

NAMMCO



COMMITTEE ON HUNTING METHODS

11 November 2025

Online

REPORT



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Cite this report as: NAMMCO (2025). *Report of the Committee on Hunting Methods* (NAMMCO/CHM/2025-03). NAMMCO-North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission. Tromsø, Norway. 8 pp. https://nammco.no/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/chm-2025-03_november.pdf

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Chair

Ulla S. Wang (FO)

Rapporteur

Naima El bani Altuna

Authors

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	Adoption of agenda and review of documents	4
2.	Catch database and GDPR	4
3.	Hunter presentation	4
4.	Follow up on the outcomes of the WWS	5
5.	Next meeting	6
6.	Any other business	6
7.	Adoption of the report	6
APPENDIX 1: Agenda and list of documents		7
APPENDIX 2: Participant list.....		8

The Committee on Hunting Methods (CHM) met online 11 November 2025 from 13:00 to 14:45 CET. 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 in particular, Ricardo de Almeida Medes, intern at NAMMCO, and Bjørne Kvernmo, Norwegian seal hunter (item 3). Then the Chair invited all participants to introduce themselves.

The Chair presented the agenda and meeting documents. Item 2, “*Review of past documents on Struck and Loss,*” was removed from the draft agenda and will be addressed at the next meeting. The agenda was adopted without further modifications (see Appendix 1).

2. Catch database and GDPR

The CHM discussed potential data privacy concerns related to publishing the catch database on the NAMMCO website. This potential issue is particularly relevant for hunts where a single hunter or company operates (e.g., harp seal hunts in Norway, and minke and fin whale hunts in Iceland).

Guro Gjelsvik noted that the Norwegian Directorate of Fisheries did not see any problem, as catch data is considered important environmental information that should be publicly available (see [here](#)). Jóhann Ásmundsson explained that, since this issue was raised at NAFO in Iceland, he is consulting with the Icelandic Directorate of Fisheries to determine how this would apply to NAMMCO.

The CHM discussed that developing a data availability and privacy policy is in the interest of the Committee, although implementing such a policy may not fall under CHM’s mandate. Therefore, **the CHM recommends that the Council address potential GDPR issues at NAMMCO.** To support this work, **the CHM agreed to compile data availability and privacy policies currently used by their respective Ministries and Directorates.** Each Party will send these policies to the Secretariat for presentation to the Council.

3. Hunter presentation

In line with its mandate to invite hunters to present at meetings, the CHM invited Bjørne Kvernmo to give a presentation on the Norwegian harp seal pack-ice hunt. The decision to invite a seal hunter was based on the CHM’s proposal to focus the next training video on seal hunts using rifles. The full proposal for this training video will be finalised at the CHM’s last meeting of this cycle (February 2026), prior to Council 33.

Kvernmo kindly presented the Norwegian harp seal pack-ice hunt in the West Ice, in which the hunters use both rifle and hakapik. The hunt targets weaned harp seal pups and adult harp seals (defined as one year or older). Kvernmo explained the roles of the hunters and the training they undergo, including shooters (responsible for shooting the seals) and jumpers (responsible for striking and bleeding the animal with the hakapik). Kvernmo also described how the hunt is conducted, the safety measures implemented on the ice, and the inspection and animal welfare considerations in accordance with Norwegian law.

Kvernmo noted that in the past, special ammunition was used for seal hunting, but today “normal” hunting bullets are employed in accordance with Norwegian legislation. Bjarni Mikkelsen added that experience from seal hunting has shown that using standard hunting bullets, which may not expand sufficiently, resulted in a higher number of animals that were not killed instantly and continued

moving. Mikkelsen emphasised that rapid bullet expansion is essential to ensure a quick death. While traditional ammunition for terrestrial mammals is designed to pass through the animal and cause bleeding, the most effective option for seals would be a bullet that expands quickly and renders the animal unconscious immediately. Kathrine Ryeng highlighted that, with the current shift toward lead-free bullets for environmental reasons, there is concern that copper bullets may not expand as effectively. This issue will hopefully be addressed in a future study.

On the question of training and specialisation in seal hunting, Kvernmo explained that most sealers today participate in only a few sealing seasons and often do not pursue sealing as a career. This has allowed more people with shooting skills to enter the business but has also led to a decline in other knowledge and expertise related to the hunt itself. This raised the question within the CHM about where and how to focus future training efforts.

Kvernmo provided a summary document with further details of the hunt to the CHM. The Committee expressed its appreciation for Kvernmo's contribution and welcomed him to share any additional material, questions, or comments in the future through Ryeng or the Secretariat.

4. Follow up on the outcomes of the WWS

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

"[To] Develop a framework for terminology, data collection, and analysis, taking into account the specificities of each common hunt." (document CHM/2025-03/05, pp. 14)

To address this and as agreed in the CHM/2025-02, the Secretariat, in collaboration with Ryeng, undertook a review of past reporting challenges to identify ambiguous or inconsistently interpreted terms. A preliminary list of these terms and problematic points was compiled and defined in document CHM/2025-03/06, which was treated as a working document and not a final version. Geneviève Desportes and Ryeng provided a brief overview of the document.

The CHM discussed the document and noted that additional context may need to be included in the definitions, as some terminology is highly context specific. Also the concept of 'Struck and Lost' should be added to the list. **The Committee agreed to keep the document open for further additions. To facilitate this, members committed to reviewing the document and continuing to add terms and definitions as needed.**

"[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/2025-03/05, pp. 14)

To support this effort, the CHM agreed in the previous meeting (CHM/2025-02) that the Secretariat would *"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"*.

This work was not ready to be presented at the current CHM meeting and **will therefore be completed for the next meeting.**

5. Next meeting

The CHM agreed to hold the **next meeting 17 February 2026, 13:00-15:00 CET**.

6. Any other business

Desportes informed that the Secretariat noticed large discrepancies for specific hunts in the catch data submitted to the Food and Agriculture Organisation and the NAMMCO catch database. The Secretariat was finalising a full analysis of such differences and once this analysis is completed, an email will be sent to the Heads of Delegation and the people in charge of filling the NAMMCO database to clarify the discrepancies.

The Secretariat also informed the Committee on the publication a few days before the meeting of a welfare review of the Grindadráp, in which the authors used the [NAMMCO hunting manual on pilot whaling](#) for their analysis (CHM/2025-03/FI01). The CHM suggested that, if appropriate or necessary, the NAMMCO manual may be reviewed. If done, the CHM suggested doing this in close collaboration between Faroese veterinarians.

7. Adoption of the report

The report was adopted by correspondence 21 November 2025.

APPENDIX 1: Agenda and list of documents

1. **Adoption of agenda and review of documents**
2. **Catch database and GDPR**
3. **Hunter presentation**
4. **Follow up on the outcomes of the WWS**
5. **Next meeting**
6. **Any other business**

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

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

Document Reference	Title	Agenda Item
Meeting/Working Documents		
CHM/2025-03/01a	Draft agenda & list of documents	1
CHM/2025-03/01b	Draft annotated agenda & list of documents	1
CHM/2025-03/02	Not existing	
CHM/2025-03/03	Procedure to invite hunters to CHM meetings	3
CHM/2025-03/04	Guiding questions for conversation with pack-ice harp seal hunter from Norway	3
CHM/2025-03/05	Report of the WWS	4
CHM/2025-03/06	Animal welfare terms – working document	4
For information documents		
CHM/2025-03/FI01	Simmons et al., 2025 – Animal welfare and Gridadráp	6

APPENDIX 2: Participant list

NAMMCO MEMBER COUNTRIES

Bjarni Mikkelsen (FO)
Faroe Marine Research Institute

Kathrine A. Ryeng (NO)
Institute of Marine Research in Norway

Guro Gjelsvik (NO)
Directorate of Fisheries

Naja Holm (GL)
Ministry of Fisheries and Hunting

Jóhann Ásmundsson (IS)
Directorate of Fisheries

Niels Lyberth (GL)
Ministry of Fisheries and Hunting

Ulla Svarrer Wang (Chair, FO)
Ministry of Fisheries and Infrastructure

INVITED PARTICIPANTS (only attended items 1 and 3)

Bjørne Kvernmo
Norwegian sealers

NAMMCO SECRETARIAT

Geneviève Desportes
Secretary General

Naima El bani Altuna
Deputy Secretary

Ian Bolduc
Deputy Secretary

Ricardo Almeida de Mendes
Intern