ecological objectives, which is also going on in EU (MFSD) and OSPAR.
- Discussion on Marine Protected Areas. Both CAFF § PAME² are promoting a network of MPAs throughout the Arctic.
- WWF strategy for the Arctic

Desportes gave a presentation on NAMMCO activities in the Arctic³ at the PAME WG that was well received. The Alaska ICC-chair, J. Stotts thanked NAMMCO for saying so directly that marine mammal were resources, like other marine resources. The US raised the question

¹ <http://www.iiasa.ac.at/web/home/research/arctic-futures.html>

² https://oaarchive.arctic-council.org/bitstream/handle/11374/417/MPA_final_web.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

³ http://www.pame.is/images/05_Protectec_Area/2015/PAME_2/Presentations/AMSA_4.9_-_NAMMCO_Presentation.pdf

about the inclusion of traditional knowledge and local communities in the work of NAMMCO.

Some directly interesting and relevant contacts were made:

UNEP - Takehiro Nakamura, Chef of the Marine and Coastal Ecosystems Unit, Division of Environmental Policy Implementation. Discussion on the Food Security Issue and the fact that marine mammals were usually not considered as resources in UN documents;

OSPAR – Darius Campbell, Executive Secretary. Discussion on reinforcing the cooperation between OSPAR and NAMMCO;

CAFF – Tom Barry, CAFF Executive Secretary & **Tom Christensen**, CBMP Co-Chair. Discussion on increasing cooperation between CAFF and NAMMCO, and the possible participation of NAMMCO in the next meeting of the Marine Mammal Expert Network in Pasvik, NO, Nov 2-6;

NAMMCO/24/24-5

CAFF's Marine Expert Network (MEN) meeting, Pasvik, Norway, November 3-5, 2015

The Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP - www.cbmp.is) is the cornerstone programme of the conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF - www.caff.is), the biodiversity Working Group of the Arctic Council. It is an international network of scientists, governments, Indigenous organizations and conservation groups working to harmonize and integrate efforts to monitor the Arctic's living resources. Its goal is to facilitate more rapid detection, communication, and response to the significant biodiversity-related trends and pressures affecting the circumpolar world. The CBMP organizes its efforts around the major ecosystems of the Arctic, marine, freshwater, terrestrial and coastal. The CBMP has been endorsed by the Arctic Council and the UN Convention on Biological Diversity and the official Arctic Biodiversity Observation Network of the Group on Earth Observations Biodiversity Observation Network (GEO BON).

General Secretary Geneviève Desportes attended the CBMP – Marine annual meeting held in Norway November 3rd – 5th at Svanhovd Conference Center in Pasvik, Finnmark. The focus of the meeting was making progress on the draft of the State of the Arctic Marine Biodiversity Report (SAMBR) developed by the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Programme (CBMP). The report is scheduled to be completed and delivered to an Arctic Council Ministerial meeting in early 2017. The SAMBR is the first primary product from the implementation of the CBMPs Arctic Marine Biodiversity monitoring plan. It will present baselines and (where possible) trends in Arctic marine biodiversity at different trophic levels and by Arctic Marine Areas.

The meeting discussed the state of Arctic sea ice biota, plankton, benthos, fishes, seabirds and marine mammals, and what was driving changes.

At the beginning at the meeting, an organigram of SAMBR was presented, indicating its situation and relation within the AC family and with other input-giving organisations. Surprisingly NAMMCO was not mentioned although the marine mammal stock status and assessments the marine mammal group was referring to for the North Atlantic were carried out in the remit of NAMMCO. This was pointed out resulting in NAMMCO being included

in the organigram. Clearly the relationship between NAMMCO and AC and AC subsidiary bodies, has not been prioritised in the past.

The Marine Mammal Expert Group, with NAMMCO as observer, made progress on the section of the report related to Marine Mammals. Desportes drew attention to the new NAMMCO abundance estimates and updated trends and assessment on different stocks of marine mammals, in particular narwhal, beluga and walrus, referring in particular to the latest reports of the Joint JCNB Working Group.

Some directly interesting and relevant contacts were made:

CBMP - Tom Christensen - co-chair of CBMP. On a more formalised cooperation with / participation of NAMMCO

ICES Secretariat - Sebastian Valanko. On a possible cooperation between NAMMCO BYC-WG and ICES WGBYC.

NAMMCO/24/24-6

**The 22nd ASCOBANS Advisory Committee meeting, 29 September – 1 October 2015,
The Hague, Netherlands**

General Secretary Geneviève Desportes attended the AC 22 meeting, organized as usual in two sessions: a scientific session and an institutional session.

A number of reports were presented and discussed that emanated from various working groups appointed under ASCOBANS. Three of these focused on harbour porpoise conservation at a regional level in the remit of three regional Action Plans covering the Baltic, the Western Baltic, Belt Sea and Kattegat, and North Sea. Other working groups deal more generally with Threats to Small Cetaceans (Bycatch, Underwater Noise, Negative Effects of Vessels and Other Forms of Disturbance, Pollution and its effects, Marine Debris).

The meeting reviewed new information on threats to small cetaceans and considered necessary steps in order to mitigate impacts of human activities on the animals and their habitats. Emerging issues were the impact of Climate Change and the development of Marine Renewable Energy, as well as ways of Managing Cumulative Anthropogenic Impacts on the Marine Environment. AC 22 was the last Advisory Committee Meeting before the 8th Meeting of the Parties (MOP8, Helsinki, Finland, 30 August - 1 September 2016), and the focus was on the decisions to be prepared for consideration and adoption at MOP8. Several topics were agreed upon that drafting groups will now elaborate on: PCBs, underwater unexploded ordnance, managing cumulative impacts on small cetaceans, best practice regarding necropsy and rescue of small cetaceans, and marine renewables. Work would also be carried out in order to update the Recovery Plan for Baltic Harbour Porpoises (Jastarnia Plan), and to advance the development of a Conservation Plan for Common Dolphins. The terms of reference for such a plan were agreed and a Steering Group was established. Two workshops were planned for 2016, one on *Conserving Europe's cetaceans through synergy-building between the relevant legislative frameworks* (joint ECS/ASCOBANS/ACCOBAMS in conjunction with the 2016 European Cetacean Society Conference), and one carrying forward the Agreement's work on management procedures relating to anthropogenic removal of small cetaceans. The Special Species Session at the 23rd Meeting of the Advisory Committee will feature the white-beaked dolphin, a species of interest to NAMMCO.

The North Sea Group – the steering group for the Conservation Plan for the Harbour Porpoise in the North Sea – held its 5th meeting prior to AC 22 on September 28. Conclusions continued to be that monitoring of marine mammal bycatch in the North Sea remains inadequate. Proper data are still lacking for a reliable impact assessment, because of inadequate and insufficient monitoring of the various net fisheries. Better quality data on bycatch rates and fishing effort for net fisheries were required from EU Member Countries before an assessment could be refined and conclusions drawn as to the overall bycatch of harbour porpoise in the North Sea. Focus was on finalising the position of ASCOBANS on the requirements of EU legislation to address monitoring and mitigation of small cetacean bycatch, to be forwarded to the European Commission.

A workshop on Remote Electronic Monitoring with Regards to Bycatch of Small Cetaceans was held on Friday, 2 October.

CMS/ASCOBANS contacted the Faroese Authorities (Executive Secretary of CMS and ASCOBANS, July 27 2015), with a request to provide information on recent hunts, in particular details regarding the species affected by the hunt, how sustainability was assessed, what regulations and management were in place, and how the catches were utilized. The answer from the Faroes (Foreign Service, 29 September 2015) reached the ASCOBANS Secretariat during the AC meeting and was therefore not discussed at the meeting.

Possible future scientific cooperation between ASCOBANS and NAMMCO

The assessment of harbour porpoises is an area where ASCOBANS and NAMMCO may want to cooperate or indeed need to cooperate as, in the present state of knowledge, North Sea harbour porpoises are considered a single stock – therefore a shared stock between one NAMMCO party (Norway) and several ASCOBANS parties (Sweden, Denmark, UK, Germany, Netherlands, Belgium, France). The estimation of life parameters, population health status, impact of anthropogenic disturbances and their mitigation are all areas benefitting of a wider expertise.

Within the framework of ecosystem-based management, it seems relevant for NAMMCO to monitor/support monitoring of the actual impact of persistent organic pollutants on marine top predators, to inform conservation management.

The development of a Conservation Plan for Common Dolphins may also be an area where the input of NAMMCO could be of interest to ASCOBANS, especially when the distribution of species seems to have extended further North.

NAMMCO/24/24-7

NEAFC 34th Annual Meeting, 9-13 November 2015, London, UK

Report of the NAMMCO Observer (Norway) to the 2015 Annual Meeting the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC).

The 34th annual meeting of NEAFC was held in London from 9 to 13 November 2015.

At the annual meeting, conservation and management measures were adopted for a number of fish stocks for 2016. These include redfish in the Irminger Sea, Rockall haddock, orange roughy and several stocks of grenadiers. Conservation and management measures for the

three main pelagic fish stocks, blue whiting, herring and mackerel, will be set through a postal procedure as soon as the coastal states have reached a conclusion in their consultations that will continue later this year.

The protection of VMEs, continues to be an important issue for NEAFC. NEAFC has already closed bottom fisheries in all areas where VMEs are known to occur or are considered likely to occur according to scientific advice. NEAFC is now focusing on measures to ensure that bottom fishing only takes place in the areas where it is authorized. This forms a part of NEAFC's extensive control system, which includes receiving information on an hourly basis detailing the exact location, speed and heading of all vessels in the high seas of the North-East Atlantic.

NEAFC continues to place great emphasis on action against IUU fishing. In this context, a number of different measures have been implemented, including NEAFC's system of port control, which was expanded earlier this year to include landings of all fish products and to ensure that the system, which is operated electronically, is fully aligned with the FAO Port State Measures Agreement.

In 2006, NEAFC was the first RFMO to carry out a performance review. Last year, NEAFC a second review was carried out. An extraordinary meeting of NEAFC was held earlier this year to decide on the follow up to the recommendations made by the review panel, and this year's annual meeting finalized some issues that were discussed at the extraordinary meeting. These included adopting the terms of reference for two working groups; one on a framework for coastal State negotiations and the other on allocation criteria. Both groups will have their first meeting already in February 2016.

The cooperating non-Contracting Party status of the Bahamas, Canada, Liberia, New Zealand and St Kitts and Nevis was renewed for the year 2016. These states cooperate with NEAFC and, in some cases, deploy vessels for transshipment operations in the NEAFC Regulatory Area.

The next annual meeting will take place in London 14-18 November 2016.

NAMMCO/24/24-8

NAFO, 37th Annual Meeting, 21-25 September 2015, Halifax, Canada – no report submitted at the time of releasing the document. Iceland observed on behalf of NAMMCO.

NAMMCO/24/24-9

NASCO, 33rd Annual Meeting, 7–10 June, Germany – no report submitted at the time of releasing the document. Faroe Islands observed on behalf of NAMMCO:

NAMMCO/24/24-10

Symposium on Ethical Dilemmas of Consuming Animals, Helsinki, 27-28 August 2015

General Secretary Geneviève Desportes attended the symposium. The talks spanned from the theoretical and historical background behind animal ethics to the legislation and

philosophical aspects of animal rights, livestock and climate change and the ethics of the meat paradox (loving animals but eating them).

A presentation challenged the fact that in Christian culture, that animals should be viewed purely as human resources, and referring e.g. to Christian traditions where animals as perceived as equal to humans (e.g. St Francis celebration of animals as brothers and sisters.).

Henry Alexander Henrysson, Iceland, who made a presentation at NAMMCO 23 on “The hunting of marine mammals – conflicts, consensus and a moral code” presented a similar talk here under the title “Whale Meat Again? How consumption of non-endangered species gives rise to an ethical dilemma”. The talk was adorned with the story of the Council singing “Whale meat again” at the dinner, seen as a sign of thoughtlessness of the delegates: “Thus, I was a little surprised when the delegates started to sing during the dinner new lyrics to the celebrated song of Dame Vera Lynn *We’ll Meet Again*. “Whale Meat Again, don’t know where, don’t know when” echoed across the plush dining room of the hotel with further references to the consumption of these non-endangered animals of the North Atlantic. My astonishment was not the result of the surprising quality of the singing or the witticism of parts of the lyrics but rather how light-heartedly delegates approached these issues, which, for many people, give rise to serious moral anguish which sometimes results in them devoting all their private resources in fighting for moratoria on the hunting of marine mammals.”

Many of the talks can be retrieved from <http://ncbio.org/english/2015/05/ethical-dilemmas-of-consuming-animals/>

Remarks / Conclusion

The symposium was dealing with the ethical of consuming meat, on the welfare of animals in households, on the consequence of eating wild stocks for the environment. It did not deal with the ethics of hunting or consuming wildlife and was therefore of limited interest in the framework of NAMMCO.

NAMMCO/24/24-11

21st Biennial conference of the Society for Marine Mammalogy, 13-18 December 2015, San Francisco, USA

Jill Prewitt attended the conference. The conference consisted of 5 days of oral and poster presentations and plenary talks. Among many themed sessions, this year’s conference had sessions that were specifically focused on climate change, which were directly relevant to NAMMCO. These included multiple presentations on Arctic species and highlighted the rapid changes in the Arctic that are already affecting these species.

NAMMCO rented exhibitor space (e.g. a booth) where we had display copies of the NAMMCO Scientific Publications volumes, and also provided an informational brochure. The banner was also displayed. The booth was staffed during all breaks, and gave us an important opportunity to talk with people who did not know about NAMMCO. It also was a good opportunity for colleagues to easily find NAMMCO to discuss future work. For example, Prewitt was able to meet with Jack Lawson from Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Phil Hammond from the University of St Andrews (UK) and discussed a possible future joint meeting to discuss surveys in the North Atlantic after the completion of their surveys in 2016.

Prewitt also met with members of the organizing committee of the Global Review of Monodontids meeting including Randy Reeves (Canada), Steve Ferguson (Canada), Olga Shpak (Russia) and Rikke Hansen (Greenland), and other people relevant to the meeting including Marianne Marcoux (Canada) and Dmitri Glazov (Russia). This was a good opportunity to meet face to face with this group and continue to discuss some of the key issues with planning this meeting, and discuss the next steps in planning.

Prewitt also attended a full day workshop on 12 December on the impacts of icebreakers on ice-dependent pinnipeds.