

NAMMCO



30 Years: 1992 - 2022

29th MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

13–15 September 2022

Hotel Grand, Oslo, Norway (Hybrid format)

COUNCIL REPORT

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1. OPENING PROCEDURES

1.1 WELCOME ADDRESS

The Chair of the Council, Petter Meier (Norway), welcomed all the participants and invited guests ([NAMMCO/29/01](#), Appendix 1: List of participants) to the 29th meeting of the Council of NAMMCO. He informed that Ole-David Stenseth (Norway), the present Chair, was still recovering from illness and could not participate to the meeting.

The Chair noted that the Annual Meeting naturally was coloured by the dramatic geopolitical situation in Europe. For the first time since 1945, there is a full scale war on the European continent. The direct consequences to this meeting were that Russia was not welcomed at the table.

The Chair emphasized the need for NAMMCO to focus on the principle of sustainability. It was of utmost importance to continue to lean on the best scientific advice in management of marine mammals. NAMMCO needed as precise knowledge as possible on the abundance of whales to be able to give ample advice on how to manage the stocks, and even more so when focussing on the different stocks that are exploited by the NAMMCO members. Exact knowledge on the stocks were needed to be able to identify and understand their position within the ecosystems, including how they are interacting with the fish stocks.

The Chair also underlined that NAMMCO must continue to focus its work on animal welfare to make sure that the highest standards possible were laid as a basis when euthanising marine mammals.

1.2 ADMISSION OF OBSERVERS

On behalf of the Council, the Chair welcomed and thanked the observers ([NAMMCO/29/01](#), Appendix 1: List of participants), from Canada, Denmark, Japan, the United States, the Makivik Corporation, Nunavut Nunavik Inc., the International Whaling Commission (IWC), the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (NAFO), the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC), the Seals and Sealing Network (Canada), the World Conservation Trust (IWMC). He welcomed the first physical attendance of the USA to a NAMMCO annual meeting.

Apologies were received from the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, Northeast Atlantic, Irish and North Seas (ASCOBANS), the European Commission – DG Env., Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) Greenland, the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) and the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation (NASCO).

1.3 OPENING STATEMENTS

The General Secretary, Geneviève Desportes, opened the agenda item, in remembrance of Gísli A. Víkingsson. Víkingsson, head of Cetacean Research at the Marine and Freshwater Research Institute of Iceland, unexpectedly passed away in July. He had been a member of the NAMMCO Scientific Committee since its first meeting, in January 1993, and had been part of the Icelandic delegation to the NAMMCO Council meetings since 1997. He was an important contributor to the work of the Scientific Committee, bringing to the Committee his particular interest in the effects of climate and environmental changes on whale distribution and ecology. Víkingsson was a dearly beloved member of the Scientific Committee and the wider NAMMCO network.

NAMMCO will remember him warmly for who he was and how much he gave the community, both professionally and personally. A minute of silence was shared in his memory.

The Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland, and Norway as well as Canada, Japan, the USA, and the IWC and the IWMC provided opening statements (Appendix 4: Opening statements).

1.4 ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The agenda ([NAMMCO/29/02](#), Appendix 2: Agenda) was adopted without amendments. Supporting documents to the meeting ([NAMMCO/29/03](#)) are listed in Appendix 3: List of documents. All documents can be found under [Council Meetings](#) on the NAMMCO website.

1.5 MEETING ARRANGEMENTS

The General Secretary joined in welcoming all the participants to this meeting held in a hybrid format with both in-person participants and online participants. She presented the meeting arrangements and practicalities. She pointed the participants to the meeting's schedule uploaded on the meeting site and informed about the social events hosted by Norway, which included an icebreaker and a sailing tour in the Oslo Fjord on the veteran ship SY Johanne Marie including a dinner.

She also reminded participants that the Secretariat staff, supported by the technical team, were available during the meeting should anyone require assistance.

1.6 INVITED SPEAKER PRESENTATION

The Chair noted that NAMMCO had recently signed (August 2022) a MOU of cooperation with the Norwegian Centre for the Law of the Sea (NCLOS, UiT, Tromsø). In view of the MOU, Prof Vito De Lucia from NCLOS had been asked to give a talk about ocean governance and the coming international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ).

In his talk, "An overview of the potential implications of the future BBNJ Treaty for existing instruments, bodies and institutions – The case of NAMMCO", Prof De Lucia noted that NAMMCO, is *prima facie* one of the relevant organizations referred to in the BBNJ agreement - even if NAMMCO does not have competence to adopt regulatory measures, as the BBNJ Treaty may impact NAMMCO's mandate.

The Chair thanked De Lucia for his presentation.

2. NATIONAL & ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORTS

Member Countries submitted their National Progress Reports (NPR) for 2021 in accordance with the deadline of 1 February ([NAMMCO/29/NPR/FO-2021](#), [NAMMCO/29/NPR/GL-2021](#), [NAMMCO/29/NPR/IS-2021](#), [NAMMCO/29/NPR/NO-2021](#), and [NPR on NAMMCO website](#)).

NPRs for 2021 had also been received from Canada, Japan and Russia, and an Annual Progress Report had been received from Makivik Corporation. The Chair thanked the different delegations for their input.

No specific remarks or clarification to the reports were brought forward.

3. FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

3.1 REPORT OF THE FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE (FAC)

The newly appointed Chair of the Finance and Administration Committee, Jón Th. Stefánsson (Iceland), presented the activities of the Committee since the last Council meeting in March 2021 ([NAMMCO/29/04](#)).

The focus of the Committee has been the financing of the MINTAG project and NASS 2024, progressing with the review and update of the Staff Rules (last modified May 2016), as well as reviewing the proposal for Financial Rules prepared by the Secretariat. In addition, the Committee has reviewed/monitored expenses and accounts and reviewed draft and forecast budgets for coming years.

Following a Council 28 recommendation, the FAC also continued its discussion with the Secretariat regarding workload and priorities.

The revision and update of the Staff Rules had been finalised in a two-step process. The Staff Rules represents an essential element in guiding the work of the Secretariat. Considering their long overdue completion, the FAC agreed that completed steps should be adopted in restricted Council meetings intersessional by the Heads of Delegation (HoD). The first part of the revision was adopted on 20 April 2022 and the second on 17 June 2022. The [revised Staff Rules \(NAMMCO/29/FI04\)](#) are available on the NAMMCO website under Calendar & Library / Agreements and Governing Documents.

The FAC made the following recommendations to the Council:

FAC recommends that Council 29

- Be conscious of the implications of its proposed priorities; the focus should be on core issues for the organisation.

Administrative issues

- Task the FAC to prioritise discussing the Secretariat staffing and work priorities
- Adopt the draft financial rules

Financial issues

- Approve the 2021 audited accounts
- Adopt the 2023 draft budget
- Approve the 2024 forecast budget
- Task the FAC to secure financing for the NAMMCO part of the NASS 2024, if the application to the NO MFA NO is not successful
- Underline that the necessity for physical meetings contra online meetings always be carefully weighed by committees and subsidiary bodies, both from a financial and an environmental perspective

Super-Tag project:

The FAC recommends that the Council reiterates the importance of the MINTAG project, as a flag project for both NAMMCO and Japan, and by the same token the importance of the MINTAG partners fulfilling their commitments regarding funding of direct cost and in-kind contributions.

COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

The Chair thanked Stefánsson for his presentation and Ásta Einarsdóttir (Iceland), the outgoing chair, for her able chairing of the Committee for the last year.

The Council noted the report and **endorsed** all the recommendations of the FAC. Council furthermore tasked the Committee, in the light of the coming changing in personnel at the Secretariat, to prioritise discussing the structure of the Secretariat including the expertise and capacity needed to best fulfil the priorities and core work of the Commission.

3.2 AUDITED ACCOUNTS 2021

The Deputy Secretary, Charlotte Winsnes presented the audited accounts 2021 ([NAMMCO/29/05](#) and Appendix 5: Audited accounts 2021).

The audited accounts for 2021 closed with a surplus of NOK 642,331 as compared to NOK 248,138 foreseen in the budget adopted by the Council at NAMMCO 28. The general reserve increased to NOK 1,824,543 compared to the budgeted NOK 1,430,350. The discrepancy continues to be explained by COVID-19 with several online meetings and less travelling.

COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

The 2021 accounts were **approved** by the Council.

3.3 EXPECTED ACCOUNT 2022, DRAFT BUDGET 2023 AND FORECAST BUDGET 2024

3.3.1 Expected accounts 2022

Winsnes introduced the expected account 2022 ([NAMMCO/29/06](#) and Appendix 6: Expected accounts 2022, budget 2023, forecast budget 2024).

The expected accounts for 2022 close with a deficit of NOK 216,190 instead of the deficit of NOK 766,440 foreseen in the budget adopted by the Council at NAMMCO 28. The general reserve increases to NOK 1,824,543 compared to the budgeted NOK 1,430,350.

Some costs will exceed the budget allocation because of unexpected expenses (staff recruitment, communication and outreach) or delay in activities in 2021 with delay of payment to 2022 (training video). However, a positive discrepancy with the budget will remain, partly still explained by COVID-19, with a larger general reserve in 2021, several online meetings and less travelling also in 2022, and the postponement of the 2022 observation activities to 2023 due to the uncertainty linked to the pandemic.

3.3.2 Draft budget 2023 and forecast budget 2024

Stefánsson introduced the draft 2023 budget and the forecast 2024 budget ([NAMMCO/29/06](#) and Appendix 6: Expected accounts 2022, budget 2023, forecast budget 2024). He noted the exceptional world situation and underlined that all member countries are and will be impacted, as will NAMMCO. It was therefore important to take pre-emptive steps such as reducing expenses in 2023 and 2024. Subsidiary bodies were also encouraged to meet online to reduce costs.

The FAC recommended that the Scientific Committee only held a maximum of four face-to-face WG meetings a year (see also agenda item 4.2), and that no funding be allocated to supplementary meetings.

The draft 2023 budget included originally an allocation of NOK 431,000 for observation activities (see item 7.3) and the Committee for Inspection and Observation asked for a surplus of NOK 69,000 to accommodate the expenses related to the focus chosen for the 2023 observation activities (COVID-postponed from 2022). However, the FAC recommended that the allocation to the observation activities be reduced to NOK 300,000 (see also under agenda item 7.2).

The final 2023 draft budget recommended by FAC closes with a deficit of NOK 980,388 and a Total Reserve of 612,965. The forecast budget 2024 closes with a deficit of NOK 247,791 and a Total Reserve of 365,174.

COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

The Chair of the Inspection and Observation Committee (CIO) noted the drastic reduction in the budget for the 2023 observation activities and alerted that this reduction may negatively impact the chance of achieving the goal set for the 2023 activities.

The Chair of the FAC asked the CIO to report back if the Committee considered that the decrease in funding highly reduced the probability of conducting meaningful observation activities for narwhal, beluga, and walrus in West-Greenland.

The Council **adopted** the draft 2023 budget and **approved** the forecast 2024 budget (Appendix 6: Expected accounts 2022, budget 2023, forecast budget 2024).

The Council **agreed** that the necessity for holding physical meeting should be considered at all levels of the Commission, both from a financial and an environmental perspective.

3.4 ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT 2021

The General Secretary introduced the Administrative Report ([NAMMCO/29/07](#)), which represented an overview of the Commission's (Council, subsidiary bodies, Secretariat) activities of the past year.

NAMMCO was still impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, with several meetings held online, although this was also a gain of time and money. A negative impact was the postponement of the 2022 observation activities to 2023 because of the uncertainty linked to travelling at the beginning of the year. A major advancement in terms of administrative issues were the completion of the review of the Staff Rules. A major achievement was the agreement around the MINTAG project and the launching of the project (see under item 5).

Besides supporting the committees' work and meetings, the Secretariat committed extra efforts to the development of an agreement on the MINTAG project, both within NAMMCO and with Japan. The Secretariat had also devoted time and effort in outreach and dissemination activities, including the preparation of the 2022 Food Conference (see under item 12), and in supporting the making of the training video for minke whale hunters (see under item 6).

The internship programme, started in 2017, continued with two interns (from Denmark and France) joining the Secretariat in 2021. The programme provides the Secretariat with additional human resources and expertise and is a well appreciated input to the otherwise small Secretariat, in terms of energy, ideas and creativity. The programme is considered a positive experience for both the interns and the Secretariat. It has also functioned as an eye opener for interns on today's reality of whaling and sealing, knowledge they bring with them when dispersing towards their next career steps to national or international institutions.

COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

The Chair thanked Desportes for her presentation and noted that information on External Relations and Communication and Outreach would be reported under items 11 and 12, respectively. He **commended** the report and the usefulness of the overview of the Commission activities and administrative matters in a single document.

The Council took note of the report.

3.5 PROCEDURAL CHANGES: FINANCIAL RULES

Council 28 (2021) had tasked the FAC to formulate consolidated financial rules, as adopted rules and practices were dispersed in different documents and no overview document existed. The Performance Review Panel (2019) had also commented on the absence of Financial Rules and recommended that such an overview document be developed. Council 28 (2021) tasked the FAC to finalise the development of consolidated Financial Rules.

Taking inspiration from the financial rules of relevant organisations, the Secretariat drafted a set of financial rules, which were subsequently reviewed by the Parties, the revisor and the FAC.

Winsnes presented the financial rules ([NAMMCO/29/16](#)). The Secretariat is small without staff specialised in finance-related matters (budgeting, accounting or auditing). Therefore, to ensure responsible financial governance at all levels, the financial rules were completed by an Annex giving more detailed instructions "Standing financial instruction for the Secretariat".

The FAC recommended that the Council adopt the Financial Rules and Instruction as drafted and proposed that while amending the Financial Rules shall be within the remit of the Council, modifying and updating the Financial Instruction should be left within the remit of the FAC to allow for more flexibility and swift response to any arising issues.

The Council **commended** the work of the Secretariat in developing both documents, the rules and the instructions. It **adopted** the Financial Rules, well noting the difference in status and in amendment rules.

3.6 OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

4. SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

4.1 REPORT OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE (SC)

The Chair of the Scientific Committee, Bjarni Mikkelsen (Faroe Islands), presented the activities of the SC since the last meeting of the Council in March 2021. Mikkelsen focused on the general part of the SC report ([NAMMCO/29/08](#)), as the species-specific sections, the ecosystem approach issues, including human disturbances, climate change and marine mammal-fisheries interactions, had been reported to the Management Committees ([NAMMCO/29/FI13-15](#)).

4.1.1 Overall work between the 27 and 28 Scientific Committee Meeting

The 28th meeting of the SC was held online 24-28 January 2022, with observers from Japan, the Russian Federation, Makivik Corporation and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. The SC reviewed the activities that had taken place since its last meeting (January 2021), including working group meetings and conclusions, involvement in the MINTAG Steering Group, preparation for the NASS 24 cetacean survey and review of four of the website species pages (fin and humpback whales, beluga, and narwhal).

In addition, following a request from the Council 28, Mikkelsen informed that the SC had tasked the joint NAMMCO-JCNB Working Group on Narwhal and Beluga (JWG) to initiate the development of a principle-based precautionary approach for the sustainable management of small and/or depleted stocks. The JWG had forwarded a draft approach composed of seven principles which, the SC agreed, provided good reference points for continuing the discussion at the next SC meeting.

The Secretariat had compiled an overview of all the abundance estimates generated from cetacean surveys in the NAMMCO area (NASS series and national surveys) and their status with regards to endorsement, caveat, present status and publication (the compilation can be found on the NAMMCO [website](#), under the *All estimates* and *Best estimates*).

The SC agreed that it would be valuable to exchange data with ASCOBANS for species with a broad and shared distribution.

Working Groups, Planning Groups and Project Meetings

Three working groups had met: the By-Catch Working Group (BYCWG, 15 October, Online), the Ad hoc Working Group on Narwhals in East Greenland (NEGWG, 25-29 October, Copenhagen DK) and the NAMMCO-JCNB Working Group on Narwhal and Beluga (JWG, 13-17 December, Winnipeg CA). The quantitative Sub-Group of the JWG had held five meetings online (in February, May, June, August and September). Members of the SC also participated to the preparatory work for the ICES benchmark WKSEALS meeting on seal modelling.

The NASS 24 Planning Committee held one meeting (online) and the Steering Group of the MINTAG project two meetings (online).

MINTAG project

The MINTAG (Miniature Tag) Project, previously referred to as the Super-Tag project, is a scientific cooperation between NAMMCO and Japan aiming at developing smaller and lighter satellite transmitters with optimal ballistic performance for long-distance deployments on lesser-known fast swimming species rorquals (blues, fin, sei, Bryde's and minke whales) and pilot whales. The project was launched the 4th of August 2021, with the first meeting of the MINTAG Steering Group (StG). The StG is composed of Scientific Committee members and scientists from the Institute of Cetacean Research of Japan, as well as the NAMMCO Secretariat and the Fisheries Agency of Japan. Heide-Jørgensen from the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources (GL) is the project leader, while the

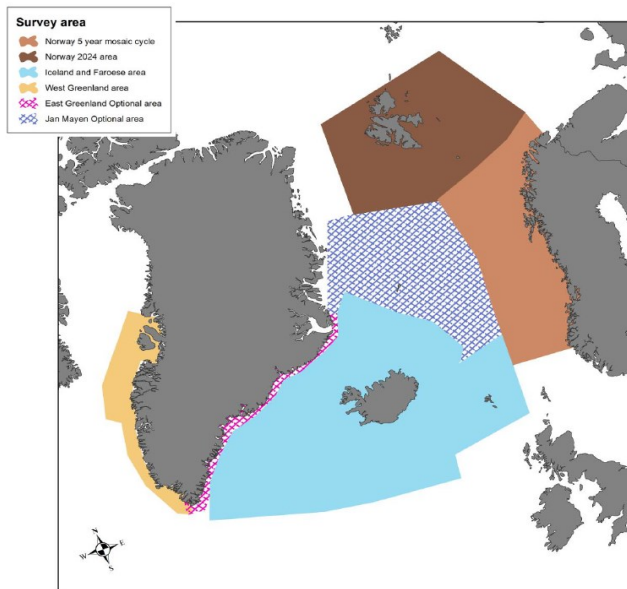
project is administrated by the NAMMCO Secretariat. The high-profile project aims at providing missing but essential tools to the management of these lesser-known species in the North Atlantic and North Pacific Oceans. MINTAG should respond to outstanding questions on habitat use, dispersal and movements, behaviour, and stock delimitation.

North Atlantic Sighting Survey of Selected Cetaceans - NASS 2024

A NASS survey is scheduled for 2024 and the Planning Group is composed of Scientific Committee members: Hansen (GL, Chair), Mikkelsen (FO), Sigurdsson (IS) and Øien (NO).

The general objective of the NASS survey is to generate fully corrected abundance estimates for target cetacean species in all areas of importance for management: i) pilot whales around the Faroe Islands and in the North Atlantic, ii) minke whales in West and East Greenland, around Iceland, Jan Mayen, Svalbard and the central Norwegian sea, iii) fin whales in the Central North Atlantic (around Iceland, off East Greenland, Faroe Islands and Jan Mayen) and in West Greenland, iv) humpback whales in West Greenland.

NASS 2024 will include, in addition to areas covered by the national surveys, adjacent areas and also increase the effort in a few national areas to obtain a complete, coherent and synoptic coverage of



the whole NAMMCO area. This was required to ensure the detection of any major shifts in the abundance and distribution of cetaceans, likely due to ongoing climatic perturbations in the North Atlantic, and which could result in abundance decline in some areas. Such decline had been observed in Icelandic Coastal waters in 2007 and off West Greenland in 2015.

The map shows both the areas that will be covered by national surveys (plain colours) and the additional areas (hatched colours) that need to be addressed to ensure complete coverage of the whole NAMMCO area.

The MINTAG project (see above) first series of tag deployments should be done during spring-summer 2024. A cheaper option than dedicating specific ship-time to satellite tagging would be to use the survey vessels for tagging effort, providing that more ship-time is allocated. All expenses except ship time would be covered by the MINTAG project.

Experience from previous NASS surveys (with sightings data from 2002 analysed and published in 2020) has shown that the cost of generating abundance estimates for non-target species should be included in the overall budget of the survey, to secure the completion of those analyses in a timely manner. This will in turn ensure that an ecosystem approach can be maintained.

Mikkelsen presented the NASS-2024 implementation plan, the budget covered by national Institutions and the additional budget to for coherent coverage and additional effort (NAMMCO part), the latter was estimated to NOK 10 million.

The Secretariat applied (June 2022) through the Norwegian Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries for funds to the Arktis 2030 Grant scheme of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for covering the rest of the cost of the additional coverage and efforts (NOK 9.230.000, see budget in Table below).

Year	Notes below	Activities within NAMMCO	Costs NOK
2023		Meetings & co-ordination	100 000
2024		Meetings & co-ordination	150 000
	1	East Greenland coastal area	1 700 000
	2	Jan Mayen area	5 000 000
	3	Increased Faroe Island area	500 000
	4	Extra ship time for MINTAG-related satellite tagging	1 500 000
	5	Abundance estimation of non-target species	400 000
2025		Co-ordination, meetings & review of results	180 000
		Publication of results	80 000
2026		Co-ordination, meetings & review of results	150 000
		Publication of results	50 000
Total 2023 - 2026			9 810 000
of which NAMMCO supports			580 000

Mikkelsen noted that the NASS 2024 planning committee will monitor new development (post NASS 2015) in methodology, technology and data quality requirements taking place in other organisations that use systematic survey data for management (e.g., the IWC SC) or used by other large-scale surveys (e.g., SCANS IV). The planning group will also explore the possibilities to use *platforms-of-opportunities* during NASS-24, as has been requested by the Council 28.

4.1.2 Proposed workplan for 2022–2024

Mikkelsen presented the SC proposed workplan for 2022 and suggested workplan for 2023-2024, (see table below). The SC would continue the planning of the NASS-2024 through 2023-2024 and engage in the testing, fieldwork and analysis related to the MINTAG project through 2022-2024.

The workplan proposed had been revised from the work plan originally proposed by the SC to accommodate the changes linked to the Ukraine war arising after the SC meeting in January.

The SC annual meeting will be hosted by Greenland on 23-27 January 2023, likely in Copenhagen.

2022	2023	2024 (tentative)
<p><u>WG & WS meetings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - By-catch WG: May (online) - MINTAG design seminar: October (Denmark) - Harbour porpoise WG (+ review of <i>Lagenorhynchus</i> sp. and pilot whale available data): November (Norway) - JWG WS on Disturbance: November (Denmark) - Ringed & Bearded mini WG: November (online) - <i>ICES Benchmark meeting on seal modelling: December (Denmark)</i> <p><u>Other:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MINTAG StG meetings 3 (Feb.) & 4 (SEP.), 5 (Nov) (online) - MINTAG: testing on carcasses: July (IS) - NASS SpC meeting: fall (online) 	<p><u>WG & WS meetings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bearded seal WS / Jointly with CAFF/CBMP: March (online) - WGHARP (ICES-NAFO-NAMMCO): September (Denmark) - Dolphins WG - Coastal seals WG - Pilot whale WG - Narwhal in East Greenland WG - Ringed seal WG (tentatively) - Beluga tagging WS <p><u>Other:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NASS planning meetings - MINTAG StG Meetings (online) - MINTAG: testing on carcasses - MINTAG: deployment field work 	<p><u>WG & WS meetings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Walrus WG - Large Whale Assessment WG - Harbour porpoise WG (off Iceland) <p><u>Other:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NASS planning meetings - MINTAG StG Meetings (online) - MINTAG: field work and analysis - NASS surveys

4.1.3 Other business

A new member from Iceland joined the SC in October 2021, Guðjón Már Sigurðsson from the Marine and Freshwater Institute. Sigurðsson had participated to the work of the BYCWG since 2016. In May 2022, Albert Chacón joined the team as the new Scientific Secretary.

Mikkelsen had completed his term as SC Chair, and Aqqalu Rosing-Asvid (Greenland) had been elected as the new SC Chair with Sandra Granquist (Iceland) as the new vice chair. Both terms would begin at the closure of the 2022 Council Meeting.

Mikkelsen, on behalf of the SC, expressed great regret and sadness on the sudden passing away of Gísli A. Víkingsson- (Iceland). His professional input to the deliberations of the committee, his humanness, humour and piano playing would be dearly missed. An *In Memoriam* was posted on the NAMMCO website and Volume 12 of the NAMMCO Scientific Publication Series will be dedicated to Gísli Víkingsson.

COMMENTS & DISCUSSION TO 4.1

The Chair thanked Mikkelsen for his report and thanked the Committee for its work.

The Council took note of the report. On behalf of the Council, the Chair thanked Mikkelsen for his able chairing of the Committee the last three years and welcomed Rosing-Asvid and Granquist as the new Chair and Vice-Chair of the Scientific Committee, as well as Sigurðsson as new SC member.

Norway announced that the ‘NAMMCO’ part of the NASS 2024 survey (NOK 9.230.000) had just been granted through the Arktis 2030 Grant scheme.

4.2 ADOPTION OF PRIORITIES AND WORK PLAN 2022-2024

Following the presentation of the reports of the Management Committees and budget considerations related to the present situation, the FAC recommended that no more than four face to face SC WG/WS meetings be held per year.

Council **agreed with** the recommendation of the FAC and recommended that the SC at its next meeting prioritise the meetings, considering the priorities of the Parties. For example, on the request of the Faroe Islands, the Dolphin WG meeting should be held in 2023, but the pilot whale WG is postponed to 2024. The Council endorsed the following workplan for the SC in 2022, 2023 and 2024.

[activities in bold have been held, activities in grey were/will be held online, StG: steering group, SpC: scientific planning committee]

2022	2023	2024 (tentative)
<p><u>WG & WS meetings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - By-catch WG: May (online) - MINTAG design seminar: October (Denmark) Harbour porpoise WG (NO + review of <i>Lagenorhynchus</i> sp. and pilot whale available data): November (Norway) - JWG WS on disturbance: November (Denmark) - Ringed & Bearded mini WG: November (online) - <i>ICES Benchmark meeting on seal modelling: December (Denmark – postponed to May 2023 after CN29)</i> 	<p><u>WG & WS meetings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bearded seal WS / Jointly with CAFF/CBMP: March (online) Four of the following meetings in face-to-face - WGHARP (ICES-NAFO-NAMMCO): September (Denmark) - Dolphins WG - Coastal seals WG - Narwhal in East Greenland WG - Beluga tagging WS <p>Ringed seal (tentatively & online)</p>	<p><u>WG & WS meetings:</u></p> <p>Four meetings in face to face</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Walrus WG - Large Whale Assessment WG - Harbour porpoise WG (IS) - Pilot whale WG

<p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MINTAG StG meetings 3 & 4: February & September (online) - MINTAG: testing on carcasses: July (IS) - MINTAG StG meeting 5: November (online) - NASS SpC meeting: fall (online) 	<p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NASS SpC meetings - MINTAG StG meetings (online) - MINTAG: testing on carcasses - MINTAG: deployment field work 	<p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NASS SpC meetings - MINTAG StG meetings (online) - MINTAG: field work and analysis - NASS surveys
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4.3 OTHER BUSINESS

Japan expressed appreciation for the continued opportunity to participate in the Scientific Committee as an observer. Through these meetings, participants from Japan obtained valuable information on the conservation, management, and study of marine mammals, which will contribute to Japan’s domestic resource management. At the last SC meeting, Japan provided four documents, which are progress reports on large cetacean and on small cetacean, and information papers on the calculation of sustainable catch limits of western North Pacific common mink whale and on satellite tagging experiments.

5. MINTAG PROJECT

NAMMCO member countries and Japan agreed in July 2021 on the terms and the funding of the MINTAG project aiming at developing a new satellite tag to be used on fast swimming rorquals and pilot whales (see under agenda item 4.1.1 for further details on the project structure). The project was officially launched on 4 August 2021 with the first meeting of the project Steering Group (StG).

Desportes introduced the Year1 report of the MINTAG project ([NAMMCO/29/14](#)).

5.1 REPORT OF THE MINTAG STEERING GROUP

The long process of finalising an agreement between the NAMMCO countries and with Japan, postponed the launching of the project to August 2021, i.e., one year later than anticipated. This in turns delayed contacting potential manufacturers and choosing one, resulting in production and deployment of the prototype tag being pushed from spring/summer 2022 to spring/summer 2023. By the same token, all the phases of the project will be delayed, and the end year of the project will be 2027 and not 2026.

Of the potential tag manufacturers responding to the tender invitation, the StG chose in February 2022 to cooperate with the US company Wildlife Computer (WC). The thinking related to the development of the tag design started immediately, with a kick-off seminar between the StG and WC in March 2023.

Wildlife Computer gave high priority to the project and progress in tag housing and carrier design were rapid enough to allow carrying out tests on tag flight and penetration on dead fin whale carcasses in July 2022 at the Icelandic whaling station using dummy tag housing. The testing was considered invaluable for the progress of the project and the design of successful tags.

Despite the initial start-up delay, the project is now on track and progressing well. The next step will be a two-day tag design seminar in Copenhagen in October 2022, where engineers from WC and the StG can progress with the design, based on the experience gained during the summer testing. Deployment of the first tag prototypes is planned for spring-summer 2023.

During the summer 2022, the Secretariat developed a project website in cooperation with the StG, which should be launched on 1 November.

5.2 FINANCIAL UPDATE

Because of the delay in finalising an agreement between NAMMCO countries and with Japan, direct expenses for the project (cost of the tag development and field work) incurred in 2022 instead of 2021, although partners' in-kind cost started running in 2021 (although at low level, with only meeting-related working hours,).

The funding expected from the participating countries was received according to the project's original timeline. Unused money in 2021 and 2022 caused by the beforementioned delay will be put on hold and used to fund the 'extra' year of the project, i.e., 2027.

The planned expenses have increased compared with the original budget. This is due to the present inflation, as well as changes in exchange rates between countries, notably with the US. It was noted that these external factors may very well increase the cost of the tag development.

COMMENTS & DISCUSSION TO 5

The Council took note of the report and expressed its satisfaction that this project was progressing well.

Desportes conveyed a specific thanks to the leader of the MINTAG project, Heide Jørgensen (GL), for his dedicated leadership, work and commitment to the project. Desportes also acknowledged and commended the high priority given by WC to the project and the continued rapid progress made in the design.

Japan expressed its appreciation to the MINTAG Steering Group for its hard work. Results and outcome of the MINTAG project will be utilized for the conservation and management of cetaceans not only in the North Atlantic but also in other oceans, including the Pacific Ocean. Japan informed that it will be pleased to continue its scientific and financial contribution to the MINTAG project.

6. COMMITTEE ON HUNTING METHODS

6.1 REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON HUNTING METHODS (CHM)

The Chair of the Committee on Hunting Methods, Kathrine Ryeng (Norway), presented the activities of CHM since Council 28 ([NAMMCO/29/09](#)).

The main tasks have been revising the annual data reporting system, developing the first instruction video for hunters and continue following up the fate of the recommendations emanating from the Committee.

Members annual data reporting

A new comprehensive system for annual reporting from Parties was introduced in 2020. The objective was to develop a procedure whereby the Parties submitted, once a year, all requested data for the CHM to meet its Terms of Reference. It was also an attempt to standardise the data entries in to enable comparisons between countries and activities. The new reporting system did not meet the expectations and the added workload for the Parties had increased significantly. Too many "non-functional" data categories had been introduced primarily based on a "nice to know" rather than "need to know" basis. The diversity of target species, hunting methods, national regulations and praxis resulted in an abundance of requests for input of data that were not relevant for all members.

In a joint effort with the Committee on Inspection and Observation (CIO) and the Working Group on By-catch, Entanglements and Live Strandings (BYCELS), the committee had revised the system taking into consideration the data needed for committees to meet their mandates and the priorities put forward by the Parties.

Follow up of active recommendations

The CHM continued the process of reviewing and structuring recommendations made by Expert Group Meetings and Workshops. Several recommendations were *de facto* repetitions with different wording. To make the overview of recommendations more accessible and better structured, the recommendations had been reorganised and (re)grouped under specific headings.

The Committee observed that some of the recommendations were standing recommendations, and therefore remained active, because they are addressing issues that continue to be relevant. This is for example the case of the recommendations emphasising the value of hunters' training. Other recommendations had not been responded to because of a lack of necessary resources or technical solution to progress with the issue.

Instruction videos for hunters

Council 18 had endorsed the recommendation from CHM to produce a series of short instruction videos for hunters on issues of significance for hunters' safety, animal welfare and efficiency of the hunts in terms of time to death and reduced struck and lost rate.

The CHM had supervised the development of the 1st information video focusing on the safe handling of the 50 mm Kongsberg whaling cannon with loaded pusher shell (cartridge), and the harpoon and the Whale grenade 99. Egil Ole Øen (DVM and former member of the Committee) had been contracted as advisor and main contributor to the making of the video. The development of the manuscript and editing of the film was done as a cooperation between the filmmaker, Relevant Film, Øen and Winsnes from the Secretariat. Filming on location was carried out during one day at MS Marie in Midsun in late September 2021. The video ([link](#)) is available in English and Norwegian with a Greenlandic version in the making.

A proposal for a 2nd video, with tentative budget of NOK 200,000, focusing on the importance of target location and shooting angle in large whale hunts was presented to Council 29. This second video was envisaged as an animation video.

The CHM had discussed and agreed that outsourcing work (i.e., carrying out work under NAMMCO control and funding) could be considered to advance pending work.

The CHM agreed to focus future priorities on

- Production of instruction videos
- Examining, as soon as feasible, the minke rifle hunt in Greenland
- Discussing ballistics and the use of leadfree bullets in recognition that EU is working on regulation to prohibit the use of such bullets, which will affect seal hunting in NAMMCO countries

Long term members of not only CHM but also CIO and BYCELS, Hild Ynnesdal (Norway) and Guðni M. Eiríksson (Iceland) had stepped down as members. Their professionalism, dedication, and considerable inputs, which had been instrumental in the success and advances made by all committees throughout many years, were commended.

COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

The Chair thanked the Chair of the CHM for a very encompassing and thorough report of the Committee's work.

The Council noted the report and commended the outgoing members Ynnesdal and Eiríksson for their long-term dedication to the work of the committees.

Member countries expressed appreciation of the work done, and especially in relation to the 1st instruction video that had been screened before opening the floor to comments.

Greenland underlined that the work and progress of this Committee was very much supported by its inclusion of hunters in its work and expert meetings. Their input to resolve practical and technical issue was very valuable, and Greenland highly commended the hunters for their input.

Iceland asked whether the efficiency of training videos as training tools for hunters could be measured. The Chair of the CHM responded that training and education are important parts of the NAMMCO mission, both with the view of increasing the safety of the hunters and improving animal welfare by decreasing time to death (TTD). It should therefore be encouraged and strengthened by all possible means. The exact benefice of the video as such was difficult to measure without a targeted project. However, she noted, seconded by Greenland, that the overall training supported by NAMMCO had paid off with documented decrease in the rate of accident and TTD in many hunts over the years. Winsnes also noted that the four NAMMCO Parties utilise the material produced by NAMMCO (Instructions manuals, videos, etc) in the training of hunters (e.g., hunters' training courses).

Iceland underlined the usefulness of keeping track of statistics for being able to document such positive results.

The Council echoed the appreciation expressed about the 1st instruction video and **endorsed the recommendation** to produce a 2nd instruction video.

Norway expressed its thanks to Øen for having been, and continuing to be remaining, a driving force in the improvement of hunting methods.

Japan expressed its continued interest in the work of the CHM. Japan started in 2009 to submit data and information on whale killing methods to NAMMCO. Japan welcome NAMMCO's evaluation of Japan's data and information. It would like to continue to exchange information with NAMMCO to further improve whale hunting methods.

6.2 ADOPTION OF PRIORITIES AND WORK PLAN 2022–2023

The Committee proposed the following workplan for the next 2 years.

2022	2023
- Produce the 2 nd training video on optimal shooting angle and target place given approval from the Council	- Monitor annual reporting from member countries - Finalise the 2 nd training video

COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

The Council **endorsed** the proposed workplan for the CHM.

6.3 OTHER BUSINESS

No items were discussed under this agenda item.

7. COMMITTEE ON INSPECTION AND OBSERVATION

7.1 REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON INSPECTION AND OBSERVATION (CIO)

The chair of the Committee on Inspection and Observation, Guro Gjelsvik (Norway), presented the activities of CIO since Council 28 ([NAMMCO/29/10](#)).

Because of the introduction of the new Observation Scheme in 2019, the CIO had in 2021 presented a recommendation to amend the CIO Terms of Reference. The amendment proposal, presented to Council 28, had been adopted in the interim period by the HODS/Council in March 2022. The new Terms of Reference are defined in the [CIO Rules of Procedures](#) available on the NAMMCO website.

The new, very comprehensive, annual reporting system introduced in 2020 had proven not to meet the expectations. In a joint effort with the CHM and BYCELS, see agenda item 6.1. above, the committee had revised the system taking into consideration the data needed for committees to meet their mandates and the priorities put forward by the Parties.

To look at member countries compliance to NAMMCO recommendations (a task for the CIO stipulated in the [Provisions of the Observation Scheme](#)), the CIO reviewed the responses to the recommendations arising from Workshops and Expert Group meetings organised by the CHM and assess which had been completed and which were still active. Of the total of 124 recommendations, 27 were identified as still active. Of these 7 (mostly analysing existing data) had not been resolved due to lack of resources, 12 were standing requests pertaining to the need of training hunters and supporting knowledge transfer. The remaining 8 recommendations were specific request not yet resolved. The CIO estimated that a 87% rate of compliance by the Parties should be considered a high compliance.

COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

The Chair thanked the Chair of the CIO for her report and the Committee for its work.

Council noted the report.

7.2 OBSERVATION ACTIVITIES IN 2023

Council 28 had allocated NOK 431,000 to the observation activities for 2022. Observers had not been contracted since 2017 due to the process of revising the old Scheme and it was agreed to make an extraordinarily large allocation to cover narwhal, beluga, and walrus hunting in West Greenland (Upernavik and Sisimiut). Both because of the years with no observation activities and due to the particular challenges with observing these specific hunts of opportunistic characters, that have never been targeted before.

In January 2022, the HOD/Council decided to follow the advice of the CIO, to postpone the 2022 observation activities to 2023 due to the remaining incertitude linked with COVID-19, especially in terms of travelling possibilities.

Because of new information pertaining to the necessity of renting a boat for the observers in Upernavik (the hunters' boats were too small to house observers), the foreseen costs of the planned activities escalated and challenged the allocated budget of NOK 431,000. The CIO thus agreed to present a revised budget of NOK 500,000 for the consideration of the Council.

COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

The Council discussed the proposed budget increase. With reference to the overall budget constraints and the anticipated impacts and economical repercussion the war in Ukraine will have, FAC recommended to limit the allocation to the 2023 observation activities to NOK 300,000.

The Chair of the CIO questioned the consequences for such a cut and voiced concern that this would strongly diminish the outcome of the proposed observation activities. See also under agenda item 3.3.2.

Well noting the concerns of the CIO, the Council agreed to limit the 2023 allocation to observation activities to NOK 300,000.

7.3 WORKPLAN 2022–2023

The CIO proposed the following workplan for 2022 and 2023.

2022	2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation of the 2023 observation activities - Defining a proposal for scope and range of observation activities for 2024 - Organise the annual online meeting of the observer corps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meeting of the CIO in February - Review submitted data from 2022 - Finalise outstanding issues for the 2023 observation activities - Finalise the proposal for scope and range of observer activities for 2024 for the approval of Council - Organise the annual online meeting of the observer corps

COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

The Council **endorsed** the proposed workplan.

8. WORKING GROUP ON BY-CATCH, ENTANGLEMENTS AND LIVE STRANDINGS

8.1 REPORT OF THE BYCELS WORKING GROUP (BYCELS)

The chair of the working Group on By-catch, Entanglements and Live Strandings (BYCELS), Ulla S. Wang (Faroe Islands) presented the activities of BYCELS since Council 26 ([NAMMCO/27/12](#)).

The new, very comprehensive, annual reporting system introduced in 2020 had proven not to meet the expectations. In a joint effort with the CHM and CIO, see agenda item 6.1. above, the committee had revised the system taking into consideration the data needed for committees to meet their mandates and the priorities put forward by the Parties.

Council 28 reviewed the guidelines on euthanasia of stranded cetaceans and agreed to asked BYCELS to incorporate the use of the spinal lance in the guidelines and present a revised version to the next Council meeting. BYCELS had revised the guidelines, and these were presented for consideration and endorsement of the Council.

BYCELS reiterated the views expressed at Council 28 that it had accomplished and followed through on what was initially identified as its tasks. The importance of having a competent body addressing animal welfare issues related to by-catch, entanglement and strandings was underlined, but BYCELS recommended that any future meetings should be scheduled when the Council or member countries ask for advice within the BYCELS mandate and not on a pre-set annual basis.

COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

Council noted the report and thanked BYCELS for its work. It agreed that BYCELS become a standing working group that would next meet when called upon for advice.

Questions were raised why the spinal lance was only recommended to use for pilot whales and white sided dolphins. Ryeng (DVM, NO) explained that the present designs were adapted to the size of these two species. Also, euthanising by ballistic goes faster than using a spinal lance, and in many instances the adequate tool will not be available.

Iceland noted that stranded cetaceans that are re-floated over the world should be (satellite) tagged so their fate can be monitored to learn more. Norway believed larger stranded cetaceans should not be re-floated but euthanised. Smaller cetaceans might be tagged if released.

Council also **endorsed** the revised Guidelines on Euthanasia noting that these focus on larger cetaceans (pilot whales and larger).

8.2 WORK PLAN 2022-2024

A workplan was not discussed due to decision taken under agenda item above.

8.3 OTHER BUSINESS

No items were discussed under this agenda item.

9. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES

The Scientific Secretary, Albert Chacón presented for information to the Council

- Proposals for conservation and management
- Recommendations for new research/data collection

endorsed by the Management Committee for Cetaceans (MCC), the Management Committee for Seals and Walrus (MCSW) and the Joint Meeting of the Management Committees (MCJ) and forwarded to the Parties.

Chacón also presented to the Council for consideration and, if appropriate, endorsement

- New Requests for Advice from the Scientific Committee
- Information relating to User Knowledge and a new recommendation from the MCJ

9.1 PROPOSALS FOR CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

This year the Management Committees (MCs) did not examine any new proposals for conservation and management directly related to sustainable catches. The MCC could not reach consensus on the endorsement of four recommendations reiterated from previous years on zero catches pertaining to beluga and E and WGL and narwhal in EGL.¹

Other advice for Conservation and Management had been given by the MCJ, the MCC and the MCSW, related respectively to marine mammal - fisheries interactions, beluga and narwhal, and bearded seal. Notably, the Committee endorsed a recommendation on the inclusion of User Knowledge (related to Norway).

The full set of proposals is available in Appendix 7: New proposals for Conservation and Management.

COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

The Council **took note** of the new proposals for conservation and management forwarded by the MCs to the Parties.

9.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND OTHERS

9.2.1 New recommendations for research with implication for stock monitoring

The new recommendations for research with implication for stock monitoring endorsed by the MCs and forwarded to the Parties concern seven topics and are listed in Appendix 8: Recommendations for new research .

- Marine Mammal - Fisheries Interactions: to Norway (1) and Iceland (2)
- Beluga: to Greenland (5 concerning both EGL and WGL)
- Narwhal: to Greenland (9 concerning both EGL and WGL)

¹ Original version of the paragraph revised on 090223: This year the Management Committees (MCs) did not examine any proposals for conservation and management directly related to sustainable catches.

- Killer whale: to NAMMCO (1)
- Long-finned pilot whale: to Faroe Islands (1)
- Bearded seal: Greenland (1)

COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

The Council **took note of the** recommendations for new research identified by the Scientific Committee and endorsed by the Management Committees, noting that these recommendations are directed to individual member countries for appropriate action. It noted further that the response to several of these recommendations will influence the possibilities of the Scientific Committee to answer the requests for advice forwarded by the Council and the strength of the scientific basis of the Scientific Committee management recommendations.

9.2.2 Recommendation to NAMMCO

The Scientific Committee recommended that *NAMMCO become involved in the organisation of the North Atlantic part of the Killer Whale World Conference planned for April 2023 in Spain*. The MCC modified the recommendation as follows:

The Secretariat examines what it entails to participate to the Killer Whale Conference and refers back to FAC regarding financial implications.

9.3 REQUESTS FOR ADVICE FROM THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

9.3.1 New requests for advice

General (emanating from the Finance and Administration Committee)

Request R-1.8.3: *“Acknowledging the importance of the website as NAMMCO’s main dissemination tool, and the value of the species pages, the Council requests the SC to continue its regular review of these pages following the procedure proposed by the SC26 (2019).”*

COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

The Council **adopted** the new request for advice from the Scientific Committee.

9.3.2 Active requests for advice to be modified

Marine Mammal- Fisheries Interactions

The MCJ propose that **Request R-1.1.8**

- *In addressing the standing requests on ecosystem modelling and marine mammal fisheries interaction, to extend the focus to include all areas under NAMMCO jurisdiction. In the light of the distributional shifts seen under T-NASS 2007, the SC should investigate dynamic changes in spatial distribution due to ecosystem changes and functional responses.*

Be split in two separate requests

- **Request R-1.1.9:** *In addressing the standing requests on ecosystem modelling and marine mammal fisheries interaction, to extend the focus to include all areas under NAMMCO jurisdiction.*
- **Request R-1.1.10:** *In the light of the distributional shifts seen under T-NASS 2007 and later surveys, the SC should investigate dynamic changes in spatial distribution due to ecosystem changes and functional responses.*

Harp and Hooded seals

The MCSW propose that **Request R-2.1.9**

- *To investigate possible reasons for the apparent decline of Greenland Sea stock of hooded seals and assess the status of the stock on basis of the results from the planned survey in 2007.*

Be rephrased as

- *To investigate possible reasons for the apparent decline of Greenland Sea stock of hooded seals and assess the status of the stock.*

Ringed seals

The MCSW propose that **Request R-2.3.1**

- *To advise on stock identity of ringed seals for management purposes and to assess abundance in each stock area, long-term effects on stocks by present removals in each stock area, effects of recent environmental changes (i.e., disturbance, pollution) and changes in the food supply, and interactions with other marine living resources.*

Be rephrased as

- *To advise on stock identity of ringed seals for management purposes and to assess abundance in each stock area, long-term effects on stocks by present removals in each stock area, effects of recent environmental changes (i.e., disturbance, pollution and climate change) and changes in the food supply, and interactions with other marine living resources.*

COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

The Council **adopted** the proposals of the MCs regarding requests R-1.1.8, R-2.1.9 and 2.3.1. Request R-1.1.8 is now considered closed.

9.4 USER KNOWLEDGE

In the light of discussions at previous meetings, the MCJ discussed at length the issue of User Knowledge and how it may be strengthened within NAMMCO (see report of [MCJNAMMCO/29/FI03](#) and on the [website](#)).

Following this discussion, the MCJ recommended to include User Knowledge in the management of coastal seals in Norway (See Appendix 7: New proposals for Conservation and Management).

The MCJ also proposed the establishment of a Working Group on User Knowledge based on the following considerations.

“From points raised during the council meeting and previously by various parties, it seems there is imbalance between how purely scientific information and information derived from various stakeholders are used in assessment and management approaches for marine mammals in the NAMMCO context.

While the topic of how to include user knowledge in management processes has been raised in various specialised working groups, it seems this topic is of sufficiently broad relevance as to warrant a separate working group to specifically address how best to include user knowledge in management and decision-making processes. Such a working group should consist of relevant stakeholders (such as hunters etc) as well as, managers, and scientists with expertise on marine mammal management and, more importantly, representatives with expertise in how to incorporate user knowledge in research and management processes.”

COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

Greenland and Norway supported the creation of a Working Group on User Knowledge.

Greenland noted that the Working Group should not be dealing with a few species, but with the whole concept of including User Knowledge in management decision.

Norway proposed that if the Council endorsed establishing a Working Group on User Knowledge, a small group be tasked to develop Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Working Group to be presented at the next Council meeting.

The Council **endorsed** the recommendations on establishing a Working Group on User Knowledge and the idea of a small group developing ToR to be presented at the next meeting of the Council. The Secretariat asked that the parties forward the names of the representatives that will participate in the small group tasked to develop the ToR for the Working Group.

Greenland noted its strong support to including User Knowledge in decision making and reiterated the rights of Indigenous peoples to use living resources and maintain a sustainable life and economy, including the right of local communities to sustain traditional hunting and costumes in their societies,

10. ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS & ECOSYSTEM APPROACH TO MANAGEMENT

The Chair reminded Council of the importance environmental questions have for NAMMCO and that its commitment to progress towards an ecosystem approach to management had been reiterated in the Nuuk Declaration in 2017. Environmental matters directly related to the scientific advice on the conservation and management of marine mammals were addressed by the MCJ – and the points of discussion can be found in the report of the MCJ ([NAMMCO/29/FI03](#)).

The Chair noted the importance of cooperating on environmental issues, as such issues, when related to marine mammals, are rarely local but usually have a global or at least regional scope.

The Chair noted that NAMMCO was engaging with environmental programmes and initiatives under the Arctic Council and particularly the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF), providing relevant information for inclusion in assessment reports on the status of the environment and the biodiversity in the Arctic. NAMMCO's collaboration with the CAFF was further reported under agenda item 11.

COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

Greenland noted that since its start, the Canadian Baffinland Mary River Project has raised strong concerns about its impact on marine mammals in the Fjord around Qaanaaq. Similar concerns have also been raised by the JWG and by the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources (GNRI). The GNRI estimates that the environmental impacts in both Canadian and international waters can have severe consequences for the hunting communities and livelihoods in West Greenland, as they will greatly affect the populations of narwhals, belugas, bowhead whales and walrus that live - and are exploited – in West Greenland in winter time. Greenland's concerns are significantly increased because the project is running without considering these severe impacts.

Desportes informed that, disturbances from mining activities would be the subject of a workshop organised by the Joint NAMMCO-JCNB Working Group on narwhal and beluga in November. The WS would assess the impacts on marine mammals of the activities associated to both the Mary River project in Canada as well as the Dundas Ilmenite project in Wolstenholme Fjord in Greenland. The terms of reference were the following.

- 1) *To assess the impact of anthropogenic activities of the Mary River project on marine mammals, with emphasis on:*
 - *the behavioural response to noise pollution from shipping and ice breaking*
 - *the energetic consequences of behavioural adaptations to noise pollution*
 - *population responses including changes in abundance and demography of narwhals in Eclipse Sound and adjacent areas*
 - *the possible changes in recommended catch levels for narwhals from Eclipse Sound*

- *disturbance of walrus, belugas and bowhead whales from shipping, anchoring and ice breaking activities*
- 2) *To assess the impact of shipping and mining activities in Wolstenholme Fjord on especially the wintering stock of walrus in the area and the fall migration of beluga.*

11. EXTERNAL RELATIONS

The General Secretary provided an update on the relationships NAMMCO had maintained since Council 28 with governmental and inter-governmental organisations working on marine management. Desportes referred to the Administrative Report ([NAMMCO/29/07](#)) for a detailed overview of governmental and intergovernmental (IGO) meetings and events where NAMMCO has been represented in 2021 which also provides relevant observer reports.

Two organisations, OSPAR and CAFF, were particularly in focus in 2021.

NAMMCO has discussed a Memorandum of Understanding with OSPAR, and a draft MOU was forwarded to the OSPAR Secretariat in June 2020. In December 2021, NAMMCO was informed, that some Contracting Parties expressed reservations about progressing the MoU. However, the OSPAR Secretariat had been tasked to explore how the two organisations could cooperate in the absence of an MoU.

NAMMCO was involved in the activities of the CAFF sub-groups and is an active member of the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP) and of its Marine Mammal Expert Network (MENN). NAMMCO proposed a joint NAMMCO-CAFF/CBMP workshop to conduct a pan- Arctic review of the status of the bearded seal to address knowledge gaps and identify priority actions needed to ensure effective monitoring and conservation of the species. The proposal was positively received and a joint WS Steering Group was formed. With the NAMMCO and CAFF Secretariats as support team, a joint workshop was planned for May 2022 but was postponed in the light of the Ukraine crisis. It is now tentatively planned for March 2023.

The Secretariat participated to the IWC Scientific Committee meeting, SC68 and observed the meeting of the intersessional preparatory IWC Commission meeting. It also participated to the ASCOBANS Working Group on Beaked Whales and Advisory Committee.

Prior to the United Nations Food Summit 2021, NAMMCO sent a letter to the UN Special Envoy for the Summit, Dr. Kalibata, with copy to Dr. Barange from the Food and Agriculture Organization. The letter underlined that, although ignored in the discourse on food security, effectively and responsibly managed marine mammal hunting contributes to resilient and sustainable food systems (socially, economically, and environmentally) and supports the global action towards meeting the Sustainable Development Goals. The letter was an attempt to draw the attention of the Summit to the importance of recognising and discussing the role that marine mammals play around the world in ensuring food security and food sovereignty, both now and in the future. The letter remains unanswered to this date.

COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

The Chair extended its thanks to the Observers, from non-member governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations for their interest in the work of NAMMCO and their participation to this Annual Meeting.

Japan recalled its continued commitment to international cooperation for the proper management of marine living resources, including whales. It acknowledged NAMMCO's achievement in relation to science-based conservation and sustainable use of marine mammals and expressed its interest in enhancing its cooperation with NAMMCO to advance the management of cetacean resources. In this connection, several persons will participate in the NAMMCO's international conference and gastronomic showcase to be held in Faroe Islands in October. Although having left the IWC, Japan will

nevertheless participate to the Commission 68th meeting as observer and work together with those IWC members also promoting the sustainable use of aquatic living resources to restore the original functions of the IWC.

12. COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH

The General Secretary provided an update on the communication and outreach activities carried out by the Secretariat since Council 28. Desportes noted that the Administrative Report ([NAMMCO/29/07](#)) provides details on these activities.

12.1 OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

The Secretariat arranged for the 3d year in a row, this year in cooperation with NCLOS, a Marine Mammal Student Symposia in Tromsø to expose the Norwegian community of postgraduate students studying marine mammals to the work of NAMMCO and also give them a forum for sharing their projects, issues, and results.

The Secretariat gave presentations on the work of NAMMCO and/or relevant thematic subjects at 4 external events. Noteworthy, for the first time, the Secretariat participated as an exhibitor in the IUCN World Conservation Congress in September in Marseille, France. The NAMMCO stand “Marine mammal as a food resource: benefits and challenges” featured 8 posters addressing the sustainable use of marine mammals under different themes (see Appendix 9: Posters presented to the 2021 IUCN World Conservation Congress). In addition, opinion polls both for kids and adults and quiz were organised. Throughout the week, the stand was relatively well visited, with several tenth of visitors per day.

However, the significance of making such an effort is perhaps not in the numbers of visitors but more the type of conversations taking place. It was evident that the information given on display and/or through the discussions they generated influenced otherwise sceptical visitors. Through the dialog, they arrived at an understanding of NAMMCO standpoint and recognised that whaling and sealing, if well-managed, can represent sustainable food systems and contribute to the blue economy and blue justice. Overall, NAMMCO’s participation to the IUCN Congress was considered relevant and fruitful.

12.2 WEBSITE

Since Council 28, the Secretariat has had a strong focus on the website and on updating and enhancing its content, a special effort was given to taking search engine optimisation (SEO) into account. Four species pages were fully revised and updated after review by the SC (harbour seal, walrus, pilot whale, minke whale). Throughout 2021 and the beginning of 2022, the Secretariat worked on a revamped NAMMCO webpage (launched on 13 April 2022 to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Nuuk agreement).

In 2021, the number of visitors to the website increased with 57%, and close to 26,000 users. The top visitor countries continued to be the USA, UK, and Canada. The website was used as a general source of information on marine mammal species, with the species pages being the most visited ones.

12.3 SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS

Content

Volume 12 of the NAMMCO Scientific Publications (NSP) series: *Marine Mammals in the North Atlantic*, with submissions welcomed from across all disciplines (e.g., biology, economics, and law) relevant for the conservation and management of marine mammals in the North Atlantic (<https://doi.org/10.7557/3.12>) had its first publication in May 2021. One workshop report, 6 research articles, and 3 notes, were submitted in total.

The volume will be dedicated to Gísli Arnór Víkingsson and include an *In Memoriam* patchwork from his colleagues.

NSP Data Policy

Aligned with NAMMCO's commitment to transparency and the importance of open access to scientific research that informs and supports management decision-making, *NAMMCO Scientific Publications* (NSP) is a free open access journal, which under the Science Europe Plan S initiative should follow an open data archiving. Council 28 requested the Secretariat to develop a draft data policy for its adoption.

A data policy was drafted ([NAMMCO/29/18](#)) with three alternatives to choose from:

1. Soft Version - No "Requirements" for open data archiving, just "Encouragement"
2. Stronger Version - No "Requirements" for open data archiving, but "Expectations"
3. Strongest Version - Requirements for open data archiving for publications in the journal

The Council **adopted** option 2:

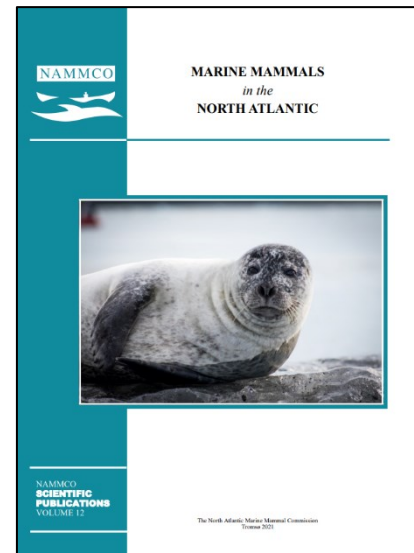
NAMMCO Scientific Publications expects that data supporting the results in published articles is made publicly available and accessible through being archived in a public repository. Authors should provide a data availability statement at the end of their article describing the availability or absence of open access to their supporting data. When data have been shared, authors are asked to include in their data availability statement a link to the repository they have used and the relevant reference number or persistent identifier for the shared data. Whenever possible, the scripts and other artefacts used to generate the analyses presented in the paper should also be publicly archived. If sharing data compromises ethical standards or legal requirements, authors are not expected to share it, although this should be justified and explained in the data availability statement.

12.4 SOCIAL MEDIA

Stories posted on Facebook and Twitter were published as trailers to longer news, articles, and report releases on the website and directed the reader to a specific section of the website, thus supporting the visitor flow to the website.

The interest for the NAMMCO Facebook site has increased, reaching 2,472 likes and 2,682 followers. The Facebook "Fun-fact Friday" posts are often complimented, also by senior scientists, for their diverse and interesting content. They were also regularly shared by other organisations working with marine mammals. The three top posts of the year generated between 18,000 and more than 78,500 people reached. The most popular post "Did you know that whale skin contains as much vitamin C as oranges?" had 2,335 likes, 483 comments, 472 shares and over 6000 post clicks.

There was also an increase of activity on Twitter, but less effort was dedicated to this platform. The top tweet since January 2021 was about the 28th Annual Meeting of NAMMCO and its link to the press release, which reached 1,970 users.



COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION ON 12.1–12.4

The Council commended the efforts made by the Secretariat in communication and outreach and not least, the focus given to the website. The website represents a useful internal and external tool that NAMMCO could be proud of, and it was important to keep it updated and accurate.

12.5 COMMUNICATIONS PLANS

The Chair recalled that the Communication Strategy (COS, adopted in 2017) and the Communication Plans (CPs) were products of an increased awareness in NAMMCO of the necessity of being visible. This in turn commanded the elaboration of a well-defined and tuned message, anchored in facts but also in the present conservation discourse and issues such as blue economy, SDGs, resilient and sustainable food systems. The implementation of the CPs should be reviewed to examine whether the expected results were reached and to apply the outcome of the assessment when formulating new plans. Two CPs have so far been adopted, 2017-2018 and 2019-2020 (available [here](#)).

The General Secretary presented the status of the CP2 implementation ([NAMMCO/29/17a](#)) and the draft CP3 plan, both developed by the Secretariat. Desportes recalled that the website had been identified by Council 27 (2019) as the primary tool of and pivot for NAMMCO communication and outreach.

Review of the implementation of the Communication Plan CP2 2019-2020 & 2021-2022

Desportes noted that CP2 had also guided the period 2021- 2022, as there was no Council meeting in 2020 and the 2021 Council meeting being an online, time limited meeting where the CPs had not been considered a priority.

CP2 was articulated around three themes presenting whaling and sealing in a global environmental perspective:

- Whaling and sealing in a blue economy & global environmental perspective
- Absolute and relative environmental cost of whaling and sealing
- Marine mammals as environmental-friendly contributors to food security.

The extension period 2021-2022 focussed on disseminating the message that, by bringing a low-carbon and low-water protein option in places with few alternatives, whaling and sealing do, that in many coastal areas around the world and not only in the Arctic:

- Contribute to food security and sovereignty of coastal communities
- Contribute to resilient and sustainable food systems (socially, economically, and environmentally)
- Therefore, support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), not only 14 *Life below water*, but also 2, 11, and 12 (by improving livelihoods), and 1, 8, and 10 (by generating economic growth).

Disseminating information and increasing NAMMCO visibility should be attempted through five main actions:

1. Complete species sections and maintain general updates of **nammco.no**
2. Increase activity on social media (SoMe) through regular posts on Twitter & Facebook
3. Participate in high profile events
4. Update Wikipedia site on NAMMCO and marine mammal species
5. Increase internal communication and information flow and generate contributions.

Priority actions 1., 2. and 3. had been implemented, including the completion and update of nammco.no, while actions 4. and 5. had been more difficult to advance. The effort undertaken had principally been borne by the Secretariat.

The Secretariat had participated with presentations in numerous communication and outreach events over the four years, some with high international profiles. This, combined with the efforts directed at the website and SoMe, resulted in increased visibility for NAMMCO within the network of marine conservation and specifically marine mammal conservation, and in fora where it had been absent before. One measurable result was the increase in the flow of visitors to the NAMMCO website (2,5 times larger in 2021 compared to 2018). The activity tripled from 2019 to 2022 and increased also on Twitter (from 60 to 587 followers), a media that had not been prioritised. In summer 2022, an Instagram account was opened in an attempt to reach younger generation.

The Secretariat experienced that the unusual way of presenting marine mammals and whaling and sealing, not as iconic species and issues, but as a sustainable and environmental food resource –can represent a door opener for a (positive) dialog and elicit food for thoughts in dialog partners when well supported by facts.

By the same token, NAMMCO's credibility has increased, and its website is for example used by non-NAMMCO marine mammal specialists due to the quality of its information, although they do not share the view of NAMMCO on the use of marine mammals.

Desportes noted that a continued support to NAMMCO's communication and outreach, which is in essence means visibility, will depend on two essential factors, the Commission's willingness, demonstrated through the allocation of stable and predictable resources, and the involvement of the whole NAMMCO community.

Communication Plan CP3 2023-2024

CP3 ([NAMMCO/29/17b](#)) is prolonging CP2, by focussing on how NAMMCO supports the absolute prerequisite for whaling and sealing to support the SDGs and be environmentally sound:

- These activities must be carried out SRT: sustainably, responsibly, and transparently
- Effectively and efficiently “managed” - in the wider meaning

Such management requires both a strong science foundation, supported by the best user knowledge, and a strong focus on responsibility, i.e., on hunter safety and animal welfare.

The plan 2023-2024 wants to disseminate how, as an organisation, NAMMCO commits to robust and responsible management through supporting and facilitating:

- High-quality independent scientific research projects, which are essential in generating the knowledge required for a sound management
- Improved hunters' safety and animal welfare by producing tools contributing to the training of the hunters

The anchors to the message, that should be rendered visible, are:

- The two high quality independent scientific research projects that NAMMCO supports and coordinate, NASS 2024 and MINTAG
- NAMMCO's continued support and engagement in hunters' training, with the present production of the training video series

Specific focus groups for this plan will be journalists/media working on Arctic and environmental issues and youth, children and educators, member countries' educational networks.

Communication channels and key actions would be tuned to the target groups, but the key channels will be the website, the SoMe, increased contact with the press, direct contact with the educational sector, and participation to external outreach events to present the three projects. Impacts would be followed to tune and amend the efforts where necessary.

COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

The Chair thanked Desportes for her presentation.

The Council noted the implementation review. It **agreed** with the prioritisation of CP3 and **endorsed** the new communication plan.

12.6 OTHER BUSINESS

The Faroe Islands gave an update on the NAMMCO conference and showcase “Marine mammals – A sustainable Food Resources” that would be held in Tórshavn (FO) on 5-6 October 2022 and hosted by the Government of the Faroe Islands. Information and programme can be accessed on the NAMMCO [website](#).

The conference will highlight the use and importance of whales and seals as a food resource and focus on the role of marine mammals as part of sustainable and resilient food systems and food cultures in the North Atlantic and around the world – today and in the future. A special food event will be organised where international chefs will showcase how marine mammals are used in different food cultures, serve a variety of whale and seal dishes and display the potential for more innovative use of marine mammals in modern gastronomy. The conference and the food event would be streamed and available on you-tube and on the NAMMCO website.

The Faroese Food College, Inuili - Food College Greenland, and young hunters from the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Norway are among the participants and presenters. This was important as it is necessary to draw in the young generations when looking at the future of marine mammal as food resource.

The Faroe Islands commended the invaluable role the Secretariat is playing in organising the event and thanked the providers of marine mammal products.

COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

Japan drew attention to its intention to enhance its cooperation with NAMMCO to advance the management of cetacean resources. In this connection, several persons will participate in the conference, such as local governments with tradition of whaling, whale industry people, chefs specialised in whale meat cooking, and Japanese policy advisers. The Japanese use of whale and whale cuisine will be presented to contribute to the discussion on sustainable food systems, diversity of food sources and traditional marine-based food culture.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

14. CLOSING PROCEDURES

14.1 PRESS RELEASE

A press release, summarising the main issues and decisions of the 2022 Council Meeting was adopted by the Heads of Delegation immediately after the meeting (Appendix 10: Press release and [web portal](#)).

14.2 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council will be hosted by the Secretariat in Tromsø in week 13, 27-31 March 2023, while the next meeting of the Management Committees will be held online in March in week 3.

The Chair, on behalf of all participants, thanked the Secretariat staff for their work in preparing for the meeting and their dedicated support during the meeting. He also thanked all the delegates for a constructive and productive meeting.

14.3 ADOPTION OF REPORT

The report of the 29th Council Meeting of NAMMCO was adopted by correspondence on 4 November 2022 at 18:40.

The report was revised on 9 February 2023 under agenda item 9.1.

APPENDIX 1: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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Charlotte Winsnes (Deputy Secretary)

APPENDIX 2: AGENDA

Agenda Items	Document Reference
1. Opening Procedures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Welcome address by the Chair 1.2 Admission of Observers 1.3 Opening Statements 1.4 Adoption of agenda 1.5 Meeting Arrangements 1.6 Invitation from invited speaker, Prof. De Lucia from the Norwegian Centre for the Law of the Sea (NCLOS, UiT, Tromsø) 	NAMMCO/29/01, 02, 03
2. Annual Progress Reports	APR reports
3. Financial and Administrative issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 Report from the Finance and Administration Committee (FAC) 3.2 Audited accounts 2021 3.3 [Budget 2022], Draft budget 2023 and forecast budget 2024 3.4 Administrative Report 2021 3.5 Procedural changes 3.6 Other business 	NAMMCO/29/04, 05, 06, 07, 16, FI04
4. Scientific Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1 Report of the Scientific Committee 4.2 Adoption of priorities and work plan 2022-2023 4.3 Other business 	NAMMCO/29/08, 15
5. MINTAG Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5.1 Report of the MINTAG Steering Group 5.2 Financial update 	NAMMCO/29/14
6. Committee on Hunting Methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6.1 Report of the Committee on Hunting Methods 6.2 Adoption of priorities and work plan 2022-2023 6.3 Other business 	NAMMCO/29/09
7. Committee on Inspection and Observation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7.1 Report of the Committee on Inspection and Observation 7.2 Observation activities in 2023 7.3 Adoption of priorities and work plan 2022-2023 7.4 Other business 	NAMMCO/29/10, FI05

<p>8. Working Group on By-catch, Entanglements and Live Strandings (BYCELS)</p> <p>8.1 Report of the BYCELS Working Group</p> <p>8.2 Adoption of priorities and work plan 2022-2023</p> <p>8.3 Other business</p>	<p>NAMMCO/29/11</p>
<p>9. Management Committees</p> <p>9.1 Proposals for Conservation and Management</p> <p>9.2 Recommendations for Scientific Research and Requests for Scientific Advice from the SC</p> <p>9.3 Other business</p>	<p>NAMMCO/29/12, FI01, FI02, FI03, FI06, MC05, MC06</p>
<p>10. Environmental Questions & Ecosystem Approach to management</p>	
<p>11. External Relations</p> <p>11.1 Cooperation with non-member countries</p> <p>11.2 Cooperation with international organisations</p> <p>11.3 Other business</p>	<p>NAMMCO/29/07</p>
<p>12. Communication and Outreach</p> <p>12.1 Website</p> <p>12.2 Social media</p> <p>12.3 Outreach activities</p> <p>12.4 Scientific publications</p> <p>12.5 Communication Plans</p> <p>12.6 Other business</p>	<p>NAMMCO/29/07, 17, 18</p>
<p>13. Any other business</p>	
<p>14. Closing procedures</p> <p>14.1 Press release</p> <p>14.2 Next meeting</p> <p>14.3 Adoption of report</p>	<p>NAMMCO/29/14</p>

APPENDIX 3: LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Reference	Title	Agenda item
NAMMCO/29/MC01	List of Participants	1
NAMMCO/29/MC02	Council draft Annotated Agenda	1.4
NAMMCO/29/MC03	List of Documents	All
NAMMCO/29/04	Report of the Finance and Administration Committee	3.1
NAMMCO/29/05	Audited Accounts 2021	3.2
NAMMCO/29/06	Interim account 2022, draft budget 2023, forecast budget 2024	3.3
NAMMCO/29/07	Administrative Report 2021	3.4
NAMMCO/29/08	Report of the Scientific Committee 2021	4
NAMMCO/29/09	Report of the Committee on Hunting Methods 2021	6
NAMMCO/29/10	Report of the Committee on Inspection and Observation 2021	7
NAMMCO/29/11	Report of the Working Group on By-catch, Entanglements and Live Strandings 2021 (incl. euthanasia guidelines)	8
NAMMCO/29/12	New Recommendations for Scientific Research and new Requests for Advice from the SC	9.2
NAMMCO/29/13	Press Release	15.1
NAMMCO/29/14	Update on the MINTAG project	5
NAMMCO/29/15	Update on the North Atlantic Survey of Selected Cetaceans NASS-2024 and funding	4
NAMMCO/29/16	Proposal for Financial Rules	3.5
NAMMCO/29/17	Communication Plan: review of plan 2019-2022, and plan 2023-2024	12.5
NAMMCO/29/18	Data policy for NAMMCO Scientific Publications	12.4

For Information documents		
NAMMCO/29/MC05	List of Proposals for Conservation and Management and Recommendations for Research, with Responses from the Parties	9
NAMMCO/29/MC06	List of Active Requests from the NAMMCO Council to the Scientific Committee, with Responses from the SC	9
NAMMCO/29/FI01	Report of the MCC	9
NAMMCO/29/FI02	Report of the MCSW	9
NAMMCO/29/FI03	Report of the MCJ	9
NAMMCO/29/FI04	Staff Rules, updated version 17 June 2022	3
NAMMCO/29/FI05	ToR for the Committee on Inspection and Observation	7
NAMMCO/29/FI06	MCs New Proposals for Conservation and Management	9.1
NAMMCO/29/FI07	Application for funding to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Arktis-2030 Grant scheme)	4-
NAMMCO/29/FI08	MINTAG project description – final 060721	3.1, 5
NAMMCO/29/FI09	In Memoriam Gísli A. Víkingsson	1.3, 4.1
Annual (APR) and national (NPR) Progress Reports		
NAMMCO/29/NPR/FO-2021	National Progress Reports Faroe Islands – 2021	2
NAMMCO/29/NPR/GL-2021	National Progress Reports Greenland – 2021	2
NAMMCO/29/NPR/IS-2021	National Progress Reports Iceland – 2021	2
NAMMCO/29/NPR/NO-2020-2021	National Progress Reports Norway – 2021	2
NAMMCO/29/NPR/C&BC&S-2021	NAMMCO Catches, by-catches & strandings up to and including 2021	2
NAMMCO/29/NPR/CA-2021	National Progress Reports Canada – 2021	2
NAMMCO/29/NPR/JP-2021	National Progress Reports Japan – 2021	2
NAMMCO/29/APR/MA-2021	Annual Progress Reports Makivik Corporation – 2021	2

APPENDIX 4: OPENING STATEMENTS

OPENING ADDRESS FROM THE FAROE ISLANDS

Mister **CHAIR, DISTINGUISHED** Delegates, Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, on behalf of the Faroese delegation, I would like to take the opportunity to thank Norway for hosting this annual meeting, and the Secretariat for organising the meeting.

It is a great pleasure to be here today, and to be able to meet with you since the Corona epidemic for more than two years has prevented us gathering for an annual meeting.

This year NAMMCO marks the 30th anniversary of the founding of the organisation. This testifies to the importance of our organisation and the value of our cooperation.

The Faroe Islands would therefore like to thank all Parties and others involved in the work of NAMMCO for their efforts and commitment to NAMMCO and tasks of our organisation.

The Faroe Islands believes that international cooperation on conservation of shared resources of the sea should be carried out through regional cooperation. Such a cooperation is more likely to be effective at a regional level, rather than on a global level, of which NAMMCO is a clear example.

As part of NAMMCO's 30 year anniversary, the Faroe Islands will host the NAMMCO conference and gastronomic showcase "*Marine Mammals: A Sustainable Food Resource*" in Tórshavn 5-6 October.

The conference will highlight the use and importance of marine mammals as a food resource. Bringing together people from a range of backgrounds, including hunters and academics, chefs and policy makers, scientists and media, the conference will focus on the role of marine mammals as part of sustainable and resilient food systems and food cultures in the North Atlantic and around the world – today and in the future.

The conference will feature a special food event where chefs from Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland Norway, Canada, and Japan will serve a variety of whale and seal dishes and showcase the potential for more innovative use of marine mammals in modern gastronomy.

Hope to see you in the Faroe Islands in October.

Thank you.

OPENING STATEMENT FROM GREENLAND

Mister Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First and foremost, congratulations to all NAMMCO member countries, observers, and the Secretariat on the 30 years anniversary for the creation of the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission.

We are very pleased to be here with you after 2 years of online meetings. We have both good and less good experiences with online meetings. One of the good things is that we use less fuel and thus less gas emissions. Good for everyone, including marine mammals.

We are gathered to address issues on the conservation and management of marine mammals NAMMCO has focussed on the last 30 years. We have gained impressive results and are still eager to develop and make it more effective to benefit conservation and management of marine mammals. I feel confident that we all work towards this end as best we can. It has been another busy year dealing with conservation and management issues especially since Greenland base its economy and subsistence from marine resources. The COVID-19 has severely impacted the food security.

The important meat supplies

Greenland, being a large coast-based and isolated country is reliant on self-sufficiency. Marine mammals are the most important part of our food as shown in the National Progress Report on the numbers of reported catches. The Government is obliged to provide the framework for food security by law. The Government is also obliged to incorporate hunter- and user knowledge in their decision-making processes.

The need for increased focus on hunter and user knowledge

Greenland have followed most of the scientific advice since the establishment of NAMMCO. For the last 6-7 years, there has been clear evidence that there is a need to improve and structure the collection and use of hunter and user knowledge in relation to addressing issues on the conservation and management of marine mammals. The situation is imbalanced, which increases challenges between scientists and hunters. The situation has a severe impact on the management on marine mammals in Greenland. It is also cause for frustrations in the hunter communities, in meat supply and to our cultural heritage.

I am referring to the clear message and presentation hunters from East Greenland gave to the NAMMCO Annual Meeting in 2021 on their knowledge on narwhal. This year the hunters' frustrations are not only seen in East Greenland, but also in North Greenland. Greenland has received other scientific recommendations that could severely impact the hunting communities.

Climate change is a hugely focussed area, and a major cause for the changes we are experiencing as inhabitants in the Arctic. The hunting activities are not the only cause for the changes in distribution and abundance of various species. Therefore, NAMMCO should address the relevant organisations dealing with climate change and point out that immediate actions must be taken to halt the negative impact on marine resources and their habitat.

The best available scientific knowledge

The scientific knowledge of the marine mammal stocks has been steadily improving, and thus improving the management advice and actions in Greenland.

The view from Greenland is that the best available knowledge is obtained by combining the two knowledge systems of hunter and user knowledge with the scientific knowledge in the decision-making processes. Then it will be up to the politicians to make the final decision using the two types of knowledge.

The above-described situation can be solved, focussing the work on structured collection and use of hunter and user knowledge at a greater level. Knowledge of the marine mammal based on 24 hours and year-round observations of wildlife from hunters is valuable and needs to be considered in the decision-making processes, on national and regional levels. However, the task is big and should be considered carefully between and with all relevant stakeholders.

Therefore, Greenland would like to work for an increased focus on organised collection and use of hunter knowledge in the decision-making processes in the coming years, also within the NAMMCO context, when we are ready to do so.

We hope for a positive and constructive meeting.

Qujanaq – Thank you.

OPENING STATEMENT FROM ICELAND

Distinguished Chair, Delegates, Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my pleasure to have the chance to address you here today for the first time at the annual meeting of NAMMCO. On behalf of the Icelandic Delegation, I would like to extend thanks to Norway and the Secretariat for all the work in preparing this annual meeting and for the coordination of all the work carried out on behalf of NAMMCO.

Continued cooperation to enhance the knowledge of the marine mammals in the North Atlantic is without any doubts one of the most valuable works under the NAMMCO umbrella.

As one of the founding members, Iceland values the work conducted in the various NAMMCO committees. This is especially the case for the Scientific Committee, and it is well known that through the last decades leading scientists from Iceland have been actively engaged in this work and Iceland will continue to support these activities.

The assessments by the NAMMCO Scientific Committee have formed the basis for management decisions taken by Icelandic authorities concerning fin and common minke whales.

As NAMMCO has also placed a large emphasis on animal welfare issues, the work by the Committee on Hunting Methods is also of importance. This is particularly of importance to Iceland and steps have been taken to strengthen the monitoring of operations at sea.

The existence and proper functioning of NAMMCO is therefore crucial to its member countries and the co-operation is also crucial for the conservation of the marine mammals in the North Atlantic.

Iceland will assess the feasibility of the utilisation of marine mammals by taking into the account all the relevant variables prior to any changes in management policy.

I look forward to a constructive meeting and fruitful discussion on the matters at hand.

Thank you.

OPENING STATEMENT FROM NORWAY

Chair, Delegates, Observers and Guests - dear friends

We wish you a warm welcome to the city of Oslo. It feels good to finally be able to meet again.

After 30 years NAMMCO is a well-established organisation, constructive in its work and forward looking. Norway would like to express its sincere gratitude to all the Parties, and the Secretariat, for contributing to this unique environment of cooperation.

The management of marine mammals represents challenges of various kinds. In NAMMCO we meet these with a solid combination of the best available science and the knowhow of the hunter. At this meeting we are particularly looking forward to hear about – and see - the work from the Committee on Hunting Methods. We also welcome further exploring how inclusion of user knowledge can progress within NAMMCO.

NAMMCO leans heavily on science and research, while over the years they have not moved far from the group it is intended to assist - the hunters. The Scientific Committee in NAMMCO is central in giving the organisation legitimacy and direction with regard to which direction it should move.

Marine mammals have an important role to play when it comes to contributing to the supply of food and proteins. In 2050, there will be an estimated 10 billion people on the planet. These will need a supply of proteins in the form of healthy and nutritious food. It is recognised that a significant part of the future consumption of food will come from the sea, in the form of wild-caught and farmed fish, but marine mammals should be able to play a role here. The UN's sustainability goal 14, Life under water, is essential in order to achieve sustainability goal 2 - to be able to ensure people's access to sustainable and healthy food production in the future.

Finally, NAMMCO contribute to communication with other international organisations that need sustainable management of the ocean's resources. Not least when establishing the UN's sustainability goals, the necessity of good coordination of global processes on these matters has been made visible in a completely different way than before. The work in the international Ocean Panel, under Norwegian leadership, is an example of this. Good management of marine resources has thus acquired a far more prominent role than just a few years ago. NAMMCO is also part of this.

I look forward to and wish you all a fruitful meeting.

OPENING STATEMENT FROM CANADA

Good morning, Chair, distinguished Delegates, fellow Observers

Canada is pleased to participate as an Observer at this 29th meeting of the NAMMCO Council, and I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Commission on its 30th anniversary. While I am unable to be there with you in-person, I would also like to thank Norway for hosting this meeting and the Secretariat for all its organizational efforts in this regard.

Canada values NAMMCO's role as a provider of strong science advice on marine mammals and its dedication to the sustainable management of these species.

We also recognise the importance of collaborating with our international partners on science and the management of marine mammals, and of maintaining our close relationship with NAMMCO participants to ensure a coordinated approach to research and conservation.

Canada is committed to the sustainable management of marine mammals, and to protecting Indigenous knowledge and cultural practices, with subsistence marine mammal harvest being especially important to Indigenous peoples for its food, social, and ceremonial significance.

We look forward to positive discussions over the course of this meeting, and I want to reiterate our appreciation for the opportunity to join you.

Thank you.

OPENING STATEMENT FROM JAPAN

At the outset, Japan would like to thank the Norwegian Government for hosting the NAMMCO Council meeting, with great hospitality and efficiency.

We recognize that NAMMCO has made great achievements in the conservation and management of marine mammals since its establishment in 1992, and we would like to extend our heartfelt congratulation to all the NAMMCO members on its 30th Anniversary. We are honoured to attend the Council meeting in the anniversary year and wish to contribute to discussions as an observer. We also appreciate NAMMCO's initiative to hold the NAMMCO Conference and Showcase in the Faroe Islands next month, which will be a good opportunity for us to reaffirm the importance of marine mammals as food resources.

As you all are aware, Japan withdrew from the ICRW on 30 June 2019, and since July 2019 has resumed commercial whaling for sei, Bryde's and common minke whales in the western North Pacific. The catch limits were calculated in line with the Revised Management Procedure (RMP) and set at 171 for minke whale, 187 for Bryde's whale and 25 for sei whale in 2019. As for minke whales, we obtained a new abundance estimate for minke whales in 2021, the annual catch limit for minke whale was revised as 167 in 2022.

Even since its withdrawal from ICRW in 2019, Japan has remained committed to international cooperation for the proper management of cetaceans, through cooperation with relevant international organisations, including NAMMCO and IWC. More specifically, in addition to the NAMMCO Council, Japan will also participate in the 68th Meeting of the International Whaling

Commission as an observer and work with IWC member countries that share the basic position to promote sustainable use of aquatic living resources in order to contribute to the science-based sustainable management of whale resources.

In March 2022, the Japanese Cabinet adopted the Basic Plan for Fisheries. The Basic Plan states that under Japan's basic stance of sustainable use of marine living resources based on scientific evidence, whaling will be carried out sustainably in accordance with international law. To further strengthen its science-based approach, Japan is eager to enhance collaboration with NAMMCO and its Members. From such perspective, Japan would like to continue scientific and financial contribution to the MINTAG Project.

Finally, Japan would like to reiterate its conviction that the collaboration between NAMMCO and Japan is a vital force in international fora to promote conservation and sustainable use of marine living resources based on science.

Thank you for your attention.

OPENING STATEMENT FROM THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The United States would like to thank the NAMMCO members for the invitation to observe your 29th Annual Meeting.

This is the first time the United States is observing a Council meeting in person, and we hope to gain a better understanding of your organisation and approach to issues of mutual concern.

Our interests here are to listen and learn how NAMMCO is structured and operates and learn more about the work that you do. In particular, we are interested in your work on by-catch, entanglements and strandings, the ecosystem approach to management, and your work on hunting methods. We would also like to learn more about the organizational structure of NAMMCO, its decision-making process, its use of scientific information, how it addresses conservation issues, how it incorporates indigenous communities' views and knowledge into decisions, and how it addresses management issues. We look forward to observing discussions over the next few days and appreciate the opportunity to be here with you all this week.

OPENING STATEMENT FROM THE INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION

On behalf of the International Whaling Commission, I wish to express our gratitude for the invitation to join this 29th meeting of the Council of the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission. Our two organisations share a common mission of cetacean science and stewardship, and I would like to note the collaborative work already underway.

I would like to thank the NAMMCO members who participated in the 2022 IWC online Scientific Committee meeting. A key part of the collaboration between our organisations is through scientists, across their research programs and their engagement in meetings and workshops.

NAMMCO and the IWC share interests in managing the increasing threats to whale stocks. Bycatch and entanglement in fishing gear is the greatest single threat, and NAMMCO's BYCELS and IWC's Bycatch Mitigation Initiative seek to expand efforts to monitor and mitigate bycatch through collaborative work with the fishery sector. Whales and other cetaceans also face ship strikes, ocean noise, marine debris, chemical pollution and, of course, climate change. One of the many benefits of partnerships with other organisations such as NAMMCO, is that we are able to raise awareness of these challenges in other fora and find workable solutions.

The IWC oversees aboriginal subsistence whaling that requires robust science and data to underpin the modelling used in its management procedure. As part of this the IWC maintains records of historical and modern whaling catches, hosting the most comprehensive such database for any wildlife resource. The IWC Secretariat is grateful for the contributions from a broad range of countries and

researchers including NAMMCO members. The IWC also maintains a table of abundance estimates endorsed by the IWC Scientific Committee. This includes a range of information such as whether the estimate can be used for management, its geographic coverage and confidence intervals. Given NAMMCO's similar use of such estimates this is an area we have identified for increased cooperation.

We look forward to welcoming you to IWC68 which will take place this October in Slovenia after a 4-year gap forced by the Covid-19 pandemic. Thank you, Chair, and we look forward to the discussions over the next three days.

OPENING STATEMENT OF THE IMWC WORLD CONSERVATION TRUST

The upcoming meeting of the International Whaling Commission will be different to what it was like in the past: After all, Japan, the spearhead for the sustainable use of whales is no longer party to the Whaling Convention. But we should not become demotivated! Because for the last few years the international community has provided states and organisations favouring the principle of sustainable use with sufficient tools to justify before the IWC and before CITES that conservation and sustainable use are not mutually exclusive, but rather complement each other.

For instance, in 2018 the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas. This Declaration not only justifies the local use of abundant resources, but rather fosters it.

Also, the recently adopted UN Declaration on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment underlines the importance of including local communities in the decision-making processes. Not because of good will, but rather because indigenous peoples and local communities hold a wealth of knowledge from their interaction with the natural environment, which is crucial for the development of effective conservation strategies.

Unfortunately, NAMMCO is merely one of few among many international organisations which has recognised the interplay between conservation and sustainable use, also by including traditional knowledge and, indeed, the voices of indigenous peoples and local communities. The importance and timeliness of this approach cannot be under-rated and should serve as an example for others.

Especially bearing in mind the increasing challenges of climate change, increasing electricity and oil prices as well as increasing living costs, the production and consumption of local foods becomes ever more important. Let NAMMCO therefore be a beacon for the promotion of indigenous and local rights as well as effective conservation of marine mammals.

APPENDIX 5: AUDITED ACCOUNTS 2021

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE	2021 (NOK)
Income	
Contributions	4,834,724
TOTAL INCOME	
Expenditure	
Staff related costs	2,988,548
Internship	122,343
Staff travel and subsistence	103,073
Meetings	20,922
Rent of premises	321,675
Office supply	162,522
Communication & Outreach	54,348
Accounts & auditing	155,320
Observation scheme	0
Committee on Hunting Methods	38,527
Committee on Inspection and Observation	0
Working Group on BYCELS	0
Scientific Committee	166,321
Capacity building	0
Other expenses	56,064
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	4,189,663
OPERATING RESULT	645,061
Financial revenue (interest)	1,513
Financial costs	-4,243
RESULT TO RESERVE	642,331
BALANCE	
Assets	
Outstanding claims	349,609
Bank deposits	4,146,169
TOTAL ASSETS	4,495,778
Equity	
General Reserve	582,212
Restricted Reserve	600,000
Result	642,331
TOTAL EQUITY	1,824,543
Liabilities	
Creditors	115,513
External project funding	2,510,313
Employer's tax	45,404
TOTAL LIABILITIES	2,671,233
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	4,495,778

APPENDIX 6: EXPECTED ACCOUNTS 2022, BUDGET 2023, FORECAST BUDGET 2024

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE (NOK)

	Expected accounts 2022 (by 01.09)	Budget 2023	Forecast budget 2024
Income			
Contributions	4,931,469	5,030,098	5,130,700
TOTAL INCOME			
Expenditure			
Staff related costs	2,814,338	3,184,856	3,181,055
Internship	125,000	195,400	195,400
Staff travel and subsistence	346,000	410,000	245,000
Meetings	177,000	255,000	225,000
Rent of premises	322,600	338,730	355,667
Office supply	180,000	180,000	189,000
Communication & Outreach	202,500	100,000	100,000
Accounts and auditing	210,000	220,500	231,525
Observation scheme	0	300,000	0
Committee on Hunting Methods	280,947	100,000	0
Committee on Inspection and Observation	0	0	0
Working Group on BYCELS	0	0	0
Scientific Committee	170,000	211,000	256,500
Capacity building	20,000	20,000	20,000
Other expenses	114,274	220,000	49,344
NASS 2024 planning	0	100,000	150,000
Super-Tag project	200,000	175,000	180,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	5,162,659	6,010,486	5,378,491
RESULT // TO/FROM RESERVE	-231,190	-980,388	-247,791
Reserve	1,824,543	1,593,353	612,965
NEW TOTAL RESERVE	1,593,353	612,965	365,174

APPENDIX 7: NEW PROPOSALS FOR CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

This appendix provides the proposals for conservation and management that the MCs have endorsed and forwarded to the Parties.

1. JOINT MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES

Marine Mammal - Fisheries interactions

- *Ice*land includes a field for [the fishery] target species in the logbooks as well as other ways to distinguish coastal and offshore (cod and Greenland halibut) fisheries for monitoring by-catch.

User Knowledge

- *Norway* looks into how to include user knowledge in the management of coastal seals, i.e., to collect hunter observations in a systematic way to complement existing survey methods, specifically by improving spatial and temporal coverage and resolution.

2. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE FOR CETACEANS

Beluga

- *Greenland* documents any by-catch of belugas in East Greenland in the Special Reports.
- *Greenland* makes all efforts to release belugas in the case of live by-caught animals.

Narwhal

- *Greenland* reduces and mitigate the effects of climate change to protect narwhal's habitat.
- *Greenland* regulates shipping activities from large vessels (including cruise ships) in the summering ground along East Greenland to avoid negative impacts on narwhal populations.

3. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE FOR SEALS AND WALRUS

Bearded Seals

- *Greenland and Norway* make the catch data available in such a way that the origin of the catch can be attributed to smaller areas than those reported now (West and East Greenland and Svalbard).

APPENDIX 8: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEW RESEARCH

This appendix provides the recommendations for new research or data collection with implication for stock monitoring and management that the MCs have endorsed and forwarded to the Parties.

1. JOINT MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES

Marine Mammal - Fisheries interactions

- *In the Norwegian CRF, the collection of the lower jaw of seals becomes a mandatory term in the boat contract.*
- *Iceland encourages collecting DNA samples and taking photos of by-caught seals in 2022 to validate inspector reports and calculate rate of misidentification by fishermen.*
- *Iceland supports the analysis of DNA samples to assess rates of species misidentification through the provision of necessary funding.*

2. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE FOR CETACEANS

Beluga

- *Greenland conducts a summer survey of the High Arctic beluga population.*
- *In East Greenland, hunter observations of belugas be collected in a structured manner, incl. photo or video footage of the animals, where and when the sighting took place and how many individuals were seen.*
- *Greenland collects the following additional information from all dead (caught or by-caught) belugas: skin biopsy sample, length, tooth, girth measurements and presence of milk in the female's mammary glands.*
- *Greenland collects genetic data and/or microchemistry data that could show new stocks or mixing of existing stocks.*
- *In West Greenland, genomic analysis should be performed on samples from Igloolik and Taloyoak.*

Narwhal

- *Greenland collects life history data from non-depleted stocks of narwhals in W Greenland and Canada, to examine impact of climate change.*
- *Greenland undertakes further research on stock structure and abundance in Smith Sound.*
- *Greenland conducts new survey in Melville Bay and Inglefield Bredning as soon as possible.*
- *Greenland establishes a community-based biopsy programme of live narwhals to provide samples for stock structure analysis.*
- *Greenland collects the following additional information from hunted narwhals (if a hunt goes ahead, despite recommendations of zero catches in East Greenland): a skin biopsy sample, type of animal (according to the 3 categories described by hunters), photograph of the back, girth measurements and presence of milk in the female's mammary glands.*
- *In West Greenland, where climate change is also expected to have an impact, life history data be collected from non-depleted stocks of narwhals for examining the impact of climate change on life history parameters.*

- *In West Greenland, different approaches to counting narwhals in the fjords be further examined, but only to the extent that new approaches will be compatible with the existing time-series.*
- *In West Greenland, the planning of surveys continues to be done in collaboration with the hunters and survey methodology (including the design of the track lines) continues to be done according to internationally accepted survey standards, to ensure that abundance estimates derived from the survey can be accepted by NAMMCO and used in the assessment.,*
- *In West Greenland, definitions be developed for what constitutes small stocks, depleted stocks and stocks at risk of extirpation, and that frameworks for advice and management then be articulated for what actions should be taken or these different categories.*

Killer whale

- *The Secretariat examines what it entails to participate to the World Killer Whale Conference planned for April 2023 in Spain and refers back to FAC, as this could have financial implications.*

Long-finned pilot whale

- *The Faroe Islands complete the analyses of both the biological and the tagging data in time to be forwarded to the 2023 PWWG.*

3. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE FOR SEALS AND WALRUS

Bearded seals

- *Greenland prioritises the analysis of data on local abundance and make it available to the Bearded Seal WG (meeting planned for March 2023).*

NAMMCO Contributing to a Sustainable North

Is Whaling a Conservation Issue?

Is our thinking stuck in the past?

BEFORE	NOW
Purpose Supplying the oil industry	Primarily a food source
Scale 1900 – 1989 <2,900,000 in 100 years* up to 75,000 a year*	1990 – 2019 <43,000 in 30 years† up to 2,300 a year†
Scope Global, incl. Antarctica	Coastal or EEZ
15 species, most stocks	8 species, few stocks
Sustainability High level of waste Decreasing stocks, some hunted to 99% depletion Hunting of endangered stocks	Use most of the resource Hunted stocks are stable or increasing Endangered stocks are protected
Management Not properly regulated Unknown stock abundances Mismanagement & illegal hunting	Strictly regulated Monitoring of stock abundances Careful management & reporting

* Data from the International Whaling Commission (IWC) and the International Whaling Commission (IWC) and the International Whaling Commission (IWC).
† Data from the International Whaling Commission (IWC) and the International Whaling Commission (IWC) and the International Whaling Commission (IWC).

North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission

NAMMCO Contributing to a Sustainable North

Hunting: the challenge for management in the North Atlantic?

We need to have an ecosystem approach that integrates all impacts. Hunting in itself is not the challenge: it is the cumulative effect of all human activities. However, some of them are not easily quantifiable or mitigable.

Hunting
The impact of hunting on marine mammals is a complex issue. It involves the removal of individuals from the population, which can lead to a decline in stock abundance. The impact is often cumulative, especially when combined with other threats.

By-catch
By-catch is the unintended capture of non-target species during whaling operations. It can have significant impacts on the survival and health of these species.

Ship strike
Ship strikes are collisions between ships and marine mammals, which can result in injury or death. This is a major threat to large whales and dolphins.

Pollution
Pollution, including plastic debris and chemical contaminants, can affect the health and reproduction of marine mammals.

Disturbance
Disturbance from human activities, such as tourism and research, can affect the behavior and stress levels of marine mammals.

Climate Change
Climate change is affecting the distribution and abundance of marine mammals through changes in sea ice, food availability, and ocean temperatures.

North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission

NAMMCO Contributing to a Sustainable North

Abundance and Catches: Whales & Dolphins

Greenland (GL)
Whale and dolphin abundance and catches are shown for various species in Greenland. The map includes data points for different years and locations.

Iceland (IS)
Whale and dolphin abundance and catches are shown for various species in Iceland. The map includes data points for different years and locations.

Norway (NO)
Whale and dolphin abundance and catches are shown for various species in Norway. The map includes data points for different years and locations.

Faroe Islands (FO)
Whale and dolphin abundance and catches are shown for various species in the Faroe Islands. The map includes data points for different years and locations.

North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission

NAMMCO Contributing to a Sustainable North

Abundance and Catches: Seals & Walrus

Greenland (GL)
Seal and walrus abundance and catches are shown for various species in Greenland. The map includes data points for different years and locations.

Iceland (IS)
Seal and walrus abundance and catches are shown for various species in Iceland. The map includes data points for different years and locations.

Norway (NO)
Seal and walrus abundance and catches are shown for various species in Norway. The map includes data points for different years and locations.

Faroe Islands (FO)
Seal and walrus abundance and catches are shown for various species in the Faroe Islands. The map includes data points for different years and locations.

North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission

APPENDIX 10: PRESS RELEASE

The Council of NAMMCO held its 29th annual meeting in Oslo, Norway, from the 13th to 15th September. NAMMCO is an international organisation for regional cooperation on the conservation, management, and study of marine mammals in the North Atlantic, with the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland, and Norway as members.

Sustainable harvesting of marine mammals for food defines NAMMCO and unites its member countries, which share a strong commitment to United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 14 – to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

The Governments of Canada, Denmark, Japan and the USA observed the meeting, as well as Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated. International organisations represented during the meetings included the International Whaling Commission, the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation, the Northeast Atlantic Fisheries Commission and the World Conservation Trust.

Climate change and food security

Marine mammals represent an environmentally friendly sustainable food resource with a low carbon footprint. In light of the challenges brought on by Climate Change, the annual meeting stressed the importance of sustainable utilisation of local marine resources and food security.

Their role will be highlighted in the upcoming international conference and gastronomic showcase “Marine Mammals: A Sustainable Food Resource” on the 5th and 6th October in Tórshavn which will also celebrate the 30th anniversary of NAMMCO.

Hunter safety and animal welfare

NAMMCO continues to put effort on improving safety for hunters and animal welfare. A newly developed instruction video featuring the safe handling of the whaling cannon and explosive grenade was screened at the meeting. The funding to produce a second video on animal welfare focusing on shooting angles and targets site was approved.

User Knowledge

Acknowledging the importance of both user and scientific knowledge to form the basis for management advice, member countries agreed to form a Working Group that would look at how these two knowledge systems can be best integrated into the advice process.

The MINTAG

The meeting welcomed updates on the MINTAG project, a cooperation between NAMMCO Countries and Japan, aiming for the first time at developing miniaturised tags for lesser known and difficult to tag species (fin, sei and minke whales) to study their movements. First tests were carried out in Iceland in July.

NASS 2024

The member countries reiterated their commitment to carry out North Atlantic Sightings Surveys in 2024 in order to obtain essential abundance estimates of cetacean stocks in the North Atlantic. These surveys represent a unique timeseries as they have been conducted in regular intervals for the last four decades.

Anthropogenic stressors

NAMMCO reiterated its concerns on anthropogenic stressors i.e., shipping traffic and their negative impact on marine mammals and their habitat. Therefore, a strong scientific approach to predict the effect of these stressors is needed.