



## NAMMCO ANNUAL MEETING 30

29-30 March 2023

Rødbanken, Tromsø

## MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>DOCUMENT 17</b>        | <b>NAMMCO FOOD CONFERENCE AND GASTRONOMIC SHOWCASE</b>  |
| <b>Submitted by</b>       | Secretariat   |
| <b>Action requested</b>   | To note the report.   |
| <b>Background/content</b> | In 2021 at Council 28, the Faroe Islands presented a proposal for a NAMMCO conference on marine mammals as food resources and offered to host such a conference. Council agreed to the proposal and allocated NOK 120,000 to this activity. |

The NAMMCO conference and showcase “**Marine mammals – A sustainable Food Resources**” was hosted by the Faroe Islands and held in Tórshavn on 5-6 October 2022.

The event aimed to highlight and stimulate discussion on the role marine mammals can play in ensuring sustainable and resilient food systems capable of generating livelihoods for local communities. The focus was on **food for the future** with an emphasis on attracting young people. This was in recognition that generations have different concerns and ways of seeing life and the world, and young people are the ones that will be “living” and experiencing the future.

The event included:

- **1 ½ day conference structured around the themes:**
  - Introduction:  
An overview of the key challenges in ensuring food security for a growing global population. It addressed the use of wildlife in supporting food security and livelihoods, with a special focus on marine mammals.  
Keynote from Manuel Barange at FAO
  - Sustainability and climate:  
Explored the environmental, social, cultural and economic aspects of ensuring the sustainable use of marine mammals, and how whaling and sealing can contribute to reducing the carbon footprint in food production.
  - Nutrition and food safety:  
Nutritional benefits and potential risks of consuming marine mammal products.
  - From the sea to the plate:  
How professional users view marine mammals as a food resource in different corners of the world.
  - Food for the future:  
Addressed perspectives for the future development of marine mammals as a sustainable food source. Young hunters shared their views on hunting.
- **A cultural evening screening** the documentary “*Ice, Seals and Men*” (2013) by Shane Mahoney on the history and conservation of the Newfoundland harp seal hunt and “*Behind the Cove*” by Keiko Yagi aiming at presenting a comprehensive picture of the dolphin and whale hunting issues in Japan, which includes interviews of people on both sides of the whaling dispute in response to the film THE COVE.
- **Gastronomic workshop and showcase – Food Court**
- International chefs from the Faroes, Greenland, Iceland, Norway, Canada and Japan showcased how marine mammals are used in different food cultures. A 2-day workshop prepared a variety of whale and seal dishes served at the Food Court the last evening. The food displayed the potential for more innovative use of marine mammals in modern gastronomy.
- **Excursion to Klaksvík**  
Presentations from a whaler from Taiji, Japan and on the slaughter customs in the Faroes and Japan were given, and cultural performances were displayed.

The objectives of the event had been formulated as:

- Engage a range of stakeholders from the Nordic countries and beyond in a conversation about the value and potential of marine mammals as sustainable modern food resources.
- Highlight how the inclusion of marine mammals in food systems can support and accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Demonstrate how using marine mammals as food resources can strengthen local communities by delivering not only proteins but also socio-cultural and economic benefits within the context of a bio-based economy.

Some of the main messages from the Conference included:

- With a growing world population in a time of climate crisis and geopolitical instability, marine mammals remain a staple and environmentally friendly food source for many, making an important contribution to global food security and nutrition.
- Marine mammals continue to have essential economic, social and cultural importance as renewable resources for many societies around the world, a reality that is becoming better recognised in international discussions.
- Younger generations are showing a growing interest in marine mammals as food, with an emphasis on choosing climate-friendly resources and preserving local food heritage for the future.

The project initiated a network of stakeholders across generations and countries with a strong participation by people from the Nordic countries. To meet and discuss over several days encourages friendship and networking. Among the chefs, the exchange of recipes and best ways of handling and processing the meat were highly commended. Students from the food colleges in Greenland and the Faroe Islands were fully participating to the gastronomic workshop that prepared all the food for the Food court. The venue was an invaluable opportunity for the students to learn from the master and has been reported as highly appreciated.

The event gathered some 175 participants from a range of backgrounds, including hunters and academics, chefs and policy makers, scientists and media in Canada, Denmark, the Faroe Islands, France, Germany, Greenland, Iceland, Japan, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, and USA.

Funding was received from the Nordic Council of Ministers and Norges Råfisklag in addition to funding from the Faroe Islands, Greenland the municipality of Tórshavn.

More information on presenters, chefs and the programme can be accessed on the NAMMCO [website](#).