



IN MEMORIAM: GÍSLI ARNÓR VÍKINGSSON

On 18 July, the Scientific Committee of NAMMCO unexpectedly and very sadly lost a valued long-term member, Gísli Arnór Víkingsson, Head of Cetacean Research at the Marine and Freshwater Research Institute of Iceland. Gísli was an outstanding and internationally respected whale expert, a dearly loved member of the Committee and the wider NAMMCO network, but above all a fantastic, funny, musical, supportive, kind, and gentle human being and friend, who is already deeply missed.

Gísli, who held a cand.scient. degree in behavioural ecology from the University of Copenhagen, started working with whale research in Iceland in 1986 at the then Marine Research Institute and continued until today, working both with large whales and smaller cetacean species. His research spans widely, encompassing reproduction, growth, feeding and consumption, but also distribution, movements, and abundance, as well as by-catch.



Gísli joined the Scientific Committee of NAMMCO at its first ever meeting in January 1993. After Jóhann Sigurjónsson, he became the head of the Icelandic Scientific Delegation to NAMMCO in 1999 and chaired the Scientific Committee in 2001–2003. Gísli was an important contributor to the work of the Scientific Committee and its working groups. Always calm and polite, affirming his points with conviction, but ever respectful and attentive to others' opinions.

Gísli brought to the Committee his particular interest in the effects of climate and environmental changes on whale distribution and ecology. In 2016, Gísli received a doctorate from the Department of Marine Biology at the University of Tromsø in Norway. The research presented in his thesis indeed looked at *“Decadal changes in distribution, abundance and feeding ecology of baleen whales in Icelandic and adjacent waters. A consequence of climate change?”* Gísli's research indicated that effects of warming on cetacean distribution and abundance were already evident in Icelandic and adjacent waters. It stressed that continued monitoring of the distribution and abundance of cetaceans, as well as further studies into their feeding ecology, were essential for a better understanding of the recent and ongoing changes.



With his wonderful sense of humor and self-irony, Gísli was one of the entertainers of the Committee, never hesitating to charm with a concert if by chance he encountered a piano. Gísli was a great fan of the Rolling Stones, a passion that he shared with some other members of the Committee. Committee members and other NAMMCO colleagues frequently enjoyed the warm hospitality of Gísli and his wife Gunna, and the memorable dinners and parties they arranged in their house or summer house, when meetings were held in Iceland.



The Scientific Committee has lost a valued and long-term member, but most of all has lost a very dear friend. Despite his health problems, Gísli remained a pillar, calm and solid and there for all. We will sorely miss the uniquely kind, funny, artistic, and generous person that he was.

The entire NAMMCO community has been privileged to have had Gísli among us. We will remember him warmly for who he was and how much he gave us, both professionally and personally. We send our deepest sympathies to his family, colleagues and friends.



Thank you to all of those who shared their memories and photos.

Small photos legend from top left to bottom right

Gísli (right) with colleagues (Jóhann, Thorvaldur, Atli, Dalli) at the MRI lab in 1986

Gísli (left) at the Icelandic whaling station in the early days

Gísli tagging whales during NASS-2001

Gísli sampling minke whales in 2003

Gísli and his beloved Gunna after his doctor defense at the University in Tromsø in 2016

Gísli during the T-NASS 2007 cetacean survey

Gísli's "serious" face

One of Gísli's many funny faces

Gísli and fellow SC member and Rolling Stones fan, Tore Haug