



NAMMCO ANNUAL MEETING 32

MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE FOR SEALS AND WALRUS

*25 March 2024, 16:45-18:00
Fram Centre, Tromsø, Norway*

DRAFT ANNOTATED AGENDA

Annotations are indicated in *blue italics*.

1. CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

Relevant documents for this meeting:

NAMMCO/32/08: Report of the 31st Meeting of the Scientific Committee

NAMMCO/32/MC/05: Recent Proposals for Conservation and Management and Research Recommendations

NAMMCO/32/MC/06: Summary of Requests from the NAMMCO Council to the Scientific Committee and Responses by the Scientific Committee

For meeting aims, see NAMMCO/32/MC/02.

This meeting addresses issues of relevance to the Management Committee for Seals and Walrus (MCSW). Only species with active requests or for which there is a recommendation from the SC are presented to the Management Committees, but all species are discussed by the Scientific Committee.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

3. CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES FOR SEALS AND WALRUS STOCKS

3.1 BEARDED SEAL

NAMMCO/32/08, item 11.1

3.1.1 Active request

- **R-2.7.1 (Rephrased 2024, ongoing)** *To complete its review and assessment of bearded seals when the necessary data become available, and collect and analyse existing information.*

3.1.2 Response from SC/31

R-2.7.1: The SC noted that, while a preliminary assessment in Greenland indicates that the seal numbers are large and there are no immediate concerns, the lack of comprehensive data prevents a full assessment. Therefore, the SC agreed that a full assessment be conducted once all the necessary data become available.

3.1.3 Recommendations involving shared stocks with non-NAMMCO countries

Canada

- Investigate bearded seal movements between West Greenland and Canada to determine if there is a shared stock between the two areas.

3.1.4 MCSW Discussion

3.2 RINGED SEAL

NAMMCO/32/08, item 11.2

3.2.1 Active request

- **R-2.3.3 (Rephrased 2024, ongoing)** To complete its review and assessment of ringed seals when the necessary data become available, and collect and analyse existing information.

3.2.2 Response from SC/31

R-2.3.3: Logistic difficulty of obtaining an abundance estimate for ringed seals considering their extensive distribution, so a full assessment cannot yet be conducted. The SC highlighted that this is a species of concern, in light of rapid environmental changes.

3.2.3 Recommendations for Research with Implications for the Parties

Greenland

- Determine whether there are isolated ringed seal stocks in different fjord systems.

3.2.1 MCSW Discussion

3.3 HARBOUR & GREY SEALS

NAMMCO/32/08, item 11.3

3.3.1 Active requests

- **R-2.4.2 (Rephrased 2024, ongoing)** To provide a new assessment of grey seal stocks in all NAMMCO areas.
- **R-2.5.2 (Renewed 2019, ongoing)** To conduct a formal assessment of the status of harbour seals in all NAMMCO areas as soon as feasible.

3.3.2 Response from SC/31

R-2.4.2 and R-2.5.2: The CSWG is scheduled to meet in 2026, given the dramatic decline of coastal seal populations. Given logistical difficulties of conventional surveys in several areas, the CSWG should discuss alternative methods to obtain abundance estimates.

3.3.3 Recommendations for Research with Implications for the Parties

Iceland and Norway

- Improve knowledge on by-catches with data on species, genetics, and age, by collecting jaws from by-caught seals.

3.3.4 MCSW Discussion

3.4 HARP & HOODED SEALS

NAMMCO/32/08, item 11.4

3.4.1 Active requests:

- **R-2.1.4 (2024, standing)** *To regularly update the stock status of North Atlantic harp and hooded seals as new information becomes available.*
- **R-2.1.9 (2022, ongoing)** *To investigate possible reasons for the apparent decline of Greenland Sea stock of hooded seals and assess the status of the stock.*
- **R-1.10rev (2019, standing)** *To provide advice on the total allowable catches for the management of harp seals.*

3.4.2 Response from SC/31

R-2.1.9: During and after the Benchmark WS for Harp and Hooded seals in 2023, WGHARP assessed a suite of environmental variables to explain the apparent decline in the West Ice hooded seal stock but did not find any of those drivers to contribute to their understanding of the reasons for the decline of this stock. The SC recommended that R-2.1.9 be added as a Terms of Reference for the next WGHARP meeting.

R-2.1.4 and R-2.1.10: The SC/31 did not reply to these requests.

3.4.3 MCSW Discussion

3.5 WALRUS

NAMMCO/32/08, item 11.5

3.5.1 Plans for a Walrus Working Group

While there are no active requests for walrus, the SC/31 considered the significant time gap since the last walrus assessment in 2018 and agreed to aim for the Walrus WG to take place in 2026 as planned. This WG will require participation from Canada.

3.5.1 MCSW Discussion

4. UPDATE ON MEMBERS' RESPONSES TO PROPOSALS FOR CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

NAMMCO/32/MC/06, Category: Seals & Walrus. Prior to the meeting of the MCs, each Party should take the time to read the updates provided by the other member countries. Any issues or uncertainties can be brought up for discussion during the meetings.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS