

NAMMCO ANNUAL MEETING 33

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

24–26 March 2026

Hotel Hans Egede, Nuuk, Greenland

DOCUMENT 09	Report of the Committee on Hunting Methods (CHM)
Agenda item(s)	7
Submitted by	CIO / Secretariat
Action requested	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take note • Consider the proposed work plan • Provide guidance on making the CHM’s work well-focused to its role in advising on hunting methods
Background/content	This report summarised the work of the CHM in 2025-2026 on the Committee and the workplan from 2025 to 2027.

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1 MEETINGS AND MEMBERS APRIL 2025-MARCH 2026

The CHM met three times on the period from April 2025 to March 2026: 28 August 2025 (CHM/2025-02), 11 November 2025 (CHM/2025-03), and 17 February 2026 (CHM/2026-01). All CHM meeting reports can be found [here](#). The CHM was chaired by Ulla S. Wang (Faroe Islands).

Committee members:

- FO: Signar Petersen, Ulla Svarrer Wang (Chair)
- GL: Amalie Jessen, Naja Holm (since May 2025), Niels Lyberth, Pilou Chemnitz (from May 2025 to July 2025)
- IS: Jóhann Ásmundsson, Kristján Loftsson
- NO: Guro Gjelsvik, Kathrine A. Ryeng
- Secretariat: Geneviève Desportes, Naima El bani Altuna

2 GENERAL INFORMATION UPDATES

The CHM reviewed and updated information related to its terms of reference regularly. The following overview documents are updated either in connection with meetings or by correspondence intersessional: [Laws and regulations](#), [References related to marine mammal hunting](#), [Management status of marine mammal stocks in NAMMCO](#) and [Hunting in NAMMCO member Countries](#).

3 REVIEW OF THE CATCH DATABASE

The CHM reviewed the 2024 Catch Database reported by the NAMMCO Parties (CHM/2025-02). 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.

3.1. CATCH DATABASE AND GDPR

Once reviewed, parts of the catch database are made publicly available on the NAMMCO website, while the full database can be accessed upon request. The CHM discussed potential data-privacy concerns related to publishing catch data online. This issue is particularly relevant for hunts in which only a single hunter or company operates (e.g., harp seal hunts in Norway, and minke and fin whale hunts in Iceland).

The CHM noted that developing a data-availability and privacy policy would be in the Committee's interest, although implementing such a policy may fall outside the CHM's mandate. Therefore, the CHM **recommends** that the Council address potential GDPR-related issues within NAMMCO. To support this work, CHM members compiled the data-availability and privacy policies currently used by their respective Ministries and Directorates; these are presented in Appendix 1.

4 ENGAGEMENT WITH HUNTERS

4.1 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 linked to the CHM's suggestion to focus the next training video on seal hunts using rifles (see 4.2.1).

The CHM **recommends** continuing such exchanges with hunters and inviting at least one hunter per year to CHM meetings.

4.2 HUNTING MANUALS AND TRAINING MATERIAL

Council 28 (2021) expressed its support for developing short videos on various aspects of hunting, with the aim of improving both hunter safety and animal welfare.

In 2021–2022, the CHM supervised the development of the first information video, which focuses on the safe handling of the 50 mm Kongsberg whaling cannon with a loaded pusher shell (cartridge), as well as the harpoon and the Whale Grenade 99. The video was completed in 2022, produced in Norwegian, and translated into English and Greenlandic.

The second information/training video focused on target areas and shooting angles in large whale hunts. It was presented to the Council 31 (March 2024) and subsequently released after incorporating the Council’s recommended adjustments and completing translations into Greenlandic and Norwegian.

The videos can be accessed [here](#).

In 2024 and 2025, the CHM discussed and evaluated the usefulness of the existing video material. The videos were considered an effective way to present hunting methods and an important initiative for reaching hunters. Both Norway and Greenland use the videos in national whaling courses, and the Secretariat received inquiries also from other organisations outside NAMMCO member countries regarding the training videos. While many whalers were already familiar with the content, they found the videos to be a helpful complement that provides a more complete overview.

4.3 NEXT TRAINING MATERIAL

The CHM discussed the proposal to develop the next training video on seal hunting by rifle. The Committee acknowledged NAMMCO’s long tradition of producing training resources, both manuals and videos, on hunting methods. In discussing whether the next video should focus on seal hunting, members recognised the considerable diversity of seal-hunting practices across NAMMCO member countries. Some members emphasised the value of documenting seal-hunting techniques, including the use of the hakapik and rifle, as a way also of preserving knowledge, and suggested exploring collaboration with other countries where seal hunting is conducted. Others proposed narrowing the focus to one specific method, such as rifle-based seal hunting. In this case, the video could address general principles common across countries, such as rifle use, ammunition choice, shooting distance, and correct shot placement, rather than detailed national practices.

At the same time, some members noted that rifle-based seal hunting varies considerably both between and within countries, which could make it challenging to produce a single training resource that represents all. The Committee did not reach consensus on whether to proceed with a seal-hunting video, nor were alternative topics proposed. The matter therefore remains open, and the CHM will continue deliberations, including the development of a proposal for hunter training material for the period 2026–2027.

5 FOLLOW UP ON MARINE MAMMAL WELFARE WORKSHOP RECOMMENDATIONS

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.” (NAMMCO/WS/2025/WWS, 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 element of this framework

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

To support this effort and follow up on the recommendation, the CHM has been developing a list of hunting- and animal-welfare-related terms. The Committee **recommends** continuing this work in the coming cycle, as some terminology is highly context-specific and further additions may be needed.

The purpose of this initiative 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.” (NAMMCO/WS/2025/WWS, pp. 14)

This recommendation sparked a discussion within the CHM about how to approach welfare outcomes in a practical and meaningful way. The CHM proposed reviewing the different hunting types practiced within NAMMCO to identify what constitutes an acceptable/realistic welfare outcome, starting with well-documented hunts, before moving on to more complex or less understood cases. This task is **recommended** for the coming cycle.

The CHM also **recommends** for the next cycle to review past Struck and Lost (S&L) data gathered by the CHM and decide how to proceed with reporting and reducing S&L in NAMMCO member countries.

“[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.” (NAMMCO/WS/2025/WWS, pp. 15)

The CHM **agrees** to support this recommendation through the development of new training materials, which aligns with one of its core tasks. This will be further discussed in the next cycle.

“[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.” (NAMMCO/WS/2025/WWS, pp. 15)

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 **agrees** that the recommendation as such was more within the remit of the national authorities.

“[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.” (NAMMCO/WS/2025/WWS, 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.

“[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. 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.

6 PROPOSED WORKPLAN 2026-2028

The CHM **proposes** the workplan presented in Table 1. A more detailed workplan can be found in Appendices 2 and 3.

Some members of the Committee highlighted that the work of the CHM has gradually shifted from strong emphasis on practical hunting methods toward a more theoretical focus in the last years. They expressed a wish to reflect on how the Committee's current activities align with its mandate. The Committee therefore **requests** guidance from the Council on this matter and will continue the discussion in the upcoming cycle, with the aim of ensuring that its work remains well-focused and responsive to its role in advising hunting methods.

Table 1. Proposed workplan for the 2026-2028 period. Activities in italics may include activities requiring funding.

2026	2027	2028
Follow up on the outcomes of the WWS		
Develop a proposal for further training material		
Invite hunters to CHM meetings	Invite hunters to CHM meetings	Invite hunters to CHM meetings
Compilation and revision of checklists used by national inspectors (with CIO)		Compilation and revision of checklists used by national inspectors (with CIO)
Update information on regulations and laws	Update information on regulations and laws	Update information on regulations and laws
Review the catch & hunting data-base (data 2025)	Review the catch & hunting data-base (data 2026)	Review the catch & hunting data-base (data 2027)
Review past CHM docs on Struck-and-lost information		

APPENDIX 1: DATA-AVAILABILITY AND PRIVACY POLICIES CURRENTLY USED BY MINISTRIES AND DIRECTORATES RELEVANT TO NAMMCO

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).

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 compiled in this document data availability and privacy policies currently used by their respective Ministries and Directorates.

Faroe Islands

GDPR

Adequacy Decision by the European Commission: Pursuant to Commission Decision of 5 March 2010 the Faroe Islands are considered by the European Union to provide an adequate level of protection relating to processing of personal data. Personal data may therefore be transferred from the European Union to the Faroe Islands without any specific authorisation.

Legislation in the Faroe Islands:

Data Protection Act

Parliamentary Act No. 80 of 7 June 2020 on the protection of personal data, with late amendments.

The main objective of the Data Protection Act is to protect persons when personal data is being processed.

The Data Protection Authority is an independent public authority set up in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

The Data Protection Authority consists of a Council and a Secretariat and is responsible for the supervision of all processing of personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

Publication of fisheries data

Catch figures, landings, and information on Faroese fishing vessels is published by the Faroe Islands Fisheries Inspection – Vørn on web-page www.vorn.fo

This information is made public in accordance with the legislation on the protection of personal data.

Greenland

The Ministry of Fisheries, Hunting, Agriculture and Self-sufficiency follows established regulations on data management, established by the Anordning om ikrafttræden for Grønland af lov om behandling af personoplysninger.

Greenland upholds the principles of openness and transparency. Nevertheless, the level of detail that can be shared varies. Municipalities receive more detailed catch and hunting information for administrative purposes, while organisations such as NAMMCO only receive a limited, non-personal subset of this information.

Hunters are required under the [hunting law no. 30 of March 26, 2025](#) to report their catch data. At the same time, the authorities are obligated to protect personal information: individual names will not be published, and any sharing of personal data requires explicit consent. The reported data may, however,

be used in aggregated or anonymised form, where no individual hunter can be identified. Any potential infringements or violations should not be made public before the police or relevant Greenlandic authorities have handled and finalised the case.

Iceland

On data availability and privacy policy within NAMMCO and CHM specifically, Icelandic authorities are bound by the EU regulation 2016/679 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, etc. implemented in Icelandic legislation with act 90/2018 on data protection and the processing of personal data.

However, the purpose of the information act, No. 140/2012, in Iceland, is to ensure transparency in government administration aiming to strengthen:

- Right to information and freedom of expression
- Opportunities for public participation in a democratic society
- Media and public oversight of public entities
- Media opportunities to disseminate information on public affairs
- Public trust in the administration

Administrative information should in general be public except when a cogent argument exists for keeping it restricted, i.e., personal data among others stated in the information act.

The aforementioned principles should apply to the data collected or disseminated by NAMMCO concerning Iceland. The Information Committee has previously ruled that specific information pertaining to whaling must be made public, despite stakeholder insistence on confidentiality. However, Iceland has within other international forums, e.g., the standing committee on international control in NAFO, made reservation on publishing data on apparent infringements (violation based on evidence but has not yet been legally proven) where very few actors are engaged in the activities in question.

Norway

The Directorate of Fisheries of Norway's data openness policy can be found here: <https://www.fiskeridir.no/statistikk-tall-og-analyse/data-og-statistikk-om-yrkesfiske/apne-data-elektronisk-rapportering-ers>.

“De åpne dataene inneholder ERS-data om havneavgang, fangst, havneanløp og omlastning som er rapportert av norske fiske- og fangstfartøy på eller over 15 meter.

Det er et mål at forvaltningen så langt som mulig bidrar til åpenhet om data som blir samlet inn fra fiskerinæringen. Fiskeridirektoratet har åpnet opp ERS-dataene fordi de utgjør viktig miljøinformasjon om ressursene i havet som eies av fellesskapet i Norge.

Du finner filene til nedlastning under.

Per i dag blir det ikke lagt ut data samlet inn fra utenlandske fartøy.

Dataene som legges ut inneholder ikke personopplysninger.”

Translation to English:

“The open data contains ERS data on port departures, catches, port calls and transhipments reported by Norwegian fishing and hunting vessels of or over 15 meters.

It is a goal that the administration contributes as much as possible to transparency regarding data collected from the fishing industry. The Directorate of Fisheries has opened up the ERS data because it

constitutes important environmental information about the resources in the sea that are owned by the community in Norway.

You can find the files for download below.

As of today, data collected from foreign vessels is not published.

The data posted does not contain personal information.”

APPENDIX 2: DETAILED PROPOSED WORKPLAN AND TIMELINE FOR THE CHM BETWEEN MARCH 2026 AND MARCH 2028

Month or Season, Year	Activity	Participants	Description/Goal
March 2026	33 NAMMCO Annual Meeting	CHM/Sec	Report to the Council
			Topics to be discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow up on the outcomes of the WWS Develop a proposal for new training material Identify the hunt and hunter to be invited to the next meeting and prepare the topic, including questions
May 2026	CHM meeting	CHM/Sec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compilation and revision of checklists used by national hunting inspectors Website update: review the information on hunting regulations and laws Review the information provided by the parties in the NAMMCO removal database
			Topics to be discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow up on the outcomes of the WWS Develop a proposal for new training material Hunter presentation at CHM meeting Compilation and revision of checklists used by national hunting inspectors Review CHM documents related about S&L and decide how to proceed with S&L issues (both reporting and improvement)
September 2026	CHM meeting	CHM/Sec	
			Topics to be discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make recommendations/proposals for new hunter training material Compilation and revision of checklists used by national hunting inspectors Reflections and proposals based on hunter presentation
February 2027	CHM meeting	CHM/Sec	
March 2027	34 NAMMCO Annual Meeting	CHM/Sec	Report to the Council
			Topics to be discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the hunt and hunter to be invited to the next meeting and prepare the topic, including questions Website update: review the information on hunting regulations and laws Review the information provided by the parties in the NAMMCO removal database
May 2027	CHM meeting	CHM/Sec	
			Topics to be discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hunter presentation at CHM meeting
September 2027	CHM meeting	CHM/Sec	
			Topics to be discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make recommendations/proposals for new hunter training material Reflections and proposals based on hunter presentation
February 2028	CHM meeting	CHM/Sec	
March 2028	35 NAMMCO Annual Meeting	CIO/Sec	Report to the Council

APPENDIX 3: DETAILED (GRAPHIC) PROPOSED WORKPLAN AND TIMELINE FOR THE CIO BETWEEN MARCH 2026 AND MARCH 2028

