



COMMITTEE ON HUNTING METHODS

*28 August 2025
Online*

REPORT



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Adoption of agenda and review of documents	4
2. Review of the catch database 2024.....	4
3. Follow up on the outcomes of the Marine Mammal Welfare Workshop (WWS)	4
4. Identify a hunt of interest.....	6
5. Next meeting	7
6. Any other business	7
7. Adoption of the report	7
APPENDIX 1: Agenda and list of documents	8
APPENDIX 2: List of participants	9

The Committee on Hunting Methods (CHM) met online 28 August 2025 from 13:00 to 15:15 CEST. The CHM meeting was chaired by Ulla S. Wang (Faroe Islands). The meeting agenda and list of participants are available in Appendix 1 and 2, respectively.

1. Adoption of agenda and review of documents

Wang welcomed the CHM members and introduced participants, to the meeting.

The Chair presented the agenda and the meeting documents. The agenda was adopted without modification

2. Review of the catch database 2024

Ian Bolduc (Appendix 1) (NAMMCO Secretariat) presented the recent adaptations made to the catch database, following requests from the CHM during NAMMCO/CHM/2024-03 (document NAMMCO/CHM/2025-02/02). Bolduc informed the CHM that, starting next year, the catch database will be sent directly to the individuals responsible for completing it, rather than to the Heads of Delegation (HoDs). This change aims to streamline the process and reduce the number of intermediaries involved.

Comments on the catch data

Greenland noted the absence of struck and lost (S&L) data in the narwhal hunt, describing it as unusual. They emphasised that, contrary to a common misconception, reporting S&L does not affect narwhal quota allocations. Greenland informed they will send a reminder to hunters to encourage accurate reporting of S&L data.

Norway reported that, since August 2024, a new system has been in place for reporting strandings via the *Dugnad for Havet* application. As a result, Norway will be able to include strandings data in the catch database starting next year.

The CHM reiterated the value of the catch database, which in most cases contains 33 years of data on catches, entanglements, by-catch, and strandings. This long-term dataset is considered essential for NAMMCO's work according to the CHM.

Improvements needed in the database

The CHM stressed the importance of standardising data entry to ensure consistency across countries. In particular, there is a need for a shared understanding of terms such as "No Data" versus "0" (zero catches). While instructions were provided via email and are also included at the bottom of each database sheet, **the Secretariat will work to present these guidelines more clearly in the coming year.**

3. Follow up on the outcomes of the Marine Mammal Welfare Workshop (WWS)

The CHM was tasked with following up the recommendations outlines by the WWS during 2025 by the Council 32. Each recommendation was addressed by the CHM:

"[To] Develop a common framework for terminology, data collection, and analysis, taking into account the specificities of each hunt." (document CHM/2025-02/03, pp. 14)

The CHM emphasised the importance of establishing a common framework for collecting, interpreting and completing hunting data, including entries in the catch database. A key

component of this framework is the use of standardised terminology and a shared understanding of key concepts across all reporting teams.

An example raised during the data collection phase for the WWS was the term “*chasing time*”, which appears to be interpreted differently across regions: *When does the chase begin—when the whale notices the hunter, or when the hunter initiates pursuit?*

To address this, the CHM agreed to task the **Secretariat, in collaboration with Kathrine Ryeng, to review past reporting challenges to pinpoint ambiguous or inconsistently interpreted terms**. A list of these terms and problematic points will be compiled, starting with those identified in the WWS report, and **circulated among CHM members for feedback and consensus**.

The goal of this is to ensure that all contributors interpret and report data consistently, thereby improving the quality, comparability, and reliability of the database across regions and over time.

“[To] Define best welfare outcomes by species and hunt type. This includes finding realistic best practices for the lowest possible TTD [Time To Death], highest IDR [Instantaneous Death Rate], and minimum Struck and Lost. Improving global welfare outcomes does not require standardisation of regulations across countries and regions.” (document CHM/2025-02/03, pp. 14)

This recommendation sparked a discussion within the CHM about how to approach welfare outcomes in a practical and meaningful way. Ryeng proposed reviewing the different hunting types practiced within NAMMCO to identify what constitutes an acceptable IDR for each with a focus on realistic outcomes.

To support this effort, the **Secretariat will review the data submitted to the WWS to compile existing welfare outcome indicators** and assess the completeness of the information. With this information **Ryeng, supported by CHM members, will begin by defining realistic welfare outcomes for well-documented hunts**, before moving on to more complex or less understood cases.

“[To] Promote the fast killing of the animal to reduce suffering and improve welfare outcomes, which has been recognised as being in the hunters’ best interest. It should be a principle that the best available equipment should be used for the hunt.” (document CHM/2025-02/03, pp. 15)

The CHM agreed to support this recommendation through the development of new training materials, which aligns with one of its core tasks for 2025. These materials will aim to improve understanding and implementation of best practices in hunting.

“[To] Make available the necessary hunting equipment to improve welfare outcomes and have a more efficient hunt. For this purpose, we should aim at having stable access to the best available equipment.” (document CHM/2025-02/03, pp. 15)

Greenland informed the CHM that, due to external factors, there is currently a shortage of hunting equipment in the country, most notably a shortage of gunpowder. Greenland and Norway have been in dialogue to address this issue and facilitate the provision of additional equipment.

The CHM emphasised the critical importance of ensuring that hunters have access to the necessary tools. Availability of appropriate hunting equipment is essential for meeting safety and ethical standards and for achieving the best possible welfare outcomes during hunts. The CHM agreed that the recommendation as such was more within the remit of the governments. However, it also agreed that if any help could be provided, it would be happy to do so (contacts, letter of support, etc.).

“[To] Develop new methods and find the best available equipment for an efficient hunt. This should be supported by accessible and adequate training, as well as with the appropriate practical support.” (document CHM/2025-02/03, pp. 15)

This recommendation aligns closely with the main goal of the CHM, which is to improve hunting methods through knowledge sharing and capacity building. The CHM actively supports this objective by developing training materials for hunters and by facilitating dialogue between hunters, veterinarians, and managers to ensure that methods are both effective and aligned with best practices. The CHM will continue its research for what would be the most suitable next steps in terms of hunts.

In relation to training materials and their evaluation, Norway reported using existing videos in national whaling courses. While many whalers were already familiar with the content, they found the videos to be a helpful complement that provided a more complete picture. Greenland confirmed that the videos are currently being used in training courses as well.

Recognising the diversity of hunting methods across the region, the CHM **discussed the possibility of focusing the next training video on seal hunts by rifle**. A more inclusive approach was suggested, highlighting both differences and shared practices across regions. This would allow the video to reflect the variety of sealing methods used, including rifles, nets, and traditional tools such as the hakaik, while also addressing region-specific requirements like minimum ammunition standards. This will be further discussed in the coming meetings.

“[To] Share knowledge about hunting tools/equipment and know-how among hunting communities. NAMMCO could organise a dedicated initiative to go further into exchanging knowledge. The specific hunts to be discussed in this setting could be prioritised in consultation between hunters and managers.” (document CHM/2025-02/03, pp. 15)

The CHM has already taken steps to support this recommendation by planning to invite hunters to participate in future meetings (see item 4). This initiative aims to strengthen knowledge exchange and ensure that practical experience informs discussions on hunting tools and techniques. This initiative reflects the CHM’s commitment to fostering knowledge exchange and improving hunting practices through practical, regionally relevant training and collaboration.

A relevant example of the necessity of knowledge exchange, that the CHM should support, is also the interest of Greenland towards St Vincent and the Grenadines use of a harpoon gun (reinforced, modified, 12 gauge shotgun) for killing smaller cetaceans, thus reducing S&L.

4. Identify a hunt of interest

During NAMMCO/CHM/2025-01, the Committee agreed to implement the procedure for inviting hunters to its meetings, as outlined in document NAMMCO/CHM/2025-02/04. Participation is to be facilitated online, with interpretation services provided if necessary to ensure accessibility.

In line with the idea of producing a training video on rifle-based sealing (see item 3), the CHM suggested that inviting a sealer would be a logical first step. To initiate this process, Ryeng proposed starting with a Norwegian seal hunter, which would simplify logistics and allow the Committee to refine its approach.

As agreed in the procedure, **the CHM will prepare a set of questions for the invited hunter** and send them well in advance to ensure clarity and preparedness. **The Secretariat will follow up by email to gather input on the questions and topics to be discussed**, ensuring they reflect the priorities and perspectives of the Committee members.

5. Next meeting

The CHM agreed to hold the **next meeting in October or November 2025**. The date will be decided by email correspondence.

6. Any other business

The HoDs requested an overview of the expertise and capacities currently missing within each NAMMCO Committee. In response, the **CHM acknowledged that more practical expertise is needed** within its own membership. The Committee emphasised that the **active participation of veterinarians, hunters, and biologists with direct knowledge of hunting practices would significantly enrich its discussions and improve the quality of its decisions**.

7. Adoption of the report

The report was adopted by correspondence 11 September 2025.

APPENDIX 1: Agenda and list of documents

1. Adoption of agenda and review of documents
2. Review of catch data 2024
3. Follow up on the outcomes of the WWS
4. Identify a hunt of interest
5. Next meeting
6. Any other business

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

In italics, documents that will be made available after the meeting.

Doc Reference	Title	Agenda item
CHM/2025-01/01a	Draft agenda & list of documents	1
CHM/2025-01/01b	Draft annotated agenda & list of documents	1
CHM/2025-02/02	Catch database 2024	2
CHM/2025-02/03	Report of the WWS	3
CHM/2025-02/04	Procedure to invite hunters to CHM meetings	4

APPENDIX 2: List of participants

Bjarni Mikkelsen (FO)

Faroe Marine Research Institute

Geneviève Desportes

NAMMCO Secretariat

Guro Gjelsvik (NO)

Directorate of Fisheries

Ian Bolduc

NAMMCO Secretariat

Jóhann Ásmundsson (IS)

Directorate of Fisheries

Kathrine A. Ryeng (NO)

Institute of Marine Research in Norway

Kristján Loftsson (IS)

Hvalur hf. (Icelandic fin whaling company)

Naima El bani Altuna

NAMMCO Secretariat

Naja Holm (GL)

Ministry of Fisheries and Hunting

Niels Lyberth (GL)

Ministry of Fisheries and Hunting

Ulla Svarrer Wang (Chair, FO)

Ministry of Fisheries and Infrastructure