

NAMMCO ANNUAL MEETING 33

MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE FOR SEALS AND WALRUS

24–26 March 2026

Hotel Hans Egede, Nuuk, Greenland

Annotated Draft Agenda

Annotations are shown *in blue and italics*. Requests are marked *in bold italics*. Recommendations from the SC are presented in a blue box.

1. Chair's Opening Remarks

Relevant documents for this meeting:

- *NAMMCO/32/08: Report of the 32nd 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/33/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/33/08, item 8.3

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/32

R-2.7.1: the SC agreed to revisit the status of knowledge on bearded seals in 2027, when all the survey data from Greenland will have been analysed.

3.1.3. MCSW Discussion

3.2. Ringed seal

NAMMCO/33/08, item 8.4

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/32

R-2.3.3: A full assessment cannot yet be conducted. However, the SC agreed to conduct a formal assessment of ringed seals in Kangia fjord at SC/33, given the uniqueness of this group and the urgency of this matter. This assessment would be held during a dedicated session, with all necessary information prepared by Greenland in advance.

3.2.3. Recommendations for Research with Implications for the Parties

<p><u>Greenland</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>(reiterated from SC/31) Determine whether there are isolated ringed seal stocks in different fjord systems.</i>
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3.2.4. MCSW Discussion

3.3. Harbour & Grey seals

NAMMCO/33/08, item 8.2

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.*
- **R-2.5.3 (2025, ongoing)** *To investigate alternatives to traditional crewed aerial and boat-based surveys as methods for estimating coastal seal abundance.*

3.3.2. Response from SC/32

R-2.4.2 and R-2.5.2: the SC agreed that postponing the meeting by a further year, to 2027, would be acceptable. In the meantime, the SC agreed that a short online meeting should be held in the autumn to provide a status update and to ensure clarity on the needs in preparation for the 2027 meeting.

R-2.5.3: the SC agreed to incorporate R-2.5.3 into the Terms of Reference of the CSWG or by organising a back-to-back workshop with the WG, potentially with the more limited objective of conducting a review of alternative survey methods for coastal seals. The SC agreed that this issue should be revisited at the CSWG online meeting in the autumn.

3.3.3. Recommendations for Research with Implications for the Parties

<p><u>Iceland and Norway</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>(reiterated from SC/28, SC/30, and SC/31) Improve knowledge on by-catches with data on species, genetics, and age, by collecting jaws from by-caught seals.</i>

3.3.4. MCSW Discussion

3.4. Harp & hooded seals

NAMMCO/32/08, item 8.1

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-2.1.10rev (2019, standing)** *To provide advice on the total allowable catches for the management of harp seals.*
- **R-2.1.12 (2025, ongoing)** *Investigate whether and to what extent the coastal hooded seal hunt in East Greenland will be affected if the decline in the Greenland Sea and west Atlantic populations continues.*

3.4.2. Response from SC/32

R-2.1.4, R-2.1.9, R-2.1.10, and R-2.1.12: The SC/32 could not reply to these requests, as the current population models are unfit for purpose, and therefore an assessment cannot be conducted.

R-2.1.12: In the absence of a planned WGHARP meeting in 2026, Greenland will compile the relevant information on the potential impacts of the decline in hooded seals on the hooded seal hunt to inform a response to the request. This information will be presented at the SC/33 meeting in 2027.

3.4.3. MCSW Discussion

3.5. Walrus

NAMMCO/33/08, item 8.5

3.5.1. Plans for a Walrus Working Group

Given the significant time gap since the last walrus assessment in 2018, Greenland requires updated advice. However, the SC agreed it was best to postpone this work until late 2027, due to the expectation of new survey data from 2026.

3.5.2. Recommendations for Removals

Until a new assessment is conducted, the advice on removals from 2018 should continue to be followed.

3.5.3. MCSW Discussion

4. Update on members' responses to proposals for conservation and management

NAMMCO/33/MC/05, 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