



COMMITTEE ON HUNTING METHODS

*26 February & 4 March 2024
Online*

REPORT



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The Committee on Hunting Methods (CHM) met online 26 February 2024 from 13:00 to 15:30 CET and 1 March 2024 from 13:00 to 14:30 CET. The CHM meeting was chaired by Kathrine A. Ryeng (Norway) following the petition of Jóhann Ásmundsson (Iceland) who holds the chair of the Committee. The meeting agenda and list of participants are available in Appendix 1 and 2, respectively.

Ásmundsson and Naima El bani Altuna (Deputy Secretary at NAMMCO) introduced themselves to the Committee, and Ryeng welcomed introductions of all the members.

1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND REVIEW OF DOCUMENTS

Ryeng opened the meeting for comments to the agenda. The agenda was revised and adopted without modifications. Meeting documents were reviewed (Appendix 1).

2. REVIEW OF BACKGROUND AND STATUS OF CHM PER AUGUST 2023

The CHM reviewed the document prepared by former Deputy Secretary Charlotte Winsnes and General Secretary Geneviève Desportes (CHM/2024-01/02). The group commended their efforts summarising the work of the CHM until August 2023. Ryeng requested the Secretariat to include the study of the time to death (TTD) conducted on fin whales in Iceland in 2014 before the document is made available. Guro Gjelsvik clarified that the monitoring on the TTD in Norway, which was expected to be conducted in 2022, did not take place due to budget constraints. Instead, Norway implemented a mandatory course for all whalers focusing on animal welfare.

Ásmundsson and Kristján Loftsson informed the Committee on the issues related to the fin whale hunt in Iceland in the summer of 2022 and 2023.

3. GENERAL INFORMATION UPDATES

The CHM reviews and updates information related to its terms of reference regularly. The following overview documents are updated either in connection with meetings or by correspondence intersessionally. Prior to the meeting members of the CHM were reminded to update the Secretariat on the missing information presented under items 3.1 and 3.2.

3.1 LIST OF LAWS AND REGULATIONS AND LIST OF REFERENCES

Laws and regulation ([here](#))

Iceland informed:

- Full list of amendments to regulation No 163/1973 on whaling: No 304/1983, 239/1984, 862/2006, 822/2007, 456/2008, 58/2009, 263/2009, 359/2009, 1116/2013, 263/2014, 186/2019, 642/2023
- Regulation No 1035, November 2017 on the ban on whale hunting in specific areas
- Regulation No 1100 of 14 December 2019 on the ban of seal hunting and its legal basis (Law No 62 of 14 June, 2006 on the harvesting of anadromous fish in Iceland
- New regulation No 895/2023 on hunting of fin whales

Norway informed:

- Regulation 511 (2022) on minke whale hunting had been slightly amended regarding shooting angle.

[Publications and references related to marine mammal hunting \(here\)](#)

Ryeng informed about their new publication:

- Ryeng, K. A., & Larsen, S. E. (2024). The significance of shooting angle in seal shooting. *Animal Welfare*, 33, e5. <https://doi.org/10.1017/awf.2024.8>

The updated information has been uploaded to the NAMMCO website.

3.2 OTHER

The CHM briefly discussed the two documents “Conservation Status Marine Mammal Stocks in NAMMCO” document (click [here](#)) and “Hunting in NAMMCO member Countries” (click [here](#)). Masaana Dorph and Ryeng noted the text of the “Hunting in NAMMCO member Countries” page should be updated. The CHM **agreed** that members should review these and submit their changes and updates to the Secretariat. The Secretariat will also group the regulations in that page per country.

4. VIDEO PROJECT

The CHM reviewed the second instruction video for hunters, which is an animation video entitled "Large Whale Hunting: Target Area and Shooting Angle". The default English version of the video was presented for comments and potential adoption. The CHM acknowledged and commended the collaborative efforts of Ryeng, Winsnes, Øen, and the company Sans in its development. It was unanimously noted that the video serves as a valuable complement to the previously published [Manual for the instruction on the maintenance and use of weaponry and equipment deployed in hunting of baleen whales in NAMMCO member Countries](#).

The group **agreed**:

- To propose the translation of the video into Greenlandic (as initially planned) and Norwegian.
- To include optional English and Icelandic subtitles in the English version (Figure 1) to increase the reach of the videos.
- To simplify the language used in the video in the translated versions, as the video currently has a scientific tone in its English version. This should be done aiming at making the content of the video more accessible to the target audience.

The Secretariat will be responsible for adding the subtitles to the file. The decision to proceed with the translation, including both subtitles and voiceover, is dependent on the budget allocation that the Council will provide for these efforts.



Figure 1. Screenshot of the English version of the video with option to activate/deactivate subtitles in different languages.

Dorph noted the need for an addition in the video regarding the rifle calibre used as back-up weapon in Greenland, which is .30-06 as indicated in Executive Order no. 9 from 6th of December 2018 . The Secretariat will follow up on this and will correct the video accordingly. The corrections will be made on the video, the subtitles, and the translated versions of the voiceover.

The CHM discussed the proposed work plan suggested by the CHM in 2022 and 2023 concerning the continuation of video production. The discussed proposal was that of producing a video to respond to the following recommendation by the NAMMCO Expert Group Meeting on Assessing TTD data from Large Whale Hunts (EG) in 2010 and 2015:

To train hunters to measure and report on strike location, detonation location and distance between the two for fin, humpback and bowhead whales in Greenland.

Such training video could be also used to improve the reporting of minke whale harpoon hunts and therefore contribute to the recommendation given by the by the EG (2015) *to investigate the reasons why NO has a higher IDR than GL in the minke harpoon hunts.*

The CHM saw no need for an immediate initiation of a new video project.

The Committee **agreed** to postpone further video projects and to assess the reception of the current video first.

In the upcoming CHM meeting, the Committee plans to discuss the impact of the current videos and explore potential topics for new ones, including subjects like seal hunting, how to minimise struck and lost, and the recommendations provided by the EG.

5. FUTURE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

To organise an Expert Group Meeting/Workshop

The Committee discussed agenda item 5 from the CHM’s 2023 report (NAMMCO/CHM/2024-01/FI02), on the work plan from 2023-2024. In their 2023 meeting, the CHM reiterated the priorities from the previous year (CHM report 2022, NAMMCO/CHM/2024-01/FI01), though there was no comprehensive discussion due to time constraints.

In 2023, the CHM reiterated to organise “*an expert group meeting or workshop on rifle hunt in Greenland, although it was agreed to postpone the gathering until Greenland had sufficient resources to prioritise the necessary work for such an undertaking to be successful*”. This priority is based on the workplan for the CHM adopted by the Council 27 (2019), through which “[*the CHM would hold*] a *back-to-back Expert Group Meeting/Workshop on hunting methods where the combined use of harpoon and rifle is not one weapon*”. This plan has been repeatedly postponed (CHM reports 2022, 2023).

In the first meeting, Greenland reiterated that the necessary data is still unavailable, and that such data would need to be analysed for the workshop/Expert group meeting to be effective. The Secretariat highlighted NAMMCO's past allocation of funds (e.g., North Atlantic Sightings Survey) to hire additional personnel for the analysis of critical unanalysed data.

In the second meeting, Dorph informed that this topic was taken up internally, and shared with the group that Greenland does not see such workshop will take place in the foreseeable future, and therefore suggests not to hold such a workshop, also due to the fact, that Greenland is the only country having rifle hunt.

To address struck and lost (S&L) rates of white-beaked dolphins in Greenland

The Secretariat informed the CHM that the Dolphin Working Group (October 2023) and Scientific Committee 30 (January 2024) noted the high S&L rates in the white beaked dolphin open-water rifle hunt in Greenland. Dorph shared with the group that Greenland is in the process of drafting a new Executive Order, set to be enacted by Spring 2024, through which reporting on S&L and catches will be made compulsory.

In addition, Desportes informed the Committee on methods (i.e., hand harpoon with line) resulting in reduced S&L rates are used in Japan and that the CHM could be interested in discussing such methods.

To invite hunters to participate in meeting of the CHM meetings

In line with the CHM recommendation proposed in 2021, which advised inviting hunters to actively participate in CHM meetings to provide insights and updates on specific hunting methods, as well as address crucial issues related to the activity, including their perspectives on challenges and opportunities, the CHM discussed which hunter organisation could be invited to the next meeting.

Dorph informed the Committee that Greenland could ask the KNAPK if they could be interested to participate in the next meeting. The Secretariat will verify the availability of funds for translation services to facilitate effective communication during the meeting.

6. COOPERATION WITH JAPAN ON WELFARE ISSUES

The Heads of Delegation have requested input from the CHM regarding potential collaboration with Japan on animal welfare issues. The Committee noted the importance of receiving an update from Japan on the status of recommendations provided by the EG in 2010 and 2015.

The Committee recognised the potential benefits of exchanging information between NAMMCO member Countries and Japan on the TTD and hunting procedures, including the types of weapons and

equipment used, as well as the methods employed. The Committee proposed to follow up on this collaboration via email and will eventually schedule a meeting to further discuss these topics in detail.

7. DIVERSE UPDATE

Ryeng provided new information regarding the upcoming ban on use of lead in bullets and other projectiles for hunting: “Derogations are proposed for using lead in bullets for seal hunting and in full metal jacket bullets. For seal hunting, the user needs permission from the Member State to hunt seals. Use of full metal jacket bullets also needs to be allowed in the relevant Member State.”

8. WORKPLAN 2024-2026

Year	Activity/Task	Participants	Tentative date
2024	Update regulation and laws	CHM	<i>Continuously</i>
	Inviting hunters to CHM meetings	CHM / Hunters	
	Exchange information with Japan on hunts	CHM / Japan	
	Review catch data-base	CHM	Late May
2025	Update regulation and laws	CHM	<i>Continuously</i>
	Inviting hunters to CHM meetings	CHM / Hunters	
	Evaluate (i.e., is it informative for hunters?) current video if possible	CHM	
	Propose a new video project or not		
	Review catch data-base	CHM	
2026	Update regulation and laws	CHM	<i>Continuously</i>
	Inviting hunters to CHM meetings	CHM / Hunters	
	Evaluate (i.e., has the TTD decreased?) current video if possible	CHM	
	Make a new video?	CHM	
	Review catch data-base	CHM	

9. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the CHM will take place in late May 2024 and the Committee will be tasked with reviewing the catch database reported by member Countries, which was not available at the time of the current meeting.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The CHM reiterated that the tasks of the BYCELS Working Group, now a “sleeping” entity, should not be taken up by the CHM. The future of this WG could be an issue for the Heads of Delegations to discuss.

11. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

The report was adopted by correspondence 6 March 2024.

REFERENCES

NAMMCO-North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (2010). [Report of the NAMMCO Expert Group meeting on assessment of large whale killing data](#). North Atlantic House Copenhagen, Denmark.

NAMMCO-North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (2015). [Report of the NAMMCO Expert Group meeting on assessing Time to Death from the large whale hunts](#). Copenhagen, Denmark.

APPENDIX 1: AGENDA AND LIST OF DOCUMENTS

1. Adoption of agenda and review of documents
2. Review of background and status of chm per August 2023
3. General information updates
4. List of laws and regulations and list of references
 - 4.1. Other
 - 4.2. Video project
5. Future work of the committee
6. Cooperation with Japan on welfare issues
7. Diverse update
8. Workplan 2024-2026 / suggestions
9. Next meeting
10. Any other business

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

DOC REFERENCE	TITLE	AGENDA ITEM
CHM/2024-01/01	Draft Agenda & List of Documents	1
CHM/2024-01/02	Background and Status of CHM per August 2023	2
CHM/2024-01/03	Large Whale Hunting Video	4
CHM/2024-01/F101	Report of the CHM Meeting in May 2022	
CHM/2024-01/F102	Report of the CHM Meeting in May 2023	

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