



COMMITTEE ON HUNTING METHODS

13 May 2026

Online

NAMMCO/CHM/2026-02

REPORT



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Abbreviations

CHM: Committee on Hunting Methods
 EG: Expert Group
 IDR: Instantaneous Death Rate
 S&L: Struck and Lost
 TTD: Time To Death
 WS: Workshop
 WWS: Marine Mammal Welfare Workshop

The Committee on Hunting Methods (CHM) met online 13 May 2026 from 13:00 to 14:45 CEST. The CHM meeting was chaired by Ulla S. Wang (Faroe Islands). The meeting agenda, list of documents and list of participants are available in Appendix 1, 2 and 3, respectively.

1 ADOPTION OF AGENDA AND REVIEW OF DOCUMENTS

The Chair, Wang, welcomed the CHM members and introduced the new member of the CHM, Ragnar Jacobsen (Faroe Islands).

The Chair presented the agenda (Appendix 1) and the meeting documents (Appendix 2). The agenda was adopted without modification. Wang informed that the adopted workplan for the CHM for the 2026-2028 time period was presented in CHM/2026-02/02.

2 HUNTER TRAINING VIDEO

The Council 33 endorsed the recommendation to continue developing new hunting training materials, noting the extensive use of, and positive feedback on, materials produced to date. During Council 33, several ideas for future training materials were discussed:

- The need to develop materials related to seal hunting was highlighted, as previous efforts have primarily focused on whaling
- Greenland also suggested climate change and its impacts on hunting practices as a potential topic.
- A combined approach included examining how climate change affects seal hunting methods, particularly for ice-dependent species, and whether hunters may need to adapt hunting techniques, as well as exploring practical aspects of seal hunting (e.g. target areas, challenges, and safety considerations) in the context of changing environmental conditions.

At the present meeting, the CHM discussed these suggestions and noted that, while climate change is significantly affecting hunting conditions (e.g., in Greenland reduced sea ice and snow is impacting hunting practices where dog sledges are used), it may be difficult to develop practical and reliable training materials on this topic due to uncertainties and variability in the impacts of climate change.

The discussion therefore shifted towards more practical and widely applicable training needs. In this context, the CHM identified weapon use and maintenance on seal hunting as a suitable and practical focus area. Such a video could cover topics such as best shooting practices for seals and the importance of equipment maintenance and information on the available ammunition. It was also noted that training systems and requirements vary between countries, which may influence how such materials are disseminated. For instance, while Norway could use such a video in sealing training courses, in Greenland where a licence is required but no courses are given, the video could be spread over Facebook, a platform used by many hunters there. With this topic in mind, the CHM further emphasised the need for expert input on weaponry and acknowledged previous detailed work conducted by Workshops and Expert Groups (WS and EG, respectively) in this area.

The CHM **agreed that the next training material should focus on seal hunting, with an emphasis on practical aspects that are broadly applicable across countries.** This will include:

- Use of weaponry and ammunition
- Maintenance of equipment
- Shooting practices and target areas
- General hunting techniques and challenges

3 HUNTER PRESENTATION TO CHM

The Council 33 (2026) highlighted the importance of continued engagement with hunters through presentations at CHM meetings, in order to provide a forum where hunters can be heard by the CHM and can contribute to discussions aimed at improving hunting efficiency and safety.

The CHM **agreed to suggest inviting a hunter from Greenland to present their hunt**, without specifying a particular hunt type. Should language be a barrier, the Secretariat will arrange for interpretation. Niels Lyberth agreed to discuss this internally and confirm, expressing preliminary support for inviting a hunter from Greenland. If a Greenlandic hunter is not available, the CHM will follow the proposal made by Nunavut Tungavik Inc at Council 33, whereby they offered to present their hunts at a CHM meeting.

Once a hunter has been confirmed, the CHM **agreed that Secretariat will prepare a list of guiding questions and keywords for the presenter, using as starting point the one prepared for the last hunter's presentation**. This list will be circulated to the Parties ahead of the meeting at which the hunter will participate.

4 FOLLOW UP ON THE OUTCOMES OF THE MARINE MAMMAL WELFARE WORKSHOP (WWS)

4.1 TO DEVELOP A COMMON FRAMEWORK FOR HUNTING TERMINOLOGY

During CHM/2025-03, the CHM began developing a common framework for hunting terminology, as recommended by the WWS: “[To] *develop a common framework for terminology, data collection, and analysis, taking into account the specificities of each hunt*” (document CHM/2026-02/FI01, p. 14).

To address this request, the CHM kept document CHM/2026-02/03 (presented at the CHM/2025-03 meeting as CHM/2025-03/06) open for further additions and review.

In the present meeting, Iceland noted the usefulness of this document for describing animal welfare-related terms in a consistent manner and highlighted the need to continue refining certain terminology. In light of this, **the CHM agreed to continue working on the document intersessionally by adding concepts and definitions, as well as reviewing and updating existing content**. The aim is to finalise the document at the next CHM meeting (CHM/2026-03).

4.2 TO DEFINE BEST ANIMAL WELFARE OUTCOMES

The WWS also made the following recommendation: “[To] *define best welfare outcomes by species and hunt type. This includes identifying realistic best practices for the lowest possible TTD [Time to Death], highest IDR [Instantaneous Death Rate], and minimum Struck and Lost*.” (document CHM/2026-02/FI01, p. 14).

To address this recommendation, the CHM agreed at CHM/2025-02 that the first step would be for the Secretariat to compile existing welfare outcome indicators. This work was prepared by Geneviève Desportes and presented in documents CHM/2026-02/04, which includes S&L, TTD, and IDR data reported to both CHM and NAMMCO, and CHM/2026-02/05, which compiles recommendations from the previous WGs and EGs on this topic (reports of these meetings were added as For Information documents).

The CHM discussed these documents and noted that, while they provide a useful compilation of existing knowledge, significant knowledge gaps remain for most species and hunt types, particularly regarding reliable estimates of TTD and IDR, but also S&L. This limits the ability to define best welfare outcomes across all hunts.

It was emphasised that, where sufficient data exist, best welfare outcomes should be defined based on the highest available standards for each specific hunt. However, for hunts lacking reliable studies i.e., most of them, further research is needed, as also has been recognised by previous Expert Groups. The CHM **acknowledged that current capacity to conduct such studies in marine mammal hunting is limited and highlighted the importance of encouraging and supporting research efforts in these topics, including through funding and skills development.**

In addition to this, members highlighted ongoing challenges related to struck and lost (S&L) rates and emphasised the importance of improving hunting practices. This was also suggested at the S&L WS that reads: *“Develop a weapon that could improve the range of strike, e.g. an air gun that could be modified to incorporate firing of a harpoon head. This could improve the firing / strike range and the securing of the whale”* (document CHM/2026-02/FI03, p. 62). In this context, Kathrine Ryeng suggested the potential development of a device capable of both killing and retrieving small cetaceans inspired by the harpoon gun presented during the WWS by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Greenland noted that it has previously considered this concept and started exploring related options.

The CHM **agreed to continue these discussions in their next meeting.**

5 WEBSITE UPDATE

The NAMMCO Parties, through the CHM representatives, are tasked with updated information related to their 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](#).

CHM members were reminded to review the above-mentioned sites if they had not already done so, and to inform the Secretariat of any necessary corrections or updates.

6 CATCH DATABASE

The CHM is tasked annually with considering the 2025 Catch Database reported by the NAMMCO Parties ([NAMMCO/33/Database](#)). To support this work and address existing issues in the database, the Secretariat **proposed directly contacting the individuals responsible for the catch data ahead of the summer to discuss these matters in one-to-one meetings.**

7 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the CHM will be held on 20 October 2026.

8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Desportes reminded the CHM that the issue of returning to the core work on providing advice on hunting methods, has been called for by the CHM itself and mandated by Council 33, had not been discussed during the meeting and questioned how this topic should be taken forward, as well as the overall role and direction of the CHM at this stage. It was essential that the CHM would rapidly agree on which methods it wanted to work with and not procrastinate to next meetings.

Other CHM members highlighted that several concrete actions had been agreed during the meeting, including a topic for the training video development (item 2) and the organisation of an upcoming hunter presentation (item 3). In addition, a suggestion was made to pursue work on improving hunting methods, building on previous recommendations from the WWS, other WS and EG, particularly regarding the development of improved hunting weapons for small cetaceans. However, it was recognised that such work would require significant resources, including funding and technical

capacity, and may exceed the current capabilities of the CHM without additional support at this stage. Desportes noted that the development of a device capable of both killing and retrieving animals seemed to be a good option, as it was directed to small cetacean, which have generally a high S&L rate. During the review of the report, Desportes suggested a draft for this project to be prepared intersessionally and to start looking for possible funding. The Secretariat will reach out to Egil Øle who has worked on this matter extensively.

The report was adopted by correspondence 28 May 2026.

APPENDIX 1: AGENDA

- 1. Adoption of agenda and review of documents**
- 2. Hunter training video**
- 3. Hunter presentation to CHM**
- 4. Follow up on the outcomes of the WWS**
 - 4.1. To develop a common framework for hunting terminology
 - 4.2. To define best animal welfare outcomes
- 5. Website update**
- 6. Catch database**
- 7. Next meeting**
- 8. Any other business**

APPENDIX 2: LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Document Reference	Title	Agenda Item
Working Documents		
CHM/2026-02/01a	Agenda & list of documents	1
CHM/2026-02/01b	Draft annotated agenda	1
CHM/2026-02/02	Workplan 2026-2028	1
CHM/2026-02/03	Animal welfare terms – working document (working document)	4.1
CHM/2026-02/04	Overview of S&L, TTD and IDR (working document)	4.2
CHM/2026-02/05	Recommendations on TTD and S&L in the past	4.2
NAMMCO/33/Database	Catch Database 2025	6
For information documents		
CHM/2026-02/FI01	Report of the WWS	
CHM/2026-02/FI02	Report of the WS on Hunting Methods for seals and walrus 2004	
CHM/2026-02/FI03	Report of the NAMMCO WS on S&L 2006	
CHM/2026-02/FI04	Report of the EG meeting on assessing hunting methods for small cetaceans 2011	
CHM/2026-02/FI05	Report of the EG meeting on TTD data for large whales 2015	
CHM/2026-02/FI06	Report of the CHM 2018-02 November	
CHM/2026-02/FI07	Meeting Document 4 for the meeting of the CHM 2018-02 November	
CHM/2026-02/FI08	Keynote D. Pike on the Significance of S&L in the WS on S&L in 2006	

APPENDIX 3: PARTICIPANT LIST

NAMMCO MEMBER COUNTRIES

Guro Gjelsvik (NO)

Directorate of Fisheries

Niels Lyberth (GL)

Ministry of Fisheries, Hunting, Agriculture and Self-sufficiency

Jóhann Ásmundsson (IS)

Directorate of Fisheries

Ragnar Jacobsen (FO)

Faroese Pilot Whaler Association

Kathrine A. Ryeng (NO)

Institute of Marine Research in Norway

Ulla S. Wang (Chair, FO)

Ministry of Fisheries, Industry and Trade

Kristján Loftsson (IS)

Hvalur hf. (Icelandic fin whaling company)

NAMMCO SECRETARIAT

Geneviève Desportes

Secretary General

Naima El bani Altuna

Deputy Secretary

Ian Bolduc

Deputy Secretary