

Facilitating the Exchange of Technical Information on ASW Hunts

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Background

During previous meetings of the IWC ASW and Infractions Subcommittees and the Whale Killing Methods Working Group, several IWC members have expressed views that there appears to be little exchange of information between ASW members about weaponry, hunting techniques, equipment, hunter safety, time to death, and humane aspects of the hunt. In general, it is believed that a broader exchange of this information could lead to more efficient, safe, and improved aboriginal subsistence whaling.

Hunters and delegations from the United States and the Russian Federation do periodically meet and discuss weapon methodology and improvements, the struck and lost issue, the effects of weather and ice conditions on hunting success, hunter safety, and any new or unusual aspect of the current season. Moreover, in 2006 the four ASW delegations met at IWC 58 and agreed to form an ASW Caucus. The purpose of the Caucus is to facilitate exchange of ASW information between ASW parties and to improve communications and the quality of data/information submitted to the Commission. Each year since IWC 58, the ASW parties have met prior to meetings of the ASW and Infractions Subcommittees and the Whale Killing Methods Working Group to review relevant information and materials to be presented. So, while there is more information exchange between ASW parties than some delegations are aware, this apparently is an area where improvements can always occur.

Recommendations

To facilitate the exchange of technical information on ASW hunts, the United States proposes that the ASW Subcommittee forwards the following recommendations to the Commission for its consideration:

- 1) To request that member governments having aboriginal subsistence hunts cooperate to the fullest extent possible in the exchange of technical hunting information to improve the efficiency and welfare aspects of those hunts;
- 2) To acknowledge and welcome the activities of the ASW Caucus in facilitating the exchange of technical information amongst its members and with the Commission; and
- 3) To request that the ASW Caucus add an item on “exchange of technical information” to the agenda for each of its meetings and to address any significant ASW issue forwarded to it by the ASW Subcommittee or Commission.