



## OPENING STATEMENT FROM NAMMCO

NAMMCO - the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission - is an international body for regional cooperation on the conservation, management and study of marine mammals in the North Atlantic with membership of the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland and Norway. The North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission held its 22<sup>nd</sup> Council meeting from 25 – 27 February 2014, in Oslo, Norway. The Governments of Canada, Denmark, Japan and the Russian Federation were represented by observers at meetings of NAMMCO, as well as other international governmental organisations within the fields of fisheries and whaling and sealing.

NAMMCO supports science-based utilisation of marine resources, including marine mammals. To ensure sustainability, management decisions should be based on the best scientific advice. Ignoring such advice is unjustifiable and unacceptable as it causes concerns in relation to range states' rights to benefit from local living resources. Attempts at hampering lawful utilisation of marine mammals are a clear disregard of scientific advice.

Key activities since the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in September 2012 include the following:

- **Manuals on whale hunting**

NAMMCO has completed two authoritative manuals: one dealing with large baleen whaling and the use of whaling cannon and the penthrite grenade, and a second dealing specifically with the use of the spinal lance and hook in the pilot whale hunt. These are the first comprehensive manuals for hunters that detail use, maintenance, weaponry and ballistics information with a focus on safety. The documents are now accessible on <http://www.nammco.no/Nammco/Mainpage/Publications/Miscellaneous/>. Both the manuals are available in English, with the first also in Norwegian and the pilot whale hunting manual also available in Faroese.

- **Inspection and Observation**

NAMMCO has an international observation scheme to monitor whether national legislation and decisions made by the Commission are respected. Observers are appointed to report on hunting activities in member countries. The effort of the control scheme for the 2014 season is whaling and sealing in West Greenland. Previously, in March 2013, a training course for observers appointed under the NAMMCO Joint Control Scheme for the Hunting of Marine Mammals took place with participation of 14 candidates.

- **Counting whales**

The series of North Atlantic Sightings Surveys has been the flagship of NAMMCO and is of vital importance for the sustainable management of cetacean stocks in the NAMMCO area. Member nations are planning the sixth comprehensive trans-North Atlantic cetacean Sightings Survey (T-NASS). T-NASS will be coordinated with other national surveys in the area in the summer of 2015.

- **Improving assessments**

Tagging of free ranging animals plays an increasing role in management decisions of marine mammals. Examples include a harbour porpoise tagged off West Greenland that repeatedly crossed the southern Davis Strait to Canada while another moved north to the Disko Bay, south to East Greenland and south east into deep waters in the central North Atlantic where it wintered. Pilot whales tagged off the Faroe Islands were tracked close to the Azores. Hunter-gathered biological samples and data were also important in the advice for larger quotas of walrus in Greenland.

- **Marine Mammals in the context of Food Security**

At a ministerial meeting in 2012, NAMMCO agreed to look at the possibilities of organising an international event where the use of marine mammal products will be examined in the context of global food security which is currently a hot topic in the area of Blue Growth. Marine mammals are an under-utilised food resource that undoubtedly is one of the most ecological on the planet. NAMMCO is now active in the preparation for the promotion of this topic and is pleased to see the topic raised in other international management organisations.

- **Online free-access NAMMCO Scientific Publications**

Online publication has been established in collaboration with the University of Tromsø's (UIT) Septentrio Academic Publishing. The journal website (<http://septentrio.uit.no/index.php/NAMMCOSP/index>) published the first paper in August 2013, and as of August 2014, has had more than 3,800 visitors from 86 countries.

**North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission**

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