



COMMITTEE ON HUNTING METHODS

8 October 2024
Online

REPORT



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The content of this report contains the view of the Committee and does not necessarily represent the views of the Council.

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The Committee on Hunting Methods (CHM) met online 8 October 2024 from 13:00 to 14:30 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. The agenda and meeting documents were adopted without modification.

2. PROCEDURE FOR INVITING HUNTERS TO THE CHM MEETINGS

At the last CHM meeting (June 2024, CHM/2024-02), the CHM expressed concerns about maintaining the item "Presentations by Hunters" as a regular agenda point in all CHM meetings. This was due to the difficulty of deciding which hunters to invite and finding hunters interested in presenting their types of hunts to the Committee. To better structure this item and ensure that a hunter presents a topic at each meeting, Ásmundsson, Kathrine Ryeng, and the NAMMCO Secretariat worked on drafting a suggestion procedure for inviting hunters to CHM meetings, including how to select a hunt of interest for the CHM (Document CHM/2024-03/02).

Ásmundsson presented the document and opened the floor for discussion. **The CHM agreed on the criteria for determining which hunts/hunters to invite**, as follows:

- **Animal welfare:** Focus on hunts with high struck-and-loss rates or longer time to death.
- **Volume of animals killed:** Prioritise hunts involving a larger number of animals.
- **Identification of knowledge gaps:** Highlight hunts where there is a lack of information.

The CHM also suggested edits to the document, and the **updated version of the "Procedure to Invite Hunters to CHM Meetings" is included as Appendix 3.**

In relation with the procedure, members of the CHM raised some concerns:

- **Disclosure of information:** The CHM reports are always made public, raising fears that this openness may discourage hunters from sharing their concerns with the Committee. The Committee will explore ways to address this issue while maintaining transparency, which is one of NAMMCO's core principles.
- **Use of information:** Hunters, particularly in Greenland, have expressed growing mistrust towards NAMMCO in recent years, fearing that the information they share may be used to strengthen regulations hampering their activity.
- **Securing funding:** Funding may be needed to cover, among other things, translation services. Typically, in NAMMCO, the country inviting hunters is responsible for securing these funds, which could influence decisions on who to invite unless the CHM helps cover these expenses.

The NAMMCO Secretariat clarified that the CHM has a budget available for such purposes (NOK 25.000 on 2024 and NOK 250.000 in draft budget 2025) could request additional funds at the upcoming Annual Council Meeting 32 in March 2025, if necessary. As it is online meetings, as long as a hunter has access to a good internet, the interpretation can be done by a person situated in another place, although this is not ideal.

To address the mistrust from the Greenlandic hunters towards NAMMCO and its Committees, the **CHM could collaborate with the Committee on Inspection and Observation (CIO) in their initiative to improve communication and build trust with hunters.** The CHM should take this opportunity to emphasise the benefits of engaging with NAMMCO/CHM for hunters to raise their concerns. It should also highlight that some of the improvements made through NAMMCO to hunting methods have greatly benefited hunters in the past, demonstrating that the relationship with NAMMCO is important.

Additionally, the CHM stressed the importance of clearly explaining to hunters how the information they share will be used: solely to improve hunting methods, which can only benefit their practices. The presentation of the hunters can be summarised, as it is also done for the presentation by scientists at the SC, and sensitive data does not need to be reported.

Since this initiative of inviting hunters has been ongoing for some time at NAMMCO, more experienced CHM members encouraged newer members to (re)read previous [Expert Group reports](#) and revisit [hunting training manuals](#) prepared by the CHM for better understanding of the cooperation between hunters and CHM.

3. UPDATE ON WELFARE WORKSHOP (WWS)

Geneviève Desportes provided the CHM with an update on the status of the Welfare Workshop (WWS), which is planned to take place before the 32nd Annual Council Meeting in March 2025 (Document CHM/2024-03/03). Currently, the workshop is awaiting approval from the Head of Delegations (HoD), who are expected to make a decision in November 2024. Desportes will share updates with the CHM on the HoDs' decision and will also circulate the database template designed to provide information necessary to map the status of welfare in the different hunts, that has been slightly simplified.

As currently planned, the workshop focuses on bringing the general status of animal welfare outcomes and knowledge on those, so the prioritisation of the efforts in collecting the necessary information on welfare outcomes and in improving them can be well informed. The WWS will not delve into the specific improvements to individual hunts. **The CHM is positive over the WWS. The Committee agreed that the workshop will allow to constitute the necessary welfare database that will be very valuable for guiding the Committee's work on improving hunting methods in the coming years.**

4. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place in mid-February 2025 (so the CHM can help reviewing the “WWS database”), and the date will be decided by email correspondence.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Kristján Loftsson mentioned that he found that using the term "Animal Welfare" when referring to the context of hunting/killing wild animals was peculiar and asked whether an alternative could not be used, the Committee agreed to think about it and provide suggestions before the next CHM meeting if they had any. Ryeng noticed that, for the same reasons, the terms used now in the field was not “animal welfare” but “welfare outcomes”.

Amalie Jessen informed the Committee that Masaana Dorph has moved to another Department. Until Greenland appoints a replacement, Jessen will serve as the CHM's contact person for Greenland. The CHM expressed its gratitude to Masaana Dorph for his cooperation and contributions throughout the years.

6. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

The report was adopted by correspondence 18 October 2024.

APPENDIX 1: AGENDA AND LIST OF DOCUMENTS

1. **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND REVIEW OF DOCUMENTS**
2. **PROCEDURE FOR INVITING HUNTERS TO THE CHM MEETINGS**
3. **UPDATE ON WELFARE WORKSHOP (WWS)**
4. **NEXT MEETING**
5. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

| DOC REFERENCE | TITLE | AGENDA ITEM |
|-----------------|--|-------------|
| CHM/2024-03/01a | Draft agenda & list of documents | 1 |
| CHM/2024-03/01b | Draft annotated agenda | 1 |
| CHM/2024-03/02 | Suggestions to develop a procedure to invite hunters to CHM meetings | 2 |
| CHM/2024-03/03 | Proposal about the WWS | 3 |

APPENDIX 2: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Amalie Jessen (GL)

Ministry of Fisheries and Hunting

Geneviève Desportes

NAMMCO Secretariat

Guro Gjelsvik (NO)

Directorate of Fisheries

Jóhann Ásmundsson (Chair, IS)

Directorate of Fisheries

Kathrine A. Ryeng (NO)

Institute of Marine Research in Norway

Kristján Loftsson (IS)

Icelandic whaler

Naima El bani Altuna

NAMMCO Secretariat

Ulla Svarrer Wang (FO)

Ministry of Fisheries and Infrastructure

APPENDIX 3: PROCEDURE FOR INVITING HUNTERS TO CHM MEETINGS

Background: This document is based on document NAMMCO/CHM/2024-03/02, which is the result of a meeting held by Jóhann Ásmundsson (IS, CHM Chair), Kathryne A. Ryeng (NO), Geneviève Desportes (NAMMCO Secretariat), Naima El Bani Altuna (NAMMCO Secretariat) to put together suggestions to develop a procedure for inviting hunters to Committee of Hunting Methods (CHM) meetings.

This document, accepted by the NAMMCO/CHM-03, has the objective of establishing a procedure/criterion for the CHM to be more effective at inviting hunter to their meetings, which are held online. **The CHM agrees to invite hunter representatives from lesser-known hunts.** In preparation for the Welfare Workshop in March 2025, connecting with these hunters will be beneficial for the CHM to gain insights, establish connections, and begin building trust. Beyond the workshop, the CHM will also benefit from learning more about lesser-known hunts to better understand the realities of the field.

To determine whom to invite, the CHM agreed on the following criteria to ensure that the invitation selection process is objective:

- Animal welfare: Focus on hunts with high struck-and-loss rates or longer time to death.
- Volume of animals killed: Prioritise hunts involving a larger number of animals.
- Identification of knowledge gaps: Highlight hunts where there is a lack of information.

Based on the above, the **CHM might consider for further discussion** the following hunts:

- Norwegian minke whale hunting
- Small cetacean hunts in Greenland
- Coastal seal hunts in Norway
- Minke whale rifle hunts in Greenland
- Pilot whale hunt in the Faroe Islands
- Fin whale hunting in Iceland
- Minke whale hunting in Iceland

Hunters can use their participation in the meeting not only to share their hunts with committee members but also to **voice their concerns and challenges related to that specific hunt** (e.g., is the time to death too long? Are there issues with the weapons they use? Is the hunt safe?). By bringing these concerns to the CHM, the committee can become aware of and begin addressing issues that might otherwise go unnoticed, making the meeting more valuable and appealing to the hunters as well.