

NAMMCO Council March 25. 2025 - Opening Statement FAROE ISLANDS

Madame Chair, Distinguished Delegates and Observers - Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great pleasure to attend the annual meeting of the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission and to be back in the beautiful and captivating Tromsø, home to our organization's secretariat.

On behalf of the Faroese delegation, I would like to extend our sincere thanks to the General Secretary and the Secretariat for their excellent work - not only in organizing this annual meeting, but also for your ongoing efforts in managing the daily operations and tasks of the organization.

We have been looking forward to this annual meeting. The past year since our last annual meeting has been both eventful and exciting, with last summer's NASS whale surveys standing out as a key highlight. From the Faroese side, we look forward to reviewing the results once they become available.

For decades, the recurring whale surveys have been a flagship of our collaboration, demonstrating NAMMCO's leadership in the study of marine mammals and our ongoing commitment to advancing the organization's mission and vision.

Whaling has been an integral part of life in the Faroe Islands for over a thousand years and continues to be a part of our way of life and food culture. The hunting of marine mammals is a heritage we share not only with our fellow NAMMCO member countries, but also with people and communities around the world.

The right of coastal people to hunt and utilize marine mammal resources is a fundamental founding principle of NAMMCO. This right comes with the responsibility to ensure that such hunting is sustainable and carried out responsibly, with due regard for killing efficiency, hunter safety, and animal welfare.

In this spirit, NAMMCO, in collaboration with the Fisheries Agency of Japan, held the Marine Mammal Welfare Workshop yesterday with participant from the NAMMCO member countries and Japan, Nunavut, Nunavik, Finland, Åland, Sweden and St. Vincent & the Grenadines. It was both interesting and inspiring to experience hunters, managers, officials, veterinarians and other experts come together to present marine mammal hunting practices from different parts of the world and to discuss how to collaborate on developing hunting methods.

The spinal lance, used in the Faroe Islands, is a shining example of how, in collaboration with NAMMCO's Hunting Committee, a hunting tool has been developed and successfully implemented into a whaling practice that has deep, centuries-old roots in our society.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the participants for their valuable contributions, which helped make the workshop a truly remarkable event.

Inspired by yesterday's workshop, I am looking forward with great anticipation to a productive and meaningful annual meeting.

Thank you!

