

44th Annual Meeting, 1992
(Rep. int. Whal. Commn 43)

IWC Resolution 1992-1
Resolution on Humane Killing

WHEREAS Article IV,1 of the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling provides that the Commission may encourage, recommend or organise studies and investigations relating to whales and whaling.

WHEREAS the IWC, following its 43rd Annual Meeting in Reykjavík, convened a special workshop, which met in Glasgow on 20 to 22 June 1992, to consider all methods of killing currently in use in whaling or known to be in development; to assess those methods, their efficacy and physiological effects; to evaluate times to death achieved by the various killing methods; to evaluate progress since 1980; and to complete a comparative analysis of the methods.

WHEREAS the participants in that Workshop are to be congratulated on the constructive manner in which they approached their task, exchanged information and promoted a better understanding of killing methods.

WHEREAS the Workshop submitted its report, IWC/44/18 SUP, with advice, to the Humane Killing Working Group of the IWC's Technical Committee.

Now THEREFORE the Commission

- (1) COMMENDS the report of the Workshop
- (2) URGES that the members of the IWC continue to promote the development of humane killing methods
- (3) ACCEPTS the 11 point action plan appended to this resolution as the basis for advice to members of the IWC.

ACTION PLAN

Equipment and methods

- 1) Encourage continued cooperation between Japanese and Norwegian agencies to refine the design of penthrite grenades as far as possible.
- 2) Review means of improving accuracy of delivery of penthrite grenade harpoons, including assessment of refined sighting equipment suitable for rapid action under conditions encountered at sea. Support the development and implementation of programmes to provide training in the safe handling and effective use of devices such as the penthrite grenade and in other aspects of the hunt.
- 3) Review constraints on shooting distance and relative orientation of vessel and whale and identify and encourage reduction of practices which may lead to increased times to death in whales.
- 4) Review effectiveness of secondary killing methods with a view to reducing time to death in whales.

Indication of insensibility and death

- 5) Investigate the basis of agreed criteria for assessment of loss of sensibility and time of death in whales, using observations, including those of muscle tone, jaw and flipper disposition; and recordings of EEG and evoked responses under controlled conditions; to establish baselines.

Assessment of cause of death in relation to observed time to death

- 6) Where possible undertake post-mortem assessment of representative penthrite-killed animals, to determine location and extent of injuries and precise cause of death, including specific assessment of the role of concussive cerebral damage and arterial embolism in death. Develop standardised protocols for post-mortem recording of major indicators of rapid death.

Collection and provision of information on time to death

- 7) Undertake analyses and presentation of any further information on penthrite harpoon use, including times to death and strike area on body, in Japanese commercial Antarctic whaling for 1984-1986/87 seasons and in Japanese coastal minke whaling since 1984. Introduce where appropriate methodology comparable to that used in commercial Antarctic whaling, in collecting and analysing data for times to death in catches under special scientific permit.
- 8) Encourage collection and presentation of struck and lost rates and standardised time to death records in aboriginal subsistence catches of whales and undertake assessment of requirements for controls on the use of rifles to kill unsecured whales.
- 9) Encourage the incorporation of data collection and reduction of struck and lost rates in initiatives in Greenland relating to the beluga and narwhal hunts.

Assessment of physiological status of hunted animals

- 10) Develop procedures for, and where possible implement collection of, representative samples of blood, brain and other tissues from selected animals, to allow assay of stress indicators and other physiological parameters in animals killed in whaling operations.

Next steps

- 11) Encourage the International Whaling Commission to review progress regularly in all the above areas, seeking data and papers; and to consider holding further workshops.