

## FAROE ISLANDS PROGRESS REPORT ON MARINE MAMMALS 2013

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### I. INTRODUCTION

This report summarises research on cetaceans and pinnipeds conducted in the Faroe Islands in 2013. Research has been conducted by the Museum of Natural History, the Environment Agency and the Veterinary Service.

### II. RESEARCH BY SPECIES 2013

#### II.a Species/Strucks studied

- Walrus (*Odobenus rosmarus*) – tagged animal
- Grey seal (*Halobuena grypus*) – hunting statistics
- Pilot whale (*Globicephala medius*) – landed animals
- Sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*) – stranded animals

#### II.b Field work

In 2013, a total of 270 "full samples" were collected from **pilot whales** by the Natural History Museum, from 10 drives - Viðvík on 21 July (34 samples), Fuglaljarhóli on 30 July (25), Sandvígar on 8 August (20), Laysur on 11 August (21), Hilsavík on 17 August (20), Hvalvík on 27 August (51), Sandvígar on 6 September (20), Hvalvík on 22 September (20), Sandvígar on 10 October (21) and Hvannasund on 1 November (18). This is a continuation of a small-scale sampling programme. The future plan is to complement this with a comprehensive monitoring programme, one priority being age determination of all individuals. "Full sample" refers to recording/sampling total length, weight (if possible), sex, teeth, ovaries/testes and stomach as well as muscle, blubber, kidney and liver tissues. Forcuses are sampled when present.

The Environment Agency took samples of 25 **pilot whales** from the Fuglaljarhóli 30 July 2013 drive. The sampling included samples of muscle and blubber from 23 individuals, kidney from 21 and liver from 19. From a subsample of 12 animals, a liver sample was placed in liquid nitrogen for additional analysis. Also teeth from the lower jaw were extracted (by sawing off the outer section) from a number of individuals from this grid for age determination. At the drive held in Sandvígar 8 August 2013, samples of muscle and blubber were taken from 24 whales; liver and kidney and samples were taken from 23 and 21 individuals respectively.

At the grid in Sandvígar 10 October 2013, the sampling was focused on two organs solely: the eye and the ear. Samples (tissue samples as above in addition to what was supposed to be the thyroid gland) were taken from one adult female (280-cm long) only, and the head was taken to the Environment Agency in Tórshavn for dissection of the ear. The eye was samples on the request of a Canadian scientist who wanted to study the retina, and the ear was sampled in