



NAMMCO ANNUAL MEETING 30

29-30 March 2023

Rødbanken, Tromsø

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

DOCUMENT 16	UPDATE ON THE NORTH ATLANTIC SURVEY OF SELECTED CETACEANS NASS-2024 AND FUNDING
Submitted by	Secretariat
Action requested	To take note
Background/content	<p>This document contains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Updates from the NASS-2024 Scientific Planning Committee (SpC) regarding surveys planning and funding. - An answer from the SpC to a request from Council to investigate the feasibility of including fish surveys as observation platforms.

1. THE NORTH ATLANTIC SURVEY OF SELECTED CETACEANS (NASS-2024).

The North Atlantic Sightings Surveys series (NASS, 1987-2015) provides 30-year trends in distribution and abundance for cetaceans in areas within the remit of NAMMCO management, the waters of Norway, Iceland, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands. These trends are required to understand anthropogenic impacts, which is essential for conservation and management in times of climate and environmental changes. The planned 2024 sightings survey will prolong and update this unique series and will be key to the development of sound and solid scientific and ecosystem-based management advice by NAMMCO.

For the NASS2024 survey a large-scale coherent area will be covered to ensure the detection of major shifts in the abundance and distribution of cetaceans, which could result in abundance decline such as the ones observed off West Greenland in 2015 or in Icelandic Coastal waters in 2007. The primary areas of focus for the 2024 survey cover all together about 5,000,000 km² (Figure 1).

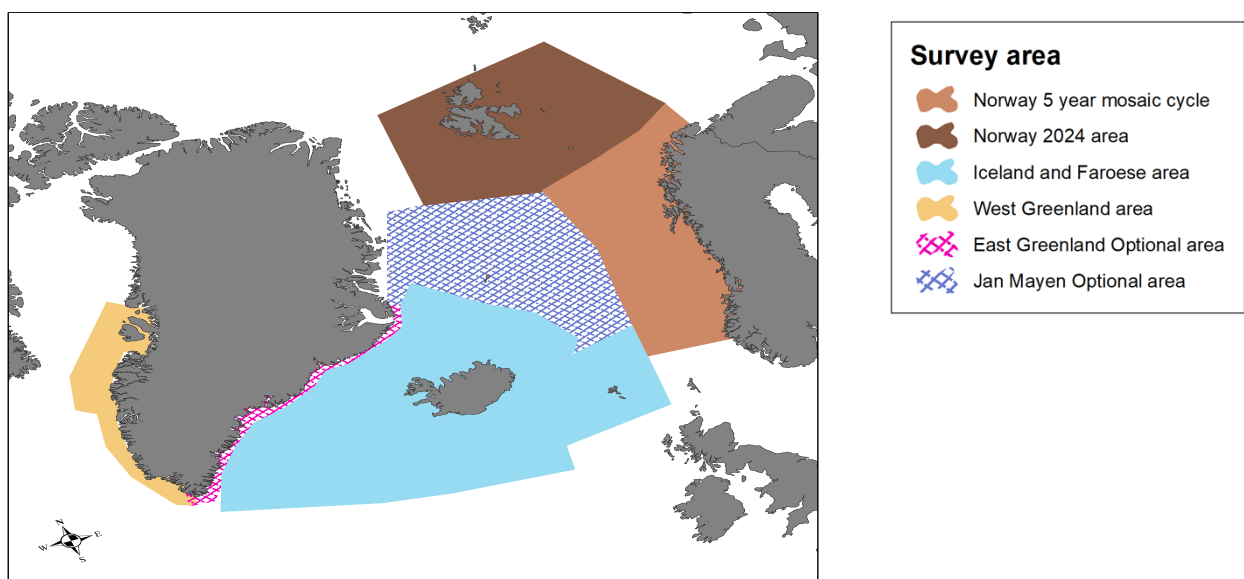


Figure 1. Extension of the proposed NASS 2024 and associated surveys. The size of the areas is estimated to be 726,044 km² for the Jan Mayen area, 1,911,354 km² for the Iceland and the Faroe Island area, 934,722 km² for the Norwegian mosaic cycle area, 936,437 km² for the Norway area (Svalbard), 225,285 km² for the West Greenland area and 233,659 km² for the East Greenland area.

2. UPDATES FROM THE NASS-2024 SCIENTIFIC PLANNING COMMITTEE (SPC)

2.1 MEETINGS OF THE SPC

Since last Council meeting (September 2022), the NASS-2024 SpC has held two planning meetings, one in November 2022 and another in January 2023, with two more meetings scheduled for 2023 (see table 1 below). During the meeting in November 2022, the spatial coverage of the NASS-2024 survey was discussed and plans from the member countries to cover all areas indicated in the proposal (Figure 1) were confirmed.

At the meeting held in January 2023, the SpC decided to collate an equipment review for advancement in ship survey methodology and equipment from other international survey groups (e.g. European, American and Canadian) that had conducted ship-based surveys since the last NASS survey in 2015. The SpC agreed this will require support from a contracted external expert (see below and 2.2).

The SpC also planned, after the 2024 survey is completed and data analysed, to investigate the possibilities of conducting a regional distribution trend analysis of cetaceans, to investigate possible shifts in distribution during the whole 37-year period covered by the NASS series of surveys. The SpC

will also investigate possibilities for proposing this topic for a Master student project or possibly a PhD student research project in the framework of a larger project.

The SpC will have an online meeting in spring 2023, with external participation (Daniel Pike, Phil Hammond), to discuss survey design and analysis and to review any improvements in either observer protocol or survey equipment since TNASS 2015. An in-person meeting of the SpC with Daniel Pike as external expert is scheduled for Autumn 2023 (tentatively during November) to finalize survey design, coverage and transects, and allocate the tasks for the NAMMCO sub- projects and survey in the extended areas.

Table 1: SpC meetings held since Council 29 and planned for 2023.

SpC meeting (Date)	Format	Main agenda item(s)
24-11-2022	Online	Spatial coverage
25-01-2023	In person (during the SC meeting)	Fish surveys as observation platforms, aid from external expert for survey design
Spring 2023 (<i>planned</i>)	Online	Equipment review, extended areas survey design
Autumn 2023 (<i>planned</i>)	In person	Final survey design

2.2 FUNDING AND BUDGET

The proposal for NASS-2024 with details on budget costs as requested by Council 28, was presented to the 29th council meeting in September 2022. Council had no further enquiries and noted that of the 9,810,000 NOK requested to conduct the subprojects outside the national monitoring schemes, NAMMCO would fund 580,000 NOK (see table 2).

In June 2022, the Secretariat applied on behalf of the SpC for the remaining amount of funding (9,230,000 NOK of cost, plus 550,000 NOK of overheads, in total NOK 9,780,000) to the Norwegian Arktis 2030 call of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Norway indicated at the Council 29 meeting that the application had been successful and that the requested funding would be granted to NAMMCO. The SpC agreed this would enable NASS 2024 to move ahead as planned in the initial proposal.

Table 2: Overview of budget for the NAMMCO part of NASS 2024 (excluding salaries of scientists and NAMMCO Secretariat staff). The amount supported by NAMMCO is underlined.

Year	Activities within NAMMCO	Costs NOK
2023	Meetings & co-ordination	<u>100 000</u>
2024	Meetings & co-ordination	<u>150 000</u>
	East Greenland coastal area	1 700 000
	Jan Mayen area	5 000 000
	Increased Faroe Island area	500 000
	Satellite tagging	1 500 000
2025	Abundance estimation of non-target species	400 000
	Co-ordination, meetings & review of results	<u>180 000</u>
2026	Publication of results	80 000
	Co-ordination, meetings & review of results	<u>150 000</u>
	Publication of results	50 000
Total 2023 - 2026		9 810 000
Of which NAMMCO supports		<u>580 000</u>

At its last meeting (January 2023), the SpC proposed to hire Daniel Pike (Canada) as external expert for a total of 2 months to conduct an equipment review (1 month of salary) and to develop an optimal design of the NASS-2024 survey (1 month of salary) by reviewing pros and cons of past NASS surveys and best practices for surveying the extended areas. The 2 months of salary and travel costs to the SpC meeting in the autumn would be covered with the 100,000 NOK budgeted for in 2023 and supported for by NAMMCO (table 2).

As of January 2023, all countries but Greenland have confirmed funding for their entire contributions to NASS-2024 (see Table 3).

Table 3: Overview of survey expenses covered by National institutions for NASS 2024.

Country	Contribution	Costs (million NOK)	Confirmed (as of January 2023)
Greenland	Survey platform (one aircraft and crew)	4.0	NO
Greenland	Preparation, analysis and presentation in subsequent years	1.0	NO
Iceland	Survey platform (two ships, one aircraft, and crews)	8.0	YES
Iceland	Preparation, analysis and presentation in subsequent years	2.0	YES
Norway	Survey platform (one vessel and crew)	8.0	YES
Norway	Preparation, analysis and presentation in subsequent years	2.0	YES
Faroe Islands	Survey platform (one vessel and crew)	2.0	YES
Faroe Islands	Preparation, analysis and presentation in subsequent years	0.5	YES
Total		27.5 mill	

3. FEASIBILITY OF INCLUDING NATIONAL FISH SURVEYS AS OBSERVATION PLATFORMS.

Council 28 had requested the NASS SpC to investigate the feasibility of including national fish surveys as observation platforms.

At its last planning meeting (January 2023), the SpC indicated that the Icelandic mackerel survey with additional effort allocated will be used as one of the Icelandic platform for NASS 2024, while the area south of Iceland will be covered by a dedicated vessel. The possibility of using a mackerel survey in July 2024 in the Norwegian Sea is also being investigated. The capelin survey off East Greenland in fall 2024 could be used to cover the area between East Greenland and Iceland. In the Faroes, the possibility of using the mackerel summer survey as observer platform will be investigated.