



COMMITTEE ON HUNTING METHODS

20 June 2024
Online

REPORT



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Adoption of the agenda and review of documents	4
2. Review of the catch database 2023.....	4
3. Presentations by hunters at the CHM	5
4. Exchange of information with Japan	5
5. Theme proposal for animal welfare workshop	6
6. Next meeting	6
7. Any other business	6
8. Adoption of the report	6
References.....	7
Appendix 1: Agenda and list of documents	8
Appendix 2: List of participants.....	9

The Committee on Hunting Methods (CHM) met online 20 June 2024 from 13:00 to 15:30 CEST. The CHM meeting was chaired by Jóhann Ásmundsson (Iceland). The meeting agenda and list of participants are available in Appendix 1 and 2, respectively.

1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND REVIEW OF DOCUMENTS

Ásmundsson opened the meeting for comments on the agenda. The agenda was revised, and Item number 3 was modified due to the absence of a hunter to present their type of hunt. Instead, the focus of Item 3 shifted to discussing how to proceed with hunters' presentations. An additional item, Item 5, was added to discuss suggestions that the CHM would have for the themes/issues that could be discussed during the Workshop on Animal Welfare, that will take place a day ahead of the 32nd Annual Council Meeting (i.e., on 24 March 2025).

The meeting documents were reviewed (Appendix 1) and an updated version of CHM/2024-02/02_rev was circulated. Meeting document CHM/2024-02/03, circulated prior to the meeting was also added to the list of meeting documents.

2. REVIEW OF THE CATCH DATABASE 2023

The CHM reviewed the 2023 Catch Database reported by the NAMMCO member Countries (CHM/2024-02/02_rev).

The CHM members presented the catch figures, including struck and lost, for their respective countries and explained the specifics of their hunting regulations. Minor errors in data reporting were identified, and it was agreed that the Secretariat will rectify these errors in collaboration with the relevant parties in the coming days after the meeting. To prevent such minor errors in the future, **the Secretariat will pay more attention during the data reporting process.**

The CHM noted that discrepancies in the hunting regulations across different countries could lead to different interpretation of the kind of data that is required to be reported. Some of the major issues and clarifications are noted below:

- The column "Hunting period according to legislation" has varying interpretations. In Norway, hunting licenses are issued for a specific period, whereas in Iceland, licenses are issued annually without specific dates, although Iceland adheres to IWC regulations for large whales, stipulating a hunting period not exceeding six months, followed by a six-month no-hunting interval.
- The importance of differentiating between the notation of *No quota* and a *quota=0* in the database.
- The importance of differentiating between *Struck and lost* of 0 or *no information on Struck and lost* for a specific hunt.
- Clarification about seal hunting in Iceland: Regulation No. 1100/2019 bans all seal hunting in Icelandic territorial waters (including at sea, in rivers and other water bodies). The Directorate of Fisheries in Iceland can provide conditional exemptions for landowners to hunt seals for own utilization within 115 m adjacent to the shore. The exemption is limited to own traditional use and does not allow for the shooting of seals in water to protect the harvesting of anadromous fish.

Given these regulatory differences, to prevent misinterpretation and promote transparency, **the Secretariat will prepare more detailed guidance for each field in the Database for the next reporting periods.**

The CHM also emphasised that when information is available and reporting is compulsory, **member Countries should ensure that the fields for Catch, and Struck and Lost are filled separately, rather than providing a combined total number for the Catches. If no information on Struck and lost is available, the column Total catch should not be used.**

Desportes noted that catch information that is uncomplete should not be entered in the database. This concerns the data from Greenland for species not subject to a quota, as the hunter reporting for a year is not completed by March 1 of the following year.

3. PRESENTATIONS BY HUNTERS AT THE CHM

The CHM expressed concern about maintaining this item as a regular agenda point in all CHM meetings due to the difficulty in finding hunters interested in presenting their types of hunts to the committee. This challenge likely arises from the lack of a clear framework or specific questions that the hunters should address.

Kathrine Ryeng explained that the intention behind inviting hunters to CHM meetings to discuss specific types of hunts was to educate CHM members, who may not necessarily have expertise in all the different hunts across NAMMCO member Countries. The committee agreed that this was a valuable goal and **expressed interest in continuing to welcome a presentation by hunters to the CHM meetings.**

To better structure this item and ensure a hunter presents a topic at each meeting, **Ásmundsson and Ryeng, with the support of the Secretariat, will work on formulating specific topics to attract hunters and preparing a list of hunts that could be of particular interest to the CHM.**

4. EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION WITH JAPAN

During the previous CHM meeting (CHM/2024-01):

The Heads of Delegation have requested input from the CHM regarding potential collaboration with Japan on animal welfare issues (. ...) 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 Heads of Delegation and Japan have agreed to continue efforts towards facilitating an exchange of information on animal welfare issues.

The CHM reiterated the importance of receiving an update from Japan on the status of recommendations provided by the Expert Groups in 2010 and 2015. Desportes noted that information on that would be included in the information database.

In order to provide a comprehensive overview of hunting activities and animal welfare in NAMMCO member Countries and Japan, Geneviève Desportes shared a draft template (CHM/2024-02/03). This document would comprise the collection of information concerning animal welfare for all marine mammal hunting activities in NAMMCO member Countries and Japan. She had started filling in for some of the hunts to see its suitability. [The Secretariat would support the NAMMCO members in filling the information already available at the Secretariat, and member should have to check and complete].

Members of the CHM were requested to submit their feedback on document CHM/2024-02/03 via email shortly after the CHM meeting, indicating any information they believe is missing and should be included regarding hunts in NAMMCO member Countries and animal welfare.

When the template is finalised, then it will be proposed (empty) to Japan to fill it in.

5. THEME PROPOSAL FOR ANIMAL WELFARE WORKSHOP

The Heads of Delegations decided in May 2024 that a one-day workshop on animal welfare should be organised just ahead the 32nd Annual Council Meeting in Tromsø in March 2025, and designated a Planning Group. While it was yet to be decided by the time of the meeting, this workshop could serve as an umbrella to host the information exchange on welfare between NAMMCO member Countries and Japan (see Item 4).

The Heads of Delegation had welcomed the CHM's input regarding potential themes for the workshop. At the time of the meeting, the idea was that it could be interesting to have a status overview on animal welfare in hunting and sealing, the information collated in the template providing a background document to this overview.

The CHM agreed it was positive to have a workshop on the status of animal welfare but found it difficult to come with a specific input when it was not known which output was desired.

The members of the CHM proposed tentative themes that would be interesting to touch upon:

- Hunters' training and practice: Do hunters receive training? Do they practice?
- Focusing on the time-to-death (TTD). Considering that immediate death is unfortunately not realistic in all cases, can an acceptable TTD be defined by NAMMCO for the different hunts?
- Are the killing methods (primary and secondary weapons) the most suitable ones and up to the technical advancement

The CHM questioned whether the workshop should be narrowed down to specific hunts, rather than addressing all hunts.

These suggestions, along with document CHM/2024-02/03, will be forwarded to the Planning Group (PG) of the workshop for their consideration. Ryeng is part of the PG and will ensure the liaison.

6. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place in September 2024, and the date will be decided by email correspondence in August 2024.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was discussed.

8. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

The report was adopted by correspondence 1 July 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 THE AGENDA AND REVIEW OF DOCUMENTS**
2. **REVIEW OF THE CATCH DATABASE 2023**
3. **PRESENTATIONS BY HUNTERS AT THE CHM**
4. **EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION WITH JAPAN**
5. **THEME PROPOSALS FOR ANIMAL WELFARE WORKSHOP**
6. **NEXT MEETING**
7. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**
8. **ADOPTION OF THE REPORT**

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

DOC REFERENCE	TITLE	AGENDA ITEM
CHM/2024-02/01	Draft agenda & list of documents	1
CHM/2024-02/01b	Draft annotated agenda	1
CHM/2024-02/02_rev	Database 2023	2
CHM/2024-02/03	Template about Information on hunts	4,5

APPENDIX 2: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Geneviève Desportes

NAMMCO Secretariat

geneviève@nammco.org

Jóhann Ásmundsson (Chair, IS)

Directorate of Fisheries

johann.asmundsson@fiskistofa.is

Kathrine A. Ryeng (NO)

Institute of Marine Research in Norway

kathrine.ryeng@hi.no

Kristján Loftsson (IS)

Icelandic whaler

kl@hvalur.is

Masaana Dorph (GL)

Ministry of Fisheries and Hunting

mado@nanoq.gl

Naima El bani Altuna

NAMMCO Secretariat

naima@nammco.org

Ulla Svarrer Wang (FO)

Ministry of Fisheries and Infrastructure

ulla.svarrer.wang@fisk.fo