



SECTION 1 – COUNCIL

Report of the Seventh Meeting of the Council.....	9
Appendix 1 List of Participants.....	37
Appendix 2 Agenda.....	39
Appendix 3 List of Documents.....	41
Appendix 4 Addresses & Opening Statements.....	43
Appendix 5 Invited Presentation	50
Appendix 6 Audited Accounts for 1996.....	58
Appendix 7 Press Release	59

NAMMCO Annual Report 1997

REPORT OF THE SEVENTH MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

The Seventh Meeting of the Council of NAMMCO was held at the Hotel Føroyar, Tórshavn, Faroe Islands from 27-30 May 1997. The meeting was attended by delegations from the member countries, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland and Norway, as well as observers from the governments of Canada, Denmark, Japan and the Russian Federation. A number of inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations were also represented by observers. Participants are listed in Appendix 1.

The meeting of the Council was convened by the Chairman, Halvard P. Johansen.

1. OPENING PROCEDURES

1.1 Address of welcome

The Chairman introduced the Minister of Fisheries of the Faroe Islands, John Petersen, who welcomed the Council of NAMMCO to the Faroe Islands for its Seventh Meeting. The full text of the Minister's address is contained in Appendix 4.

1.2 Invited presentation

The Chairman introduced Chief Tom Mexsis Happynook, hereditary whaling chief of the HUU-Ay-Aht tribe of the Nuu-Chah-Nulth Nation (British Columbia, Canada) and Chairman of the recently formed World Council of Whalers. Chief Happynook gave a presentation on the whaling traditions of the Nuu-Chah-Nulth people, and described the establishment and aims of the World Council of Whalers. The text of Chief Happynook's presentation is contained in Appendix 5.

At the conclusion of his presentation, and as a token of gratitude and friendship, Chief Happynook presented the Fisheries Minister, Mr Petersen, the Chairman of the Council and the Secretary with traditional, hand-crafted baskets from his tribe.

In appreciation of Chief Happynook's presentation and as a memento of his visit to the Faroe Islands, the Minister, Mr Petersen presented Chief Happynook with a hand-crafted Faroese whaling knife.

1.3 Opening statements

Opening statements were made by the heads of delegations from Greenland and Norway and by the Minister of Fisheries of Iceland, Mr Þorsteinn Pálsson. Statements were also made by Deputy Minister of Fisheries of Canada, Mr Fernand Robichaud and on behalf of the Government of Japan by Mr Kazuo Shima. Opening statements are contained in Appendix 4.

1.4 Admission of observers

Representatives of a number of intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations were admitted as observers to the Council (see Appendix 1).

1.5 Adoption of agenda

The agenda, as contained in Appendix 2, was adopted.

1.6 Meeting arrangements

The Secretary outlined the practical and social arrangements for the meeting, which included a reception co-hosted by NAMMCO and the Nordic Atlantic Cooperation (NORA) on Tuesday 27 May in the Faroese Museum of Art in Tórshavn, and a dinner hosted by the Minister of Fisheries of the Faroe Islands, Mr John Petersen, at Hotel Føroyar on Thursday 29 May.

2. ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE

2.1 Report of the ad hoc Working Group on Finance and Administration

The Chairman of the *ad hoc* Working Group on Finance and Administration, Arnór Halldórsson (Iceland) reported to the Council on the meetings and recommendations of the Working Group. The Working Group held a telephone meeting on 25 February 1997 to review the accounts for 1996 and to develop a draft budget for presentation to the Council. The report of this meeting, to which were appended the 1996 audited accounts, was circulated to the Council as NAMMCO/7/4. The Council subsequently adopted the draft budget for 1997 by correspondence in March 1997 (see below under 2.2).

The Working Group met again in Tórshavn on 27 May 1997 to further review and develop forecast budgets for 1998 and 1999, and to discuss administrative and budgetary matters related to the work of the Commission and the Secretariat, including staffing, information, a headquarters agreement, and various procedural matters. As a basis for its discussions, the Working Group had also referred to a summary report from the Secretary outlining activities in the Secretariat since the Sixth Meeting of the Council in 1996 (NAMMCO/7/FA/7). The report of the *ad hoc* Working Group on Finance and Administration meeting was circulated to the Council as NAMMCO/7/10.

2.1.1 Audited Accounts 1996

The Council noted that the *ad hoc* Working Group on Finance and Administration had reviewed the audited accounts at its meeting in February and that these had been approved by the Council through correspondence in March (see Appendix 6).

2.1.2 Staffing

The Council noted the Working Group's review of staffing arrangements in the Secretariat and plans for the recruitment of a professional employee to replace Jens Paulsen, Assistant Secretary, who would be leaving the Secretariat later in the year. Sidsel Grønvik had been offered a one-year contract as Scientific Secretary, and the Council **agreed** to the recommendation of the Working Group that this contract should also allow for the possibility of extension for a further three years.

It was also noted that the position of office assistant had been vacated in December 1996 and the Secretariat had employed Tine Richardsen in January 1997 as administrative assistant on a one-year basis.

The Council **agreed** to the recommendation of the Working Group that draft guidelines and procedures for the hiring of Secretariat staff be prepared by the

NAMMCO Annual Report 1997

Secretary for the review of the Council.

2.1.3 *Information*

The Council noted the activities of the Secretariat with respect to general information on NAMMCO, as reported to the *ad hoc* Working Group on Finance and Administration (NAMMCO/7/FA/7). These included the following:

- The publication in June 1996 of a collection of papers presented to the NAMMCO International Conference on Marine Mammals and the Marine Environment (Shetland, 20-21 April 1995), as "Marine Mammals and the Marine Environment", Special Issue, *The Science of the Total Environment*, Volume 186, Nos 1-2, edited by Kate Sanderson and Geir Gabrielsen;
- The publication of the *NAMMCO Annual Report 1996* in 300 copies.
- The regular production and distribution of *Selected Cuts*, a selection of items from the international media on issues concerning the conservation and utilisation of marine mammals and related topics. This is sent to a list of some 50 contacts in member countries and elsewhere.

In addition, members of the Secretariat staff took part in a number of meetings at which information on NAMMCO was presented. These included: the 1996 annual meeting of the Norwegian minke whalers' association, at which Jens Paulsen gave a presentation on the NAMMCO Joint Control Scheme; a meeting of the Canadian Northern Co-Management groups in Yellowknife, Canada in November 1996, at which Kate Sanderson gave a briefing on NAMMCO; and the seminar "Whaling in the North Atlantic" in Reykjavik in March 1997, organised by the Fisheries Research Institute of the University of Iceland and the High North Alliance, at which Kate Sanderson gave a paper on NAMMCO's first five years. This paper was circulated to the Council as NAMMCO/7/INFO/1 (since published in Pétursdóttir 1997).

The Council noted the Working Group's discussion of the possibility of reclaiming costs in connection with the circulation of NAMMCO publications and other material, such as the press clippings service, *Selected Cuts*. It was **agreed** that the Secretariat should investigate the requirements for such payment procedures.

The Council **agreed** that the development of newsletters and fact sheets should be given priority, and that this kind of information would be an important part of the function of a NAMMCO web site on the Internet, which was currently being developed.

2.1.4 *Host Agreement*

The Council noted that a joint letter from the Faroes, Greenland and Iceland had been sent in early May 1997 to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Norway concerning the continued lack of a host agreement between Norway and NAMMCO. No response from the Ministry had yet been received.

The Council reiterated its view, also expressed at its Sixth Annual Meeting, that there is a need to resolve the details of an agreement as soon as possible, both with regard to clarifying the legal status of the organisation, as well as the financial implications for

the organisation and its staff.

It was also once again noted that payments made through NAMMCO to Norway amount to significantly more than the extra annual contribution of NOK 250,000 paid by Norway in lieu of tax concessions. It was noted that as the responsibilities of the organisation increase, so too will the financial consequences of a lack of host agreement. An agreement, including financial elements, would enable the organisation to utilise the contributions paid by member countries much more effectively.

2.1.5 The status of the Working Group

The Council **agreed** to the recommendation that the *ad hoc* Working Group be established as a permanent group with the following terms of reference:

- to review annual accounts and develop budgets and forecast budgets for the Council;
- to review administrative matters related to the activities of the Commission;
- to consider any other financial and administrative matters which the Council may decide to forward to it.

It was envisaged that the Group would, until otherwise decided, elect its own Chairman from among its members, who should be officially appointed to the group by respective member countries.

2.2 Forecast budgets 1998 & 1999

The Council referred to document NAMMCO/7/5-rev 1, containing the adopted budget for 1997 and draft budgets for 1998 and 1999.

It was noted that the budget for 1997 had been **approved** by the Council by correspondence in March.

The Council **agreed** to the proposal of the *ad hoc* Working Group on Finance and Administration that, beginning with the present meeting, the Council should approve the budget for the following year at its annual meetings. This procedure would take into account budgeting procedures in respective member countries and allow contributions to be paid at the beginning of the financial year.

It was also **agreed** that wherever possible, future budgets should not be developed with a surplus.

The Council **adopted** the budget for 1998, as contained in NAMMCO/7/5 - rev 1.

In adopting the 1998 budget, it was noted that as a result of the decision to implement the International Observation Scheme in 1998 (see below under 4.1.4), funds already allocated for the implementation of the Scheme in the adopted budget for 1997 would not now be used in this financial year, resulting in an empty post under this item for 1998.

3. SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

3.1 Report of the Scientific Committee

The Chairman of the Scientific Committee, Tore Haug, presented the Report of the Scientific Committee, which had met in Tromsø, Norway from 10 to 15 March 1997. The Report was available to the Council as NAMMCO/7/6 and is contained in Section 3 of this volume.

The Scientific Committee met to address both new and outstanding requests for advice forwarded to it by the Council. The Committee decided to deal with the new requests for advice on food consumption of minke whales, harp seals and hooded seals in the North Atlantic, and the review of the current state of knowledge of sealworm infestation in fish, by establishing separate expert *ad hoc* Working Groups. These Working Groups convened during the week of the Scientific Committee meeting in Tromsø and included participation from a broad range of external expertise represented by scientists from Canada, Denmark and the UK in addition to Norway, Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands (see under item 3.1.1 below).

National Progress Reports for 1996 from Norway, Iceland and the Faroes, and for 1995 from Greenland were submitted to the Scientific Committee. These are contained in Section 4 of this volume.

The Council noted the Scientific Committee's discussions regarding the admission of observers to its meetings (See Section 3.1, item 5.8), and **endorsed** the Scientific Committee's recommendation that, in order to provide the Scientific Committee and the Council with a proper basis on which to decide their admission, prospective observers to meetings of the Scientific Committee should submit a written request to the Secretariat stating their affiliations and reasons for wishing to attend.

3.1.1 *Role of marine mammals in the ecosystem*

i) *Food consumption of minke whales, harp and hooded seals in the North Atlantic*

Haug reported to the Council on the major conclusions and recommendations of the Scientific Committee with respect to the Council's request to the Committee to -

".. focus its attention on the food consumption of three predators in the North Atlantic: the minke whale, the harp seal and the hooded seal, with a particular emphasis on the study of the potential implications for commercially important fish stocks." (NAMMCO Annual Report 1996: 28)

In order to address this request, the Scientific Committee had established an *ad hoc* Working Group on the Role of Minke Whales, Harp Seals and Hooded Seals in North Atlantic Ecosystems, which was chaired by Gísli Vikingsson (Iceland). The report of the Working Group was reviewed by the Scientific Committee (for further details see Section 3.1, item 7.1 and Section 3.2).

Feeding ecology and estimates of consumption

Available knowledge on the feeding ecology of the three marine mammal species across the North Atlantic was reviewed, and some estimates of total consumption of various prey items were also presented. It was noted, however, that a number of uncertainties were identified in relation to the estimates of consumption in the different stocks and areas, and that all given estimates should therefore be used with caution.

Except for the Northeast Atlantic, the diet composition of minke whales was poorly documented. Recent studies off northern Norway (in the Barents Sea and around Spitsbergen) in years with low capelin abundance have shown herring and krill to be the most important food items, followed by cod and various other fish species. Based on abundance estimates from 1995, minke whales in this area are estimated to consume annually 1.8 million tons of prey during their feeding period, which lasts from April to October. Of this estimate, 633,000 tons were herring, corresponding to about 70% of the total 1995 fishery for that species. Consumption of cod and haddock was 256,000 and 142,000 tons, respectively, while the amount of krill was similar to the herring component.

From the little available information, minke whales in Icelandic waters appear to feed on fish and krill in roughly equal amounts. The identified fish species were capelin, sand eel and cod. The total consumption of the species in this area, (based on abundance estimates from the 1987-1989 surveys) was estimated as 391,000 tons, of which 198,000 tons were fish. In Greenland waters capelin is the most important food species for minke whales. Among other identified prey species were Atlantic cod, polar cod, Greenland cod, herring, sand eel and crustaceans. In the Northwest Atlantic off Canada, capelin appears to be the dominant prey species of minke whales, while other identified food items include squid, salmon, herring, cod and crustaceans. A preliminary estimate indicates that the consumption of minke whales in Canadian waters is relatively low compared to that of harp seals, although it may be larger than the consumption of hooded, grey or harbour seals in the area.

In general the most important prey groups for harp seals in the Barents Sea are crustaceans, capelin, polar cod and herring. The total consumption of the Barents Sea harp seal stock was estimated as 1.1-1.7 million tons. The large range is due to uncertainties in the choice of input parameters in the model. Under certain assumptions about energy expenditure, the estimated annual consumption by harp seals is 428,200 tons of crustaceans, 258,200 tons capelin (in years of high capelin abundance), 212,500 tons polar cod, 69,600 tons herring and 32,200 tons cod. In years of low capelin abundance, capelin consumption seemed to be replaced by other fish species, notably polar cod.

Most of the examined harp seals from the Greenland Sea pack ice during spring and early summer had empty stomachs but analysis of the intestines revealed the pelagic amphipod, *Themisto sp.* as the major food item. No information is available about Greenland Sea harp seal diet in the most important feeding period (June-February). The main prey species identified in harp seals collected during February-May in coastal North Icelandic waters were sand eels, cod fishes and capelin.

The food composition of harp seals in West Greenland waters is variable, with pelagic crustaceans, capelin and polar cod as the most important prey types. Although commercially important fish species are a small part of the diet, the total consumption of these may be of the same order of magnitude as the commercial fishery in the region.

Harp seals are considered the most important pinniped predators in Atlantic Canadian waters. In the northern Gulf of Maine and NAFO areas 2J3KL they were estimated to have consumed over 150,000 tons of Atlantic cod, 1.1 million tons of capelin, 600,000 tons of polar cod, 130,000 tons of Greenland halibut, 107,000 tons of redfish and 104,000 tons of herring in 1996. The greatest source of uncertainty in the estimates of consumption by harp seals in the Northwest Atlantic is related to limited information on seasonal distribution of the species and potential spatial and temporal variations in the diet. Haug reported that studies addressing these questions are under way.

The diet composition of hooded seals is not generally as well known as that of harp seals. The majority of hooded seals sampled in the Greenland Sea pack ice during spring and early summer had empty stomachs, but the major food item found in the intestines was the squid *Gonatus fabricii*. Redfish, cod and other fish species were the main prey species identified in a small number of hooded seals investigated off northern Iceland. In Greenland waters, larger demersal fish species like Greenland halibut, redfish, cod and wolffish are apparently important prey items for hooded seals, in addition to the species also taken by harp seals in the area. In Atlantic Canada hooded seals were estimated to consume 129,000 tons of Greenland halibut, 36,000 tons of Atlantic cod and 19,000 tons of redfish in 1996.

Multispecies modelling of interactions

Haug reported on the Scientific Committee's subsequent discussions and conclusions related to the interactions between these three major predators and commercially important fish stocks, in particular with respect to results from applications of a number of multispecies models.

A multispecies model for the Barents Sea (MULTSPEC) describes the interactions between minke whales, harp seals, herring, capelin and cod in the Barents Sea. The main effects identified were: the herring stock increased as predation from marine mammals decreased; the development of the capelin stock was mainly determined by changes in the herring and cod stocks (both of which prey on capelin); the cod stock generally increased or decreased when marine mammal stocks decreased or increased; decreasing the preference for herring by cod had much larger effects than changing some of the marine mammal preferences. It was noted that the model might be improved by including polar cod and taking account of seasonal variation in prey preferences. Recent studies of Barents Sea harp seals may indicate that the latter is important.

Another model investigated the effect on fish stocks of tuning the Revised Management Procedure (RMP) for minke whales in the Barents and Norwegian Seas from the current level of 72% of k (carrying capacity) to 60% k . Assuming an abundance of 100,000 minke whales and a Maximum Sustainable Yield Rate (MSYR) of between 1% and 2%, the main effect of changing the RMP target from 72% to 60%

was an increase of some 14% in the cod catches.

Investigations on interactions between three whale species, two seal species and two fish species in Icelandic waters indicate that natural mortality of cod from marine mammal predation is twice that which is due to cannibalism and thus may be a major proportion of natural mortality in the younger age classes.

The Scientific Committee noted that the effects of marine mammals are at present not included in models routinely used in multispecies management (e.g. such as by ICES). A number of potential uses of multispecies models were identified, as well as the most important gaps in knowledge and data requirements for the modelling work (see Section 3.2, item 5.5 in this volume), some of which were reflected in the Scientific Committee's recommendations for future work (see below).

.....

The Council noted the conclusion of the Scientific Committee that minke whales, harp seals and hooded seals in the North Atlantic may have substantial direct and/or indirect effects on commercial fish stocks. In order to better understand these effects, the Council **endorsed** the recommendations from the Scientific Committee for future work in this area, as outlined in Section 3.1, item 7.1.3 of this volume.

Greenland noted that the Scientific Committee's review of major prey consumption estimates by marine mammals, as well as their discussion and recommendations related to multispecies models which include marine mammals, would also be of interest to regional fisheries management bodies, such as NEAFC, NAFO and NASCO. The Council **agreed** that the pertinent sections of the Scientific Committee report should be brought to the attention of these and other relevant fisheries management bodies.

ii) Sealworm infection

Haug referred to the Council's request to the Scientific Committee -

"... to review the current state of knowledge with respect to sealworm infestation and to consider the need for comparative studies in the western, central and eastern North Atlantic coastal areas, taking into account the priority topics recommended by the Scientific Committee and its *ad hoc* Working Group on grey seals." (*NAMMCO Annual Report 1996*: 28; 111-116)

To address this request, the Scientific Committee had established an *ad hoc* Working Group on Sealworm Infection under the chairmanship of Geneviève Desportes (Faroes), which was attended by a number of scientific experts from Canada, Iceland, Norway and the UK who had been invited to contribute working papers to the Working Group's review of sealworm infection in the North Atlantic (see Section 3.1, item 7.2 and Section 3.3 of this volume).

The Scientific Committee reviewed available information on the life cycle of the sealworm as well as environmental and behavioural factors influencing the life cycle. In response to a question from Norway, Haug pointed out that transmission of

sealworm is not only related to the occurrence of cod or their feeding patterns, as sealworm is present in many different fish species.

Influence of seal abundance on the level of sealworm infection in fish

Haug noted that from a management perspective, the most relevant sealworm question reviewed by the Committee was how seal abundance may influence the level of sealworm infection in fish. The Council noted the following conclusions of the Scientific Committee:

- The presence of either grey seals or harbour seals can lead to sealworm infections in fish over the entire North Atlantic region. Reduction of either species may not therefore result in a significant reduction in sealworm infections in fish;
- Although harbour seals are less abundant than grey seals in many areas, they could be responsible for high local infections in fish because of their limited foraging range;
- At least in the short and medium term, sealworm infection levels in intermediate hosts are not necessarily directly correlated with seal abundance. They may be mitigated by other factors such as environmental temperature and intermediate host abundance and distribution;
- Individual worm levels in seals vary to such an extent that a few seals could still maintain high infection levels in fish.

The Scientific Committee also concluded that modelling was now a priority in order to bring together and analyse the considerable amount of data collected since 1990. The Scientific Committee also identified the need for comparable datasets in the western, central and eastern North Atlantic coastal areas, as well as the need to categorise habitat types in order to compare infection rates between seal and fish populations.

The Council **endorsed** the Scientific Committee's recommendations for future work on sealworm infection (see Section 3.1, items 7.2.2 and 7.2.3). These included: intensified research in both the Northeast and Northwest Atlantic with respect to sealworm biology and dynamics; an intensive survey in Iceland of sealworm in grey seal stomachs to coincide with a planned Icelandic survey of sealworm in Atlantic cod; a workshop on modelling of sealworm infection.

3.1.2 Marine mammal stocks - status and advice to the Council

Long-finned pilot whales

Haug presented the findings and conclusions of the Scientific Committee in response to the Council's request for:

- an assessment of the state of the pilot whale stock in the Northeast Atlantic, based on information sampled from the Faroese drive fishery and the NASS sightings surveys; and
- an analysis of the effects of the pilot whale drive hunt in the Faroe Islands on

North Atlantic pilot whales, especially whether the numbers taken are consistent with sustainable utilisation.

The first part of the request had been forwarded to ICES in 1992, in response to which ICES had established a Study Group on Long-finned Pilot Whales. The Scientific Committee based its review of both questions and the development of its advice to the Council on the findings of the ICES Study Group, as well as on its own recent review of the results of NASS-95.

i) Population assessment

Stock identity and seasonal movements of pilot whales were addressed using available new information about distribution, genetics and morphometric measurements. The Scientific Committee discussed the three stock identity hypotheses formulated by the ICES Study Group, and concluded that of these, the two extreme scenarios of a single North Atlantic population or one stock restricted to the vicinity of the Faroe Islands, could both be ruled out. This left the general conclusion that there is more than one population of pilot whales in the North Atlantic.

With respect to social structure and behavioural factors, it was noted that the total number of animals in the aggregations investigated was still less than the average size of schools landed in the Faroe Islands, and that further investigation of this matter was necessary. The effects of harvesting whole groups of animals which are genetically related should also be further explored.

In discussing the estimates of abundance for pilot whales in the Eastern North Atlantic, the results of the NASS surveys were of crucial importance. It was noted that the coverage of the three surveys (NASS-87, 89 and 95) was not identical and thus yielded substantially different estimates of total abundance. It was, however, concluded that given the mobility of the species, the apparent between-year shifts in distribution and the relatively thorough and extensive coverage of NASS-89, the estimate of 778,000 derived from this joint survey was the most appropriate. No estimate of abundance for pilot whales based on systematic sightings is available for the Western North Atlantic

The Council **endorsed** the Scientific Committee's recommendation for future research requirements, as listed by the ICES Study Group on Long-finned Pilot Whales in its 1996 report (ICES C.M.1996/A:6), and further **endorsed** the Scientific Committee's recommendation that two of these should, in particular, be given priority:

- A long-term research and population monitoring strategy should be developed related to the Faroe Island fishery, based on an in-depth review of previous and current fishery monitoring procedures and the extensive research conducted in the Faroe Islands since the mid 1980s. The aims of such a programme should include both longer-term monitoring which would help improve understanding of the status of the harvested population, and short-term monitoring to detect more rapid changes as might occur.

- In order to gain more information on the size of the population subjected to the Faroese fishery, the movements of individual pods of pilot whales that approach

the Faroe Islands should be monitored by use of satellite tags. Several animals within a pod should be tagged, ideally with tags designed to be active over varying time periods.

With respect to the second of these recommendations, the Faroe Islands informed the Council that plans were under way to attempt the attachment of satellite tags on pilot whales in the Faroe Islands in 1997.

ii) *Sustainability of the Faroese catch*

Haug reported to the Council that in discussing the sustainability of the Faroese catch, the Scientific Committee focused on the population trajectories developed by the ICES Study Group, which are included as Appendix 6 to the Scientific Committee Report (see Section 3.1). Based on the catch history, the population trajectories predict the changes in the population size since 1840 under various assumptions of maximum population growth rates and for various stock areas, based on the population estimate resulting from NASS-89. A plausible range of maximum population growth rates of 1.4% to 5.7% per annum was applied to three probable stock areas: Rockall-Iceland; Mid-Atlantic Ridge-Faroes; NASS-89 survey area.

From the performed calculation exercises the Scientific Committee concluded that the effects of historic and present catches in the Faroes Islands have had a negligible effect on the long-term trends in the pilot whale stock. It was noted that an annual catch of 2,000 individuals in the eastern North Atlantic corresponds to an exploitation rate of 0.26% of the present best estimate of 778,000 pilot whales (from NASS-89) in the Northeast Atlantic.

In conclusion, Haug informed the Council that the Scientific Committee now considered its work complete with respect to the development of advice on this species, while noting the recommendations for further research which had been endorsed by the Council.

.....

The Chairman of the Council thanked the Scientific Committee for their work in providing their final response to this long-standing request for advice. The Council also noted with appreciation the contribution of the ICES Study Group on Long-finned Pilot Whales, under the chairmanship of Doug Butterworth, whose work had provided such a comprehensive basis for both the NAMMCO Scientific Committee and ICES in developing their advice to the Council. It was noted, however, that the Scientific Committee had taken their findings further than the official advice received from ICES

(NAMMCO/7/8), which had not had the benefit of the most recent review of data from NASS-95.

Killer whales

The Council noted the Scientific Committee's decision to postpone further consideration of the request for advice on this species until the results of on-going studies became available.

Harp and hooded seals

Haug reported that the Scientific Committee had little new information to add to last year's comprehensive review of available data on harp and hooded seals, in particular in the Northwest Atlantic (see *NAMMCO Annual Report 1996*: 104-107).

It was noted, however, that the ICES/NAFO Joint Working Group on Harp and Hooded Seals would be meeting again later this year to look in particular at outstanding aspects of NAMMCO's request with respect to harp and hooded seals in the West Ice and harp seals in the East Ice. It was therefore expected that the Committee would be in a position to return to these items at its next meeting in 1998 (see below under 4.2.1).

Harbour porpoises

Although no specific request for advice on harbour porpoises had been forwarded from the Council, the Scientific Committee noted that this species was common to all NAMMCO member countries, and that the extent of current research activities and expertise in member countries and elsewhere across the North Atlantic would provide an excellent basis for undertaking a comprehensive assessment of the harbour porpoise throughout its range, should the Council decide that this is an appropriate task for the Scientific Committee (see below under 4.2.1).

Central North Atlantic minke whales

Haug reported on the status of work by the Scientific Committee to address the Council's most recent request for advice:

"In the light of the new survey abundance results the Scientific Committee is requested to undertake an assessment of the status of the Central North Atlantic minke whale stock, including to evaluate the long term effects of past and present removal levels on the stock."

The task of assessing the status of the Central North Atlantic minke whale stock was assigned to the Scientific Committee's Working Group on Management Procedures, under the chairmanship of Nils Øien (Norway). Although the Council had requested the Scientific Committee to provide this advice in time for its present meeting, it had not yet been possible for the Scientific Committee to finalise an assessment. It was reported, however, that the Group was currently working by correspondence on the various issues which the Scientific Committee had identified as necessary to address in such an assessment.

These included: a summary of completed work and ongoing studies of the stock discreteness of Central North Atlantic minke whales; examination of past history of exploitation under varying assumptions of recent population size, maximum population growth rate and stock areas; and an examination of a range of management scenarios of present removals under most likely stock areas and with results from NASS-87, -89 and -95. In order to carry out this work, the Scientific Committee would contract the relevant expertise to summarise genetic results and to run population trajectories

.....

Iceland commended the progress made so far in addressing this request and expressed their desire for the Scientific Committee to complete the necessary work towards providing this stock assessment as soon as possible (see also Section 2.1, item 4 in this volume).

3.1.3 Review of results of NASS-95

Haug reported on the work of the Scientific Committee to address the following request from the Council:

“The 1995 North Atlantic Sightings Survey (NASS-95) would provide updated abundance estimates for a number of whale species in the North Atlantic, and the Scientific Committee was requested to review results in the light of recent assessments of North Atlantic whale stocks” (*NAMMCO Annual Report 1995: 23*).

The Scientific Committee reviewed the findings of its Working Group on Abundance Estimates, the report of which is contained in Section 3.4 of this volume. The synoptic distributions of the cetacean species encountered during NASS-95 were described, and abundance estimates were developed for minke, fin, sei and pilot whales, which were the target species of the survey.

Minke whales

It was agreed that the NASS surveys gave a complete picture of the summer distribution of minke whales in the Northeast Atlantic. The overall estimate for the Norwegian survey blocks was 118,000 (CV 0.10); for the Icelandic shipboard surveys 17,900 and the Icelandic aerial survey 55,900 (CV 0.31). This gives a total estimate (corrected by excluding from the shipboard estimates the part that overlaps the aerial survey area) of 184,000 minke whales for the total NASS-95 area (*NAMMCO/7/6: Annex 3, Table 2*). Distributed according to assumed stocks, this means 72,000 in the Central North Atlantic and 112,000 in the Northeast Atlantic.

It was noted that minke whale estimates from Icelandic aerial surveys show a great increase from 1987 to 1995, although the total number of sightings is about the same in both years. Although more of the effort in 1995 is in low density areas, so given the same number of sightings, a larger estimate would be expected, the difference is to a large degree a function of different methodology as well as different observers. Thus, reanalysis of the 1987 aerial survey data gives more than twice the estimate obtained by the earlier methods.

Fin whales

The total abundance of fin whales for the areas covered by NASS-95 was 22,800 (CV 0.15). The total estimate for the Norwegian survey area is 3,100 fin whales (CV 0.25) and for the Icelandic/Faroese survey area 19,700 fin whales (CV 0.17). The estimate for the East Greenland-Iceland stock, 18,900, is the largest to date. In particular, the abundance is considerably higher in the area between East Greenland and Iceland than in the 1987 and 1989 surveys. This may reflect a true increase in the stock, while discontinuity in distribution towards the south of the survey area may indicate that the 1995 survey captured the peak of the fin whale migration to these waters better than earlier surveys.

Sei whales

The total estimate of sei whales from NASS-95 was 9,249 animals (95% confidence interval: 3,700 - 23,116. Although the majority (about 70%) of the 1989 estimate (10,600, CV 0.27) was derived from survey blocks south of the 1995 survey, the two surveys are not inconsistent in the light of the wide confidence limits and difference in timing.

It is unlikely that any of the NASS surveys covered the total distribution of the sei whale stock and the species is known for relatively large between-year variations in abundance in northern waters.

Pilot whales

The total abundance of pilot whales over all blocks in 1995 is 215,000 animals (CV 0.26). Previous surveys of long-finned pilot whales had been conducted in 1987 and 1989, and a total estimate of 778,000 (CV 0.29) has been calculated based on 1989 data when the survey had its largest extension. By comparing comparable survey blocks, it appears that the 1995 estimate is broadly comparable to the 1987 and 1989 estimates. The 1995 estimate is therefore consistent and not significantly different from previous estimates for the area covered. The 1989 estimate is therefore still regarded as the best estimate for this population.

.....

The Council noted the conclusion of the Scientific Committee that the updated abundance estimates for the target species as reviewed by the Scientific Committee Working Group on Abundance Estimates represented the best available estimates for the stocks concerned.

3.1.4. Monitoring of marine mammal stock levels and trends

Haug reported on the Scientific Committee's discussion of the following request from the Council:

“In relation to the importance of the further development of multispecies approaches to the management of marine resources, the Scientific Committee was requested to monitor stock levels and trends in stocks of all marine mammals in the North Atlantic.”

It was clarified that the purpose of this request was to ensure that data on marine mammals was available for input into multispecies models for management. The Management Committee had suggested that the Scientific Committee present this information annually in the form of a table (*NAMMCO Annual Report 1995: 47*). The value of such a table was discussed by the Scientific Committee, and it was agreed that, given the differences in survey methodologies and areas on which estimates of abundance are based, such a table would not be a reliable reference for management.

Instead, the Scientific Committee agreed that updated information on abundance and

indications of trends in abundance of stocks of marine mammals in the North Atlantic should be clearly described in a new document for the internal reference of the Council, to replace the List of Priority Species. This document would be entitled Status of Marine Mammals in the North Atlantic, and should include those cetacean and pinniped species already contained in the List of Priority Species, as well as other common cetacean species in the NAMMCO area for which distribution and abundance data is also available (fin, sei, humpback, blue and sperm whales). It was also suggested that it would be useful to include an indication of research needs for each species/stock, as well as references to relevant general review literature and working group reports.

.....

The Council **endorsed** the suggestion of the Scientific Committee regarding the development and contents of the Status of Marine Mammals in the North Atlantic, noting that this would be further developed by the Secretariat and reviewed by the Scientific Committee, using the present List of Priority Species as a starting point.

3.1.5 Publications

Recalling the Council's decision at its last meeting to begin a NAMMCO series of scientific publications, Haug reported on progress with the first edition on ringed seals, which was currently being edited by Mads Peter Heide-Jørgensen and Christian Lydersen (Polar Institute, Norway). It was expected to be completed in late 1997.

The Council **endorsed** the Scientific Committee's view that the most recent work of the Scientific Committee provided material which would also be valuable to publish in this series, and noted that the Scientific Committee had already tentatively assigned editors from among its members for future volumes on the following subjects:

- Role of minke whales, harp seals and hooded seals in North Atlantic ecosystems (ed. Gísli Víkingsson, Iceland)
- Sealworm infection (ed. Geneviève Desportes, Faroes)
- Results of the 1995 North Atlantic Sightings Survey (NASS-95) (ed. Jóhann Sigurjónsson, Iceland).

3.1.6 Election of officers

Haug informed the Council that the Scientific Committee had elected Mads Peter Heide-Jørgensen as its new Chairman, and Dorete Bloch (Faroes) as Vice-Chairman, for the next two years.

The Chairman of the Council thanked the outgoing Chairman of the Scientific Committee for his report to the Council, and for his efforts over the past two years in co-ordinating the important work of the Committee.

3.2 Cooperation with the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)

The Council noted with appreciation the report received from ICES in January 1997 on the status of the long-finned pilot whale in the North Atlantic (NAMMCO/7/8). This was the official ICES response to NAMMCO's request to "provide an assessment of the state of the pilot whale in the north eastern Atlantic, based on the

information sampled from the Faroese drive fishery and the NASS (North Atlantic Sighting Survey) sighting surveys”, which had been forwarded to ICES in 1992. The final advice from ICES had been prepared jointly by the ICES Advisory Committee on Fishery Management (ACFM) and the Advisory Committee on the Marine Environment (ACME) at their meetings in 1996 (see also under item 3.1.2 above, and Section 3.1, item 8.1).

Memorandum of Understanding with ICES

At its sixth meeting in Tromsø in March 1996, the Council agreed that the form and terms of a formal cooperative agreement between ICES and NAMMCO should be negotiated between respective Secretariats. The Secretary reported to the Council on correspondence related to this matter that had been exchanged with the ICES General Secretary in the interim. In response to a first draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) developed by ICES in May 1996 along the lines of their agreement with, for example, the Oslo and Paris Commissions, NAMMCO had suggested in June 1996 the development of a more general kind of cooperative agreement, acknowledging the need for cost recovery by ICES in cases where this is necessary.

ICES subsequently responded in May 1997 with the option for NAMMCO to consider one of the two kinds of MoUs with which ICES prefers to operate. The one kind involves collaboration on scientific areas of mutual interest, where the costs of such collaboration are covered, as appropriate, jointly by ICES and the other party, and which precludes information and advice being requested from ICES. The other type of MoU involves both scientific collaboration as well as the provision of information and advice by ICES, and which formalises the obligation of the organisation requesting advice to cover the costs incurred by ICES in providing such advice.

The Council **agreed** that the Secretariat should further investigate both of the options for a formal agreement as presented by ICES, and report back to the Council at its next annual meeting. While not wishing to rule out the option of an agreement which provides NAMMCO with the opportunity to seek advice from ICES, and recognising the cost recovery policies of ICES, it was suggested that the Secretariat look into the specifics of the cost implications for NAMMCO of such an agreement. It was also suggested that it might be useful to consult other regional management bodies with whom ICES has similar agreements.

3.3 Other business

The Council noted discussions in the *ad hoc* Working Group on Finance and Administration concerning the level of funds available to cover the costs of invited expertise in its work, and **endorsed** the recommendation that the present level of funding be maintained in future budgets (see also 2.2 above). However, it was also noted that, according to items II.5 and IV.3 of the Scientific Committee Rules of Procedure, the nomination of external experts to participate in meetings of the Scientific Committee and its working groups is subject to the approval of the Council. The Council encouraged the Secretariat to ensure that these procedures be followed by informing the Council of the Scientific Committee’s plans for the involvement of external experts in its work.

4. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

4.1 Report of the Management Committee

The Chairman of the Management Committee, Einar Lemche (Greenland) reported to the Council on the meeting of the Management Committee which was held in Tórshavn from 28 to 30 May. A draft of the major conclusions and recommendations of the Management Committee was circulated during the Council meeting. The final report of the Management Committee was completed by correspondence and is contained in Section 2.1 of this volume.

4.1.1 *Matters arising from the Scientific Committee*

The Management Committee noted the revised abundance estimate of 72,000 for this stock as the best available, and also noted the progress made so far by the Scientific Committee in providing the requested assessment of the status of the stock (see also under items 3.1.2 and 3.1.3 above).

4.1.2 *Earlier proposals for conservation and management*

The Council noted the Management Committee's review of updated information with respect to management conclusions and recommendations previously made in relation to species and stocks for which advice had been sought through the Scientific Committee. These included Northern bottlenose whales, Atlantic walruses and harp and hooded seals in the Northwest Atlantic (see Section 2.1, item 5.1 in this volume).

4.1.3 *New proposals for conservation and management*

Long-finned pilot whales

The Council noted the Management Committee's review of the comprehensive advice which had now been provided by the Scientific Committee in response to requests from the Council (see above under item 3.1.2).

It was noted that the Faroe Islands wished to continue to utilise pilot whales in the manner they had done for centuries. Due to the opportunistic nature of the catch, it was further noted that the application of total allowable catches was not considered an appropriate management measure for this form of utilisation.

The Council noted the conclusion of the Management Committee that the drive hunt of pilot whales in the Faroe Islands is sustainable. This conclusion was based on the findings and conclusions of the Scientific Committee, through its review of the ICES Study Group Report and the analysis of data from NASS-95 with respect to the abundance and stock identity of long-finned pilot whales in the North Atlantic (see Section 3.1, item 8.1), as well as the conclusions of the Scientific Committee that the effects of the drive hunt of pilot whales in the Faroe Islands have had a negligible effect on the population, which is estimated as 778,000 in the Central and North East Atlantic.

4.1.4 *Implementation of the Joint NAMMCO Control Scheme*

National Inspection Schemes for Coastal Whaling (Part A - Joint NAMMCO Control

Scheme)

With reference to the adoption at its Sixth Meeting of the Provisions for the Joint NAMMCO Control Scheme for the Hunting of Marine Mammals (see *NAMMCO Annual Report 1996*, 29; 69-75), the Council noted the information provided by members of the Management Committee in relation to progress in implementing Part A of the Joint Control Scheme - Common elements for national inspection schemes for coastal whaling in NAMMCO member countries (see Section 2.1, item 7.1).

International Observation Scheme (Part B - Joint NAMMCO Control Scheme)

The Council noted that the necessary guidelines for implementation of Part B of the Joint Control Scheme, the International Observation Scheme, had been developed by the Management Committee's *ad hoc* Working Group on Inspection and Observation, and that these had been adopted by the Management Committee in February 1997, according to the provisions of Section C (Implementation) of the Joint Control Scheme. The Guidelines are contained in Section 2.2 of this volume.

The Council **agreed** to the recommendation from the Management Committee that the International Observation Scheme be implemented in 1998, according to the adopted guidelines and the specified procedures for planning the scope of observation activities and appointing observers. It was further **agreed** that an amount of NOK 120,000 be allocated for the Scheme in 1998 (see also under item 2.2 above). It was noted in this connection that according to article B.7 of the Joint NAMMCO Control Scheme, the possibility also exists for different arrangements for covering costs related to the activities of NAMMCO observers, which can be agreed between NAMMCO and the country sending the observer.

It was further noted that the Management Committee had requested the Working Group on Inspection and Observation to complete the outstanding practical documentation for observers, drafts of which had been prepared by the Secretariat.

The Council also reiterated the view of the Management Committee that the Secretariat should maintain active consultation with the relevant authorities in member countries when developing proposals for the scope and range of observation activities.

4.2 Research recommendations & requests for advice

The Council **agreed** to forward the following requests for advice and research recommendations to the Scientific Committee (under 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 below). In so doing, the Council also **agreed** that priority should be given to the tasks outlined under 4.2.1 below prior to the next meeting of the Council, drawing on all relevant expertise to address these requests.

4.2.1 Short-term priorities

Harp and hooded seals

With respect to the Council's earlier request for advice on harp and hooded seals (see *NAMMCO Annual Report 1996*:132-33), it was noted that at its 1996 meeting, the Scientific Committee had reviewed the latest information on the Northwest Atlantic stocks of these species (see also above under 3.1.2), but that a number of issues

regarding the status of stocks of hooded seals in the Greenland Sea and harp seals in the Greenland, Barents and White Seas still remained to be addressed.

It was noted that at its Copenhagen meeting in August/September 1997, the Joint ICES/NAFO Working Group on harp and hooded seals will in particular address the status of the harp seals stock in the Greenland Sea and the Barents and White Seas and the hooded seal stock in the Greenland Sea. The ecological role of these stocks will also be discussed. Aware that aerial surveys have been carried out in 1997 to assess both the Greenland Sea hooded seal stock and the Barents/White Sea harp seal stock, updated abundance estimates for these two stocks are expected. An updated stock estimate for the Barents/White Sea stock of harp seals will make it possible to establish a more reliable estimate of the annual food consumption of this stock. Current knowledge about the feeding habits of harp and hooded seals in the Greenland Sea are, however, insufficient to facilitate calculation of food consumption of these stocks.

It was anticipated that the Scientific Committee would review this new research at its next meeting.

Harbour porpoises

The Council noted that the harbour porpoise is common to all NAMMCO member countries, and that the extent of current research activities and expertise in member countries and elsewhere across the North Atlantic would provide an excellent basis for undertaking a comprehensive assessment of the species throughout its range. The Council therefore **requested** the Scientific Committee to perform such an assessment, which might include distribution and abundance, stock identity, biological parameters, ecological interaction, pollutants, removals and sustainability of removals.

Ringed seals

The Scientific Committee was **requested** to advise on what scientific studies need to be completed to evaluate the effects of changed levels of removals of ringed seals in West and East Greenland.

Economic aspects of marine mammal-fisheries interactions

The Council **requested** that special attention be paid to studies related to competition and the economic aspects of marine mammal-fisheries interactions.

4.2.2 Long-term priorities

Narwhal and beluga

The Scientific Committee was **requested** to examine the population status of narwhals and belugas (white whales) throughout the North Atlantic.

Role of marine mammals in the ecosystem

The Council encourages scientific work that leads to a better understanding of interactions between marine mammals and commercially exploited marine resources, and **requested** the Scientific Committee to periodically review and update available knowledge in this field.

Monitoring of stocks and trends in stocks of marine mammals in the North Atlantic

The Scientific Committee was requested to continue its work to monitor stock levels and trends in all stocks of marine mammals in the North Atlantic in accordance with previous recommendations (see *NAMMCO Annual Report 1996*:131-132). In this context the Scientific Committee was encouraged to prioritize calculation of the abundance of species covered by NASS-95, in particular those species presently harvested and species considered to be important with respect to interactions with fisheries.

4.2.3 Recommendation to Member Countries

The Council **recommended** that NAMMCO member countries study the ecological interaction between dolphin species (e.g., *Lagenorhynchus* spp.) and fisheries, with the view to future assessments of such interactions.

4.3 Other business

National Progress Reports

The Council **agreed** to the recommendation of the Management Committee that National Progress Reports submitted to the Scientific Committee each year should also be available to the Management Committee, and that these should contain information on annual catch levels, as well as research activities and management measures.

National Progress Reports submitted to the Scientific Committee in 1997 are contained in Section 4 of this volume.

The Council further **agreed** to the Management Committee's recommendation that the Governments of Canada and the Russian Federation be invited to provide NAMMCO with similar information on catch levels and management strategies with respect to shared stocks of marine mammals.

By-catch of marine mammals

The Council noted the decision of the Management Committee to establish a Working Group to work intersessionally to consider how the issue of by-catches of marine mammals could be addressed at its next meeting, noting the duties of States under article 61.4 of UNCLOS in this respect.

Management Committee Rules of Procedure

The Council **agreed** to the recommendation from the Management Committee to amend Article IV, paragraphs a), b) and c) of the Management Committee Rules of Procedure with respect to the specified deadlines for the development, circulation and amendment of the Committee's agenda prior to its meetings (see Section 2.1, item 8, and Section 2.3 of this volume).

5. HUNTING METHODS

The Chairman of the Working Group on Hunting Methods, Amalie Jessen (Greenland) informed the Council that no meeting of the Working Group had taken place since its last meeting in January 1996. Members of the Working Group had agreed to meet

again prior to the next meeting of the Council in 1998.

In the meantime, further developments with respect to hunting methods in member countries would continue to be reported to the Secretariat as agreed last year, with the purpose of maintaining an updated overview of existing regulations on equipment, hunting and hunters in member countries. This would provide a basis upon which to consider potential coordination initiatives as well as to enhance mutual knowledge of hunting methods in member countries (see *NAMMCO Annual Report 1996*: 31).

6. ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS

Greenland drew attention to the fact that the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) under the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) had recently completed a major assessment of the levels of anthropomorphic pollutants and their effects in the Arctic environment (AMAP 1997). This report would be officially presented at an international symposium on environmental pollution in the Arctic in Tromsø in early June. The preliminary programme for this symposium was circulated as NAMMCO/7/INFO/3. The AMAP assessment provides a comprehensive review of the sources, pathways, levels, trends and effects of contaminants in the Arctic, and identifies the geographical areas of concern, as well as outlining human exposure, potential threats and gaps in current understanding.

The Council recalled the NAMMCO International Conference on Marine Mammals and the Marine Environment in Shetland in April 1995 (Sanderson and Gabrielsen 1996), which focussed in particular on the sources and levels of contaminants in marine mammals, as well as health issues related to the high level of marine mammal foods in the diet of many people in northern regions. It was noted that attention to environmental matters remained a permanent part of the Council's agenda and was an important area in which the Commission should continue to follow international developments in research and policy.

Greenland pointed out that concern about the exposure and associated risk to human health deriving from high levels of persistent pollutants in the marine environment had recently become more explicit in national policy statements related to health and the environment, and that there was a growing recognition of the need to be more aware of contaminant levels in marine food and their possible consequences for human health in the long-term. It was further recognised that the major sources of pollutants in Arctic areas were the industrial activities of countries to the south of the North Atlantic region.

Against this background, the Council **agreed** to a number of steps which it considered appropriate for NAMMCO to take in relation to concerns about contaminant levels in the marine environment. NAMMCO should:

- contact the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP), commending the work carried out and urging the continuation of such work in the future;
- communicate its concerns to the relevant international bodies responsible for dealing with pollution reduction (such as the Oslo and Paris Commissions), and

- request information on progress with respect to the reduction of emissions;
- seek an exchange of information and advice with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation and the World Health Organisation with regard to the effects of marine pollution levels on food quality and human health.

In addition, Norway encouraged all NAMMCO member governments to follow closely discussions and developments related to pollution and marine mammals in the relevant international fora in which they participate.

The Faroe Islands drew the Council's attention to a forthcoming international symposium on human health and exposure to heavy metals which would take place in Tórshavn from 22 -26 June 1997. A preliminary programme was made available for the information of delegates and observers.

7. THE NAMMCO FUND

7.1 Annual Report of the NAMMCO Fund

The Annual Report of the NAMMCO Fund was presented to the Council by Einar Lemche (Greenland) and distributed as NAMMCO/7/9. The Board of the NAMMCO Fund conducted its meetings in 1996 and 1997 primarily by telephone.

7.1.1 Focus on seals and sealing

With reference to the decision at its Sixth Meeting that funds in the NAMMCO Fund in 1996 should be used to focus on seals, sealing and the interaction between seals and fisheries, the Council noted the process of consultation and discussion which had taken place through the Board of the NAMMCO Fund to identify the possibilities for a single international project related to seals and sealing.

After determining the extent of existing plans for international seal-related projects, the Fund initiated a process of consultation with regard to an idea for a major international publication on seals and sealing. Based on feedback received from a broad range of contacts, the Board of the Fund agreed that it would be better to reduce the scope of the idea to a more immediate project which would be possible to implement within a shorter time-frame, such as a collection of essays on topical issues related to sealing and seal management.

After further discussions it was agreed that the idea should be further developed for a conference to focus on sealing, which would draw all interested parties together across the North Atlantic, both commercial and subsistence, including user groups, industry representatives and policy makers. The aim of the conference would be to share information and experiences and explore the potential for international cooperation on trade and management issues.

Based on the positive responses received to this idea, it was finally decided that the Secretariat should proceed with plans for an international conference on sealing, and that the NOK 200,000 earmarked for the NAMMCO Fund in 1996 should be put

towards organising this forum (see further 7.2 below).

7.1.2 Other projects supported by the Fund

In the course of its meetings to develop a project on seals and sealing, the Board of the Fund also reviewed updated information on progress with projects which had been supported or earmarked for support but which were not yet complete. These included:

Mammals in the North Atlantic: a text book with illustrations by Dorete Bloch, to be published by Skúlabókagrunnurin, Faroe Islands. With reference to this project, the Secretary drew the attention of participants to the marine mammal illustrations on display in the meeting room, These were created especially for inclusion in this publication by Faroese artist Edvard Fuglø.

Socio-economic aspects of whaling in Greenland: edited by Milton Freeman, published by the Canadian Circumpolar Institute publication. An edited collection of documents related to the socio-economic aspects of whaling in Greenland (since published as Stevenson, Madsen and Maloney, 1997).

ICC and the Whaling Agenda: a background report by the Inuit Circumpolar Conference on whaling in an historical and contemporary perspective in connection with the development of an ICC whaling strategy for Inuit/circumpolar whaling.

Whales in Norwegian waters: an information poster by Tore Dillingøen, Oslo. To be produced in Norwegian and English versions, and co-sponsored by the Norwegian Ministry of Fisheries.

Marine Hunters: information brochure by High North Alliance on marine mammal utilisation in the North Atlantic (c. 30pp. in English, German and Swedish).

It was finally reported that the Board was currently considering a request for support for a film on minke whaling by Norwegian documentary film-maker Knut Skoglund.

7.2 International Conference on Sealing - 1997

With reference to 7.1.1 above, the Secretary informed the Council of progress towards the planning of the sealing conference. An invitation had been received from the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada to hold the Conference in St John's, and dates had been set for 25-27 November 1997. It was noted that the Nordic Atlantic Cooperation had agreed in 1996 to grant NOK 100,000 to NAMMCO for the development of a project on seals and sealing, and that it had since been confirmed by NORA that these earmarked funds could be used to support the planned conference in 1997.

The Secretary reported that a first announcement outlining the main themes of the Conference, which was entitled *Sealing the Future*, had been widely distributed in April, and a further, more detailed programme was currently under development. Plans were also under way to set up a special Conference Exhibition to highlight seal products and information on sealing, which would coincide with the programme of presentations and panel discussions. In addition to cooperation with the Nordic Atlantic Cooperation, Conference partners also included the Inuit Circumpolar

Conference (ICC), the Nordic Council of Ministers (Programme on Arctic Cooperation), and the High North Alliance.

The Council commended the progress made so far with planning for the Conference, and in particular expressed its appreciation for the invitation from the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to host the event in St John's.

Greenland underlined the importance of ensuring that the Conference programme allow ample time for participants to establish contacts and discuss matters informally, with a clear focus on seal product development and marketing and trade issues.

(Section 5 of this volume contains the final Conference Programme, Press Release and panel recommendations from the NAMMCO International Conference, *Sealing the Future*.)

8. EXTERNAL RELATIONS

8.1 Observers' reports

The Secretary informed the Council of the meetings of other international organisations at which NAMMCO had been officially represented by an observer since the last meeting of the Council.

International Whaling Commission (IWC)

The Secretary represented NAMMCO at the 48th annual meeting of the International Whaling Commission, which was held in Aberdeen in June 1996. NAMMCO submitted an opening statement and supplementary information on its activities to the IWC and special attention was drawn to the publication of proceedings from the 1995 NAMMCO Conference on Marine mammals and the Marine Environment, a copy of which was presented to the IWC Secretariat. In addition, in accordance with a request by the Council in 1996, the Provisions for the Joint NAMMCO Control Scheme for the Hunting of Marine Mammals were forwarded to the IWC as background information for the IWC's own attempts to agree on a suitable inspection and control scheme for commercial whaling operations. The 49th annual meeting of the IWC was scheduled to take place in Monaco 20-24 October 1997.

Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (NAFO)

The Council decided in 1995 to delegate its observer status at annual meetings of NAFO to Iceland. NAMMCO was not, however, officially represented at the 1996 annual meeting, which had been held in St Petersburg in the Russian Federation in September. The Secretary would pursue the matter with the NAFO Secretariat to ensure that the relevant information on annual meetings of NAFO was received on a regular basis.

North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC)

In line with the Council's decision to delegate NAMMCO's observer status at NEAFC to Norway, Bente Angell Hansen reported to the Council on the Fifteenth Annual Meeting of NEAFC in London, 20-22 November 1996, to which an observer's report on the activities of NAMMCO for the previous year was also submitted. In addition,

Arnór Halldórsson of Iceland represented NAMMCO at an extraordinary meeting of NEAFC held in Brussels in March 1997 to discuss the adoption of recommendations for regulatory measures for Norwegian spring-spawning herring in waters beyond the fisheries jurisdiction of the Contracting Parties.

The Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas (ASCOBANS)

The Secretariat reported that the 2nd Meeting of the Parties to ASCOBANS was scheduled for November 1997 in Bonn, Germany, to which NAMMCO receives a standing invitation. In addition, it was reported that Arne Bjørge, observer for Norway in the Advisory Committee of ASCOBANS, had submitted information on the work of the NAMMCO Scientific Committee to the Advisory Committee meeting in November 1996. The Secretariats continued a regular exchange of reports and information on respective meetings.

International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

The Secretary reported on her attendance as NAMMCO Observer at the 20th General Assembly of the IUCN, which was held in Montreal, Canada from 17 to 23 October 1996. A written report had been circulated to Council members separately, outlining some of the issues of interest to NAMMCO. These included: further discussion of the criteria for listing in the *IUCN Red List of Threatened Animals* (Baillie and Groombridge 1996), where cod and haddock had recently been included as “vulnerable”; recognition of the work of the IUCN Sustainable Use Specialist Group and its initiatives through regional networks; and the rejection of an application for IUCN membership by the International Fund for Animal Welfare.

The Council noted the importance of following the work and policies of the IUCN, in particular with respect to their development of reviews of the conservation status of species and stocks world-wide. The Council reiterated the concerns expressed by the Scientific Committee with regard to the inappropriateness of producing status assessments on a global/species basis rather than on a stock basis.

8.2 Cooperation with other international organisations

The Council noted that other than those organisations with whom an exchange of observers was normally reciprocated, NAMMCO had also established contacts with a number of other organisations which also received invitations to send observers to NAMMCO Council meetings. Prior to NAMMCO/7, notification had been received from the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS - Bonn Convention), the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment programme (AMAP) and the IUCN that these bodies were unable to send observers to NAMMCO/7. (With regard to cooperation with ICES, see under item 3.2 above; with AMAP see under item 6 above).

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

The Secretary informed the Council that the CITES Secretariat had requested scientific advice and views from NAMMCO on the Norwegian proposal to the forthcoming 10th Conference of the Parties of CITES (Harare, Zimbabwe, June 1997) to transfer

the Northeast Atlantic and North Atlantic Central stocks of minke whales from Appendix I to Appendix II. This had been received in accordance with Article XV, paragraph 2 of the CITES Convention, which requires the CITES Secretariat to consult other relevant international bodies on downlisting proposals to the Conference of the Parties.

The Secretariat had prepared a response to this request, informing CITES of the revised abundance estimates for the Central North Atlantic stock agreed by the NAMMCO Scientific Committee in March 1996. Reference was also made to the NAMMCO Scientific Committee's work related to the role of marine mammals (including minke whales) as predators of commercially important fish species in North Atlantic ecosystems, as well as to the recently adopted Joint Nammo Control Scheme for the Hunting of Marine Mammals. The Norwegian proposal to CITES and associated correspondence between CITES and NAMMCO was circulated for information as NAMMCO/7/INFO/2. A position paper from the Government of Japan regarding a proposal to establish a marine fish species working group at the 10th meeting of CITES was also circulated for information as NAMMCO/7/INFO/7.

Canada/Greenland Joint Commission on Conservation and Management of Narwhal and Beluga

The Secretary informed the Council that reports were now being exchanged on a regular basis with the Joint Commission. The Scientific Working Group and the Commission had last met in 1995, and would convene again in 1997, after analysis of data from a recent survey of belugas was complete.

Arctic Council

The Secretary referred the Council to the Declaration on the Establishment of the Arctic Council, signed in Ottawa in September 1996 (circulated as NAMMCO/7/INO/4). In addition, NAMMCO had approached the Secretariat of the Arctic Council in Canada in connection with the signing of the Declaration to suggest the establishment of a formal exchange of observers with the Arctic Council in the future. It was noted that the Arctic Council Declaration included provisions for the establishment of a sustainable development programme, a category of permanent participants in addition to state membership, and decision-making by consensus.

The suggestion for an exchange of observers would be further pursued in connection with the forthcoming Fourth AEPS Ministerial Conference in Norway in June 1997.

.....

The Chairman noted that, as was now established procedure, the appointment of NAMMCO observer representatives to other international bodies would be coordinated through the Secretariat in consultation with the Chairman of the Council or directly with those Member Countries to whom observer status was already delegated.

9. RULES OF PROCEDURE

The Council acknowledged the need for formal Rules of Procedure, which would

outline and clarify specific procedures related to, for example, the arrangement and conducting of its meetings, admission of observers and election of officials. It was **agreed** that a draft proposal should be developed by the Committee on Finance and Administration for the consideration of the Council. It was also stressed that Rules of Procedure for the Council should be kept as simple as possible, reflecting the basic procedures already established in practice by the Council, while allowing for flexibility in the future conduct of Council business.

10. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

10.1 Election of Chairman 1997/98

The Council elected Arnór Halldórsson of Iceland as its Chairman for the next two years (1997/98).

Arnór Halldórsson thanked the Council for entrusting him with this important task, and expressed his appreciation on behalf of all Council members to the outgoing Chairman, Halvard P. Johansen, for his devoted work over the past two years towards the further development of NAMMCO.

10.2 Election of Vice-Chairman 1997/98

The Council elected Amalie Jessen of Greenland, as its Vice Chairman for the next two years (1997/98).

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Before concluding the meeting, the retiring Chairman, Halvard P. Johansen, took the final opportunity as Chairman of the Council to make some closing remarks. He recalled that upon taking up the Chairmanship in 1995, he had stressed the importance of the principle of sustainable use as the basis for the common management of marine resources among the NAMMCO member countries, and was pleased to note that the organisation had adhered to this principle. He also commended the decision to begin a series of publications deriving from the work of the NAMMCO Scientific Committee, as well as the regular publication of the NAMMCO Annual Report, noting that these were important means of maintaining an open and informative approach to the work of the Commission.

He noted with appreciation the efforts of the Secretary, Kate Sanderson and her acceptance of a further four-year term with NAMMCO and thanked Assistant Secretary Jens Paulsen, on behalf of the Council, for his contribution to the establishment and smooth running of the Secretariat since 1993, and wished him all the best for the future. Finally, the retiring Chairman wished his successor, Arnór Halldórsson, every success in taking the work of NAMMCO forward.

12. CLOSING ARRANGEMENTS

12.1 Next meeting

The 1998 annual meeting would be held in Norway. The location and specific dates would be announced at a later date.

12.2 Adoption of press release

The final press release, as contained in Appendix 7, was adopted.

13. REFERENCES

- AMAP 1997. Arctic Pollution Issues: A State of the Arctic Environment Report. Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme, Oslo.
- Baillie, J. and Groombridge, B. (eds). 1996. *IUCN Red List of Threatened Animals*. The IUCN Species Survival Commission.
- NAMMCO Annual Report 1995*. North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission, Tromsø. 1995.
- NAMMCO Annual Report 1996*. North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission, Tromsø. 1997.
- Pétursdóttir, G. (ed.). 1997. *Whaling in the North Atlantic*. Economic and political perspectives. Proceedings of a Conference held in Reykjavík on March 1st 1997. Fisheries Research Institute, Reykjavik.
- Sanderson, K. and Gabrielsen, G. 1996. Marine Mammals and the Marine Environment, Special Issue, *The Science of the Total Environment*, Elsevier, Volume 186, Nos 1-2.
- Stevenson, M.G., Madsen, A. and Maloney, E. (eds). 1997. *The Anthropology of Community-Based Whaling in Greenland*. Canadian Circumpolar Institute.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

DELEGATES

Faroe Islands

Dorete Bloch
Ingibjörn Eldevig
Karstin Hansen
Hans J. Hermansen
Marius Jacobsen
Regin Jespersen
Tryggvi Johansen
Kaj Mortensen (HD)
Ivan Klein Olsen
Jústines Olsen
Knút Olsen
Jógvan Ósá
John Petersen (Minister)
Maria Róin
Ulla Wang
Jákup Weihe

Greenland

Páviâraq Heilmann (Minister)
Jesper Koldborg Jensen
Amalie Jessen
Einar Lemche (HD)
Bjørn Rosing

Iceland

Ari Edwald
Konráð Eggertsson
Arnór Halldórsson (HD/Vice
Chairman)
Kristín Haraldsdóttir
Árni Kolbeinsson
Guðjón A. Kristjánsson
Helgi Laxdal
Kristján Loftsson
Þorsteinn Pálsson (Minister)
Jóhann Sigurjónsson
Óskar Vigfússon
Gísli Víkingsson

Norway

Bente Angell-Hansen (A-HD)
Halvard P. Johansen (Chairman)
Jan Birger Jørgensen
Inger Lavik Opdahl
Lisbeth W. Plassa
Øyvind Rasmussen
Johán Williams
Inger Winsnes

Scientific Committee

Mads Peter Heide-Jørgensen
Tore Haug

OBSERVERS

Governments

Canada

Guy Côte
Dan Goodman
Fernand Robichaud (Secretary of
State, Agriculture, Agri-food,
Fisheries &
Oceans)
Earl Wiseman

Denmark

Henrik Fischer

Japan

Yasuo Lino
Kazuo Shima

Russian Federation

V.N. Prohorov
Yu. B. Ryazantsev (I)
V.N. Solodovnik
G.V. Tishkov
F.M. Troyanovsky
V.K. Zilanov (Deputy Chairman,
Fisheries Committee)

Intergovernmental organisations:

NAMMCO Annual Report 1997

ASCOBANS

Henrik Fischer

International Whaling Commission
(IWC)

Henrik Fischer

Nordic Atlantic Cooperation (NORA)
Kjartan Hoydal

Nordic Council of Ministers

Jesper Heldbo
Reidar Hindrum

North-East Atlantic Fisheries
Commission

(NEAFC)
Bente Angell-Hansen

Northwest Atlantic Fisheries
Organization

(NAFO)
Lisbeth W. Plassa

Non-governmental organisations:

High North Alliance

Rune Frøvik
Geir Wulff Nilsen
Jan Odin Olavsén
Hansi Kreutzman

Inuvialuit Game Council

Robert Bell
Duane Smith

Inuit Circumpolar Conference

Alfred Jakobsen

North Atlantic Salmon Fund

Orri Vigfússon

World Council of Whalers

Tom Happynook
Matt Stabler

Researchers:

Steinar Andresen
(Fridtjof Nansen Institute, Norway)

HD = Head of Delegation;
A-HD = Acting Head of Delegation;
I = Interpreter

AGENDA

1. Opening procedures

- 1.1 Welcome address: Mr John Petersen, Minister of Fisheries of the Faroe Islands
- 1.2 Invited presentation: Chief Tom Mexsis Happynook, Chairman, World Council of Whalers
- 1.3 Opening statements
- 1.4 Admission of observers
- 1.5 Adoption of agenda
- 1.6 Meeting arrangements

2. Administration and finance

- 2.1 Report of the Finance and Administration Group
- 2.2 Forecast budgets 1998/99

3. Scientific Committee

- 3.1 Report of the Scientific Committee
- 3.2 Cooperation with ICES
- 3.3 Other business

4. Management Committee

- 4.1 Report of the Management Committee
- 4.2 Requests for advice
- 4.3 Other business

5. Hunting Methods

6. Environmental questions

7. The NAMMCO Fund

- 7.1 Annual Report of the NAMMCO Fund
- 7.2 International Conference on Sealing, 1997
- 7.3 Other business

8. External relations

- 8.1 Observers' reports
- 8.2 Cooperation with other international organisations
- 8.3 Other matters

9. Rules of Procedure

NAMMCO Annual Report 1997

10. Election of Officers

- 10.1 Election of Chairman 1997/98
- 10.2 Election of Vice-Chairman 1997/98

11. Any other business

12. Closing arrangements

- 12.1 Next meeting
- 12.2 Adoption of press release

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Meeting documents

NAMMCO/7/1	List of participants
NAMMCO/7/2-rev1	Agenda
NAMMCO/7/3-rev1	List of documents
NAMMCO/7/4	Report of the Finance and Administration Working Group
NAMMCO/7/5-rev1	Adopted budget 1997 and forecast 1998/99 budgets
NAMMCO/7/6	Report of the Scientific Committee
NAMMCO/7/7	Report of the Management Committee
NAMMCO/7/8	
NAMMCO/7/9	Annual Report of the NAMMCO Fund
NAMMCO/7/10	Report of the <i>ad hoc</i> Working Group on Finance and Administration

Opening statements

- NAMMCO/7/OS - Canada
- NAMMCO/7/OS - Faroe Islands
- NAMMCO/7/OS - Greenland
- NAMMCO/7/OS - Iceland
- NAMMCO/7/OS - Japan
- NAMMCO/7/OS - Norway

Information documents

NAMMCO/7/INFO/1	The North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission - In Principle and Practice - Paper by K. Sanderson to Whaling Seminar, Reykjavik, 1.3.97
NAMMCO/7/INFO/2	CITES & minke whales - Proposal submitted by Norway to CITES to transfer the Northeast Atlantic and North Atlantic Central stocks of minke whale from Appendix 1 to Appendix II; Response from NAMMCO to CITES for advice on this proposal.
NAMMCO/7/INFO/3	Provisional Programme for the AMAP International Symposium on Environmental Pollution of the Arctic and Third International Conference on Radioactivity in the Arctic-Tromsø, 1-5 June 1997.

NAMMCO Annual Report 1997

NAMMCO/7/INFO/4	Declaration on the Establishment of the Arctic Council (August 6, 1996)
NAMMCO/7/INFO/5	World Council of Whalers: Press Release, 26 February 1997.
NAMMCO/7/INFO/6	Discussion paper on feeding ecology (submitted by Japan)
NAMMCO/7/INFO/7	Government of Japan: Position Paper concerning the Proposal to Establish Marine Fish Species Working Group at the 10th meeting of the CITES Conference of the Parties.

**ADDRESSES AND OPENING STATEMENTS TO THE
COUNCIL
BY MEMBER DELEGATIONS AND OBSERVER
GOVERNMENTS**

.....
FAROE ISLANDS - ADDRESS OF WELCOME

The Minister of Fisheries of the Faroe Islands, John Petersen

It is my great pleasure, on behalf of the Government of the Faroe Islands, to welcome NAMMCO to the Faroe Islands for its Seventh Meeting. It hardly seems like five years since we had the honour of hosting the Inaugural Meeting of the NAMMCO Council in September 1992, and I am pleased to see how much progress has been made to build up the organisation since then, and to note the growing interest in NAMMCO's activities from a wide range of organisations and regions. I would like to welcome the North Atlantic Fisheries Ministers and their representatives who also have this opportunity to attend NAMMCO's opening session. I would also like to extend a special welcome to Chief Tom Happynook, and look forward to hearing his presentation on the whaling traditions of his people on the west coast of North America.

The Government of the Faroe Islands places great value on an enhanced cooperation between the North Atlantic countries on matters related to the rights of coastal states to use marine resources, including whales and seals.

The Government of the Faroe Islands has full competence in questions concerning the management of marine resources, including whales and seals. Management measures for whales are taken in accordance with the special whaling act which was adopted by the parliament in 1984, and any quotas agreed internationally must be approved by the parliament.

The Government bases its resource management policies on the principle of rational and sustainable use of all marine resources. This also covers whales and seals. The Government also emphasises a holistic, ecosystem approach to the management of marine resources. It is the conviction of the Faroese Government that, in the case of seals and whales in particular, pollution from industrial centres and the degradation of marine habitat - and to a certain extent also by-catches in fisheries - pose the real threats to marine mammals today, rather than the limited hunting of these animals that is carried out in coastal communities in our region. This is clearly seen in the North and Baltic seas, where hunting is certainly not the reason why one so seldom sees whales in these waters.

The Government of the Faroe Islands also places great value in regional cooperation with respect to all factors which have a bearing on the conservation status of whales and seals, as well as the influence of marine mammals on other components of the ecosystem. By working through NAMMCO on the conservation and management of marine mammals in the North Atlantic, the Faroese Government fulfils its commitments for international cooperation as stated in Article 65 of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. Through NAMMCO we have established a framework for scientific cooperation which will ensure that utilisation of marine mammals in the Faroese fisheries zone continues to be sustainable in accordance with Section II, Chapter 9 of Agenda 21.

It is particularly appropriate that it should be at this meeting here in the Faroes that NAMMCO's Scientific Committee will present their well-founded and thorough conclusion on the status of the pilot whale population and the sustainability of the Faroese pilot whale hunt. Not only does this provide us with a solid, international basis for our national management policies, but it also serves to confirm the competence of NAMMCO as an appropriate body for the conservation and management of small whales in the North Atlantic.

.....

OPENING STATEMENT BY GREENLAND

The Greenlandic delegation is very pleased to participate in this 7th meeting of NAMMCO here in Tórshavn, for the first time since NAMMCO's inaugural meeting in 1992.

To Greenland, the Faroe Islands are like a smaller but earlier matured brother in the family of the Danish Kingdom. The Faroese people have for centuries recognised marine mammals, such as the pilot whale, as an important part of their diet. Not only for their nutritious value but also as a part of a cultural heritage.

This is reality for all the NAMMCO members - and for Canada and Russia as well.

Through the years we have carried out a great deal of work together in NAMMCO. Though there are differences in management practices among us, these are not so great that they cannot be overcome in a constructive working process - through the strength of our similarities.

The nutritious and health value of marine mammals is being assessed through the AMAP programme. Next week, AMAP (the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme) will present its first assessment of the state of the Arctic environment.

Pollution from sources south of NAMMCO is now of such an extent that we must deal with the consequences in our countries. We dealt with this at the NAMMCO Conference on Marine Mammals and the Marine Environment in the Shetland Islands

a few years ago. These problems have special attention in Greenland, given the importance for our people of marine mammals in Greenlandic food. The Greenland delegation considers that NAMMCO should touch upon these issues again this week.

Finally, we would like to thank the Faroese Government for the invitation and the hospitality we are enjoying.

.....

ICELAND - OPENING STATEMENT

The Minister of Fisheries of Iceland, Þorsteinn Pálsson

It is with pleasure I take the floor to thank my Faroese colleague for hosting this meeting. First of all I should say how much we have enjoyed this stay in Tórshavn.

Here we have once again be reminded of where the North Atlantic roots are, and where the basis of our livelihoods is. It has been a pleasure to visit you in the Faroe Islands and see what good progress you are making in preserving your identity, natural heritages and values.

There are several countries that share your values. The sentiment of understanding the needs and values of the Northern communities who rely upon the sustainable use of marine living resources, is a message which we need to bring forward to the world society. Generally, I believe that in the years to come an increased tolerance towards different ethical and cultural values will be common practice. But we, the NAMMCO countries, need to understand that we have cultural and strategic allies in communities dependant on marine resources in the other Northern areas. This, for example, enables us to understand Russian frustration regarding the lack of understanding of the needs of the people in the Chuckotka area. The same applies to the aboriginal communities in Canada.

Now we are celebrating the 5-year anniversary of NAMMCO, which provides an opportunity to recall the reason for establishing this organisation. There was a need for an umbrella organisation that would cover all the different marine mammal populations in this large ocean area and their interrelationships with other marine living resources upon which we so much depend.

In this light Iceland is particularly interested to see NAMMCO developing and flourishing in the same spirit and fashion for the next five years as it has done for the last five years.

.....

NORWAY - OPENING STATEMENT

NAMMCO Annual Report 1997

The Minister of Fisheries of Norway, Karl-Eirik Schjøtt-Pedersen

The Norwegian delegation is very pleased to participate in the 7th meeting of the Council. The Agreement on Cooperation in Research, Conservation and Management of Marine Mammals in the North Atlantic was signed in 1992. In September the same year the parties had the first meeting of the Council right here in Tórshavn. I would like to thank our Faroese hosts for inviting us to Tórshavn and for their hospitality.

The Norwegian delegation looks forward to fruitful discussions and decisions in the Council. We must continue to build NAMMCO as an organisation that promotes the needs of the coastal communities of the North Atlantic.

It is, in my view, useful from time to time to evaluate the organisation and its accomplishments. What has NAMMCO then achieved in its first five year period of operation?

Experience from other international organisations and resource management regimes indicates that we should not expect much of substance to take place within such a short time-span. I think, however, NAMMCO has been quite successful, as a lot has been accomplished on the scientific side. Procedures for management and for observation and inspection are already in place. To my mind the NAMMCO Annual Report gives ample evidence to substantiate this view. The work done has a positive effect when building public confidence in our organisation outside the member countries.

The important question now is therefore: Where does NAMMCO go from here?

We do not want NAMMCO to be just a discussion club. According to the agreement we shall cooperate in research, conservation and management of marine mammals in our area. Norway is ready to make management decisions within NAMMCO. Specific management decisions on the baleen whales, however, would in our view be counterproductive to the further building of the organisation. Thus, Norway being a member of the IWC, will not participate in making such decisions concerning minke whales in the NAMMCO Management Committee. We are still of the opinion that NAMMCO should continue to concentrate on cooperation on the management of seal stocks and small cetaceans.

The scientific work on the interactions between marine mammals and fish stocks in the ecosystem of the North Atlantic is of equal importance. NAMMCO should also continue to play an important role in dissemination of relevant information on the conservation and management of marine mammals in order to educate the public.

Let me close this statement by reiterating that Norway would like to welcome other countries in our region with a genuine interest in conservation and management of all marine mammals as members of NAMMCO. We therefore hope that both Russia and Canada will soon join NAMMCO as members.

I look forward to a successful meeting.

.....

CANADA – OPENING STATEMENT

Fernand Robichaud, Secretary of State for Agriculture and Agri-food,
Fisheries and Oceans

As members of the Council will know, Canada has been more than just an observer to NAMMCO. We were participants in the international conferences going back to 1988 which led to the establishment of NAMMCO, and Canadian scientists have made substantial contributions to the work of NAMMCO's Scientific Committee. In addition, both government officials and representatives of Inuit organisations in Canada have attended all of the Council of NAMMCO.

All of the marine mammal species that have been the subject of NAMMCO's attention occur in Canadian waters and most importantly, we share with NAMMCO members, a commitment to the principles of conservation and sustainable use of marine resources and the regard for the needs of coastal communities and indigenous peoples that are the foundation of this organisation.

Mr. Chairman, it is our view that NAMMCO has indeed become an effective organisation for co-operation in the conservation and management of marine mammals in the North Atlantic and we appreciate the invitation of the Council to become a full Party to the NAMMCO Agreement. As you know, this matter is still under consideration in Ottawa.

.....

JAPAN - OPENING STATEMENT

Kazuo Shima, Observer for the Government of Japan

It is my great pleasure to come back again to the NAMMCO Council's Meeting and this beautiful city of Tórshavn. This is my second visit to the Faroe Islands. It is a great honour for me to address the meeting, because I was one of the first to welcome the birth of NAMMCO.

First of all, I congratulate NAMMCO on her Seventh Council meeting. NAMMCO is the international organisation which advocates conservation and sustainable utilisation of the marine ecosystem. I express my great concern that there still remains a movement in the world which wishes to give a sacred status to marine mammals. Such a movement will not achieve the conservation and rational utilisation of all marine living resources.

The world population is expected to reach 10 billion by the year 2050. Against this it has been estimated that the environmental carrying capacity of the earth can support

only 7 billion people. The task now facing us, therefore, is to seek every possible means to secure enough food to accommodate the ever-increasing world population. When we consider the food problem from a global point of view, we naturally have to take into account how to manage marine living resources, including whales, effectively as food for present and future generations. Seen from the perspective of bio-diversity, to grant excessive protection to a particular element of the marine ecosystem will lead to disruption of the biological balance in the same manner as excessive harvesting. In order to both utilise and conserve species of marine living resources, as well as the ecosystem, each element of the ecosystem should be utilised properly and proportionally.

As you know, two thirds of the surface of this planet is covered with ocean. Almost all, 97% of water on the earth is seawater. But the ocean may remain not fully developed. It is estimated that marine mammals, all over the world, are consuming approximately 700 million tons (only cetaceans 500 million tons) a year. If proportionally and appropriately managed, fishery production could possibly be increased, although FAO has estimated that fishery production would reach around 80 million tons at its best.

In the face of this situation, the forthcoming 10th meeting of CITES Conference of Parties will consider two significant issues: the downlisting of 6 stocks of 3 species of whales from Appendix I to Appendix II, proposed respectively by Japan and Norway; and the establishment of a marine fish species working group proposed by the U.S.

As for the former, I hope for the strong support of NAMMCO members for the Japanese and Norwegian proposals for the downlisting of whales. At present CITES categorises most large whale species as "threatened with extinction". I believe that the current listing practice of Appendix I should be improved to ensure rational utilisation of marine living resources based on scientific findings. CITES should have an independent standpoint based on scientific evidence.

As for the U.S. proposal, I would remind you of the nature of CITES. Its purpose is to regulate international trade in endangered species so that it can contribute to the conservation of such species. Of course such regulations must be subject to scientific findings. No marine fish species subject to large-scale commercial fisheries and international trade satisfy the requirements for listing in CITES Appendices. The appropriate organisation to address these species is not CITES but FAO. The 22nd meeting of the Fisheries Committee of the FAO reaffirmed that it was the mandate of FAO and of regional fisheries management bodies to take responsibility for collecting data, formulating research needs and recommending management options. We support such a confirmation and are opposed to the proposal to establish within CITES a marine fish species working group as proposed by the U.S.

NAMMCO has been making efforts to develop a multi-species management model through researching the feeding habits of marine mammals. If it is successful in building up a useful scheme, it must also be helpful in resolving the problems of a global range, such as the food supply and the conservation of the environment.

NAMMCO Annual Report 1997

From such a viewpoint I have been paying attention to the activities of NAMMCO and I am looking forward to its successful results in contributing to the global benefit.

I express our sincere thanks to the Government of the Faroe Islands and the NAMMCO Secretariat ¶ for inviting us to this meeting. Thank you very much for your attention.

INVITED PRESENTATION:

**THE WHALING TRADITIONS OF THE NUU-CHAH-NULTH
NATION AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE WORLD
COUNCIL OF WHALERS**

Chief Tom Mexsis Happynook, Chairman of the World Council of Whalers
and Head Whaling Chief of the HUU-Ay-Aht tribe of the NuU-Chah-Nulth Nation
(B.C., Canada)

1. NUU CHAH NULTH WHALING - HISTORIC PERSPECTIVE

"The NuU-Chah-Nulth" - Whaling peoples of the Pacific North West

The NuU Chah Nulth nations are a seafaring people who inhabit the west coast of Vancouver Island in the Pacific North West. We consist of 15 first nations, which include the Makah nation from Washington state in the USA.

Since the beginning of time we have lived on the ocean and fully occupied and utilised the resources that the ocean and our lands provided for us. Each of the NuU Chah Nulth hereditary chiefs was responsible for a resource and each had his own territory. The NuU Chah Nulth had great respect for all the resources that were available to them and the hereditary chiefs were raised from birth to look after and care for these resources. This was to ensure they could provide for our communities forever.

This was how the NuU Chah Nulth government was structured. It was based on, and rooted in, the natural resources that surround us in NuU Chah Nulth country.

One of the many resources that we fully utilised and respected was the whale. This majestic mammal was looked upon as one of the greatest gifts granted to us by the creator and was treated as such by the NuU Chah Nulth whaling chiefs.

Traditional Whaling Equipment

The NuU Chah Nulth whaling chiefs went out in large dugout cedar canoes that were 36 feet in length. The eight crew members each had a unique paddle. These paddles were carved from the yew tree which is very hard and heavy. These paddles were designed so they would bend while paddling to give extra thrust but had to be strong enough so they would not break. The harpoon shaft was also made from the yew tree and was about 16 feet long and 4 inches in diameter. The harpoon shaft was constructed in three sections and bound together using a tree bark. The bark of this tree would grow around the tree rather than straight up. Because it grew like this it had the natural shape for wrapping and was perfect for tying the harpoon shaft together.

The harpoon head was made from a Mussel shell which was fashioned into an arrowhead shape. This was then tied onto an elk antler barb using sinew or gut and covered with spruce sap to give it strength. The harpoon tip was then fitted and secured to the harpoon shaft. Off the harpoon tip came a cord that was several fathoms long and was made by braiding three or four strands of sea lion gut together. This cord would then be attached to a rope made from cedar bark. The cedar bark rope was also made by braiding three or four strands of cedar bark together. Finally, seal skin floats were fastened to the cedar bark rope at intervals of several fathoms and inflated.

The handling of this equipment was forbidden. Only the whaling chief or his designated people could touch or handle the whaling equipment. To ensure this law was adhered to the whaling chiefs stored their equipment in secret caves so no one could get at it. We have histories, stories and legends that tell about people who have died because they did not heed the warnings and foolishly handled the sacred whaling equipment.

Preparation and the hunt

The preparation began up to nine months before the whales went by Vancouver Island on their migration north to the Bering Sea. This preparation included fasting, bathing and praying. It also included secret rituals and sacred ceremonies which were performed in conjunction with the moon. These rituals and ceremonies were held in undisclosed areas, caves and pools throughout the tribal territory.

The Nuuchah Nulth whaling chiefs had special places throughout the territory where they would go to get the cedar trees for the dug-out canoes, the yew wood for the harpoon shafts, the mussel shells for the harpoon tips and the different tree bark or plants that they needed for tying or making the ropes. They had special places where they gathered the secret family medicines, plants and trees. They had sacred songs, prayer chants and amulets that they used during the preparation, during the hunt and during the celebrations after the hunt.

All of these secret and sacred belongings were a necessary part of the preparation because we believe that it is imperative to make a connection to the spirit of the whale in order to address it with the proper respect and that it is essential for the whaling chief to connect to the supernatural. These connections allowed the chiefs to overcome the largest mammal on earth using the method and equipment that they used.

The Nuuchah Nulth whaling chiefs would begin their preparation on the top of a mountain, and over the months work their way down to a cave beside the ocean. There were foods that they could not eat during these months of preparation and tests that they had to endure to ensure they had prepared properly. If they had not prepared properly they would not go hunting. During the time that the whaling chiefs were preparing, the whaling crews were also preparing and getting in shape for the rigours of the whale hunt. The crew was made up of eight men in each of the whaling canoes. When the chief had prepared properly and the whales were migrating, he then went to his secret cave to collect his whaling equipment.

NAMMCO Annual Report 1997

The whaling canoes were brought down from their storage place by the crew members. The canoe could not touch mother earth, either when they were putting it in the water for the hunt or taking it out of the water after the hunt. This was because the liquid from a special plant had been applied to the bottom and sides of the canoe. When the crew and canoes were ready, the whaling equipment was in order and the food and water had been stored properly, they would set out. On the way out the seal skin floats would be inflated and the songs of the whaling chiefs would be sung.

There were two whaling canoes and one smaller canoe. The smaller canoe was used as the look-out, watching for the whale to show up. When the whale was sighted, the whaling chief would be signalled and the smaller canoe would head for home to let the village know they could begin to make the necessary arrangements.

As the whaling chief and his crews left the village the whaling chief's wife had a very significant role to play. She had to lie very still on a cedar mat, not move and face the mountains. This was to keep the whale from heading off shore. She had a special stone on which she would put a snail. If the snail moved off the stone, this indicated the whale would be rambunctious; if the snail stayed on the stone this indicated that it would be a clean, safe hunt.

The whaling crews could paddle these large canoes at around eight knots. The yew wood paddles were designed and carved so the sides were sharp and the tip pointed. This allowed them to paddle silently. The initial approach would be on the left side of the whale. The steersman had the responsibility to tell the chief when to throw the harpoon. He had to make sure the head of the whale was under the water as well as the tail before signalling the whaling chief to throw the harpoon. This was to make sure the canoe would not be hit by the tail when the whale sounded. When the conditions were right the steersman yelled to the chief and the paddler right behind the whaling chief would tap him on the back of the leg with the top end of his paddle. This was just in case the whaling chief did not hear the steersman signal. If the harpoon had not penetrated deep enough the paddler on the right front seat would grab the harpoon shaft and push it in as hard as he could before the rest of the crew back paddled to move the canoe away from the tail. At about the same time the other canoe would harpoon the whale from the right side. When the whale sounded, the harpoon shaft would release from the harpoon tip and the crew would pick the shaft up as it floated by. As the whale sounded the cedar bark rope with the inflated seal skin floats would be let out and the chase would begin.

When the whale had tired the hunters would go in for the kill. They would puncture the heart and lungs using a 6 foot yew wood lance. After the whale had been killed one of the crew members would dive into the water and, using a bone knife and sinew or gut, he would sew the mouth of the whale shut. This was to ensure it did not sink on them. They would sometimes, if necessary, cut the ends off of a bulb kelp and use this as a breathing tube if the diver could not hold his breath for very long. Most of these men could hold their breath for several minutes and dive down as far as 16 fathoms. Many hours were spent practising for their part in the hunt.

When the whaling crews and the whale reached the village the crews very carefully lifted the whaling canoes out of the water without allowing them to touch mother earth and put them back in their storage places. The chief would return his equipment to his secret cave for safe storage. Now began the sacred ceremonies surrounding the cutting and distribution of the whale. The whale represented the whole territory of the tribe and had to be cut and distributed according to strict tribal laws. Because all of the hereditary chiefs and their territories together made up the whole tribal territory, the cuts to the whale had to be precise. A cut could not be made in the piece that belonged to another chief. Once these cuts were made and distributed to the chiefs, the rest of the whale was processed and shared throughout the community. This could go on for days and included ceremonies, songs, celebrating and feasting.

The blubber was eaten, smoked, dried and rendered for the oil. The oil was used everyday with our meals. The meat was also eaten, smoked, dried and preserved. The bones were made into tools and weapons. The community took what was needed and the rest of the whale products were stored for barter and trade.

The Nuu-Chah-Nulth and the whale

The Nuu Chah Nulth whaling chiefs on the west coast of Vancouver Island were held in high esteem for the discipline, spirituality, rituals, medicines, songs, prayer chants and the connection to the supernatural that they possessed. They played a significant role within their Government structures because of the responsibility they had for the whale resource. Part of their responsibility was to ensure that this resource would be there for the whaling chiefs seven generations on. They were also responsible for making sure that all the knowledge pertaining to whales was passed on to the eldest son, who would eventually become the next hereditary whaling chief.

Each of the hereditary chiefs within our nations was responsible for a resource, and because of this responsibility their participation within our government structure was essential. They held the knowledge. The whale was the basis of our economic structure and the foundation of our economic system. It was our Fort Knox. Tribes and people came from all over the Pacific North West to trade and barter for our whale products, for the blubber, the oil, the meat and the tools and weapons that we made from the bones.

The reason that it played the largest role in our economic structure and economic system was because the Nuu Chah Nulth are the only tribal group (to my knowledge) who hunted the whale in the Pacific North West, until you reached Alaska. Most of the tribes had access to fish, seafood and wildlife but it was the Nuu Chah Nulth whaling chiefs who hunted the whale, and the whale products that brought the people to Nuu Chah Nulth country.

Besides the whale being the foundation of our economic system it was the cornerstone of our religion, spirituality and physical well-being. From before the whaling chief began his preparation to after the whale was hunted and the ceremonies were concluded, the whale strengthened our people and our communities in a number of ways. It strengthened community governance because the whaling chiefs were

fulfilling their responsibility to the head chief, the community and their families. They were also fulfilling their role within their nations government structure. It strengthened the economic structure and economic system of communities by providing very valuable products to sell, trade and barter. It strengthened our tribal laws, ceremonies, rituals, prayer chants, songs, values, teachings and culture because all of these elements were practised and used throughout the whaling operation, right from the beginning to the end. It strengthened the communities' religion and spirituality through the example of spiritual discipline that the whaling chiefs exemplified in their months of bathing, praying and fasting. It strengthened the relationships between communities because it brought people from all around the Pacific North West to Nuuchah Nulth country to buy, trade and barter, which often produced intertribal relationships and marriages. It strengthened the relationships between families within our communities because everyone participated in the processing of the products, the celebrations and the feasting after the hunt. It strengthened the relationship between family members in the community because the whale was shared with all of your family members and your relatives. And finally, it strengthened our people physically and mentally because of the scientifically proven nutritional value that the whale products provide and the rigorous training that took place prior to the hunt.

How do we know that the whale played a significant role within Nuuchah Nulth life? You only have to look at our art and the designs used in our carvings, paintings and basketry and you will begin to understand that the whale truly inspired and influenced the Nuuchah Nulth way of life.

In closing, I want to share with you some of the things that I was taught when I was a little boy. These were teachings passed on to me by my great grandmothers. I was taught that the resources were put there for us to use, to provide food for our people, to benefit the community and to sustain our economies. At that time it was not currency as we know it today, but it was still economics.

I have been taught that we are dominant over nature but that we are part of nature and we are here to help to ensure that the balance in nature is kept. I have been taught to remember that we are not only responsible to our people and our communities but most importantly to the resource itself. These teachings were told to me over and over again so I would never forget what my role is. If you look at modern history and how the resources have been managed you will clearly see that first they have been plundered then protected. Is this keeping the balance?

2. THE WORLD COUNCIL OF WHALERS

The ways of my people always ensured that our resources were cared for, and an excessive harvest would never have even been considered; this would have been in direct contravention to our understanding of how life on this earth worked - together, inter-related and in harmony. Therefore, you probably can imagine my people's dismay when the great ships arrived in our homeland. On the one hand they brought useful items as gifts, but on the other they pillaged our resources in a manner most incomprehensible. To our horror, the greatest gift of the sea, our foundation, whales, were slaughtered to the point that many thought they would never return. In a matter

of a few scant years, the resource that had been our mainstay for centuries seemed to be hunted to extinction or driven from our waters. There was great sorrow amongst our people, for this loss was indeed a great one.

In time, the numbers of whales off British Columbia were so low that the ships finally stopped pursuing them. We learned that some distant organisation had decided the whales should be protected, and were happy that the end of the wasteful harvest was at hand. Little did we know how this would impact us within a generation. We watched, and as the numbers of whales returning to our waters each year increased, we celebrated. We celebrated for we knew the day when we could return to our traditional harvest was getting closer each passing year. In order to ensure that the numbers of whales were at a level at which our harvest would again be in keeping with conservation, we began to seek information from various sources, to verify what we were seeing with our own eyes. To our amazement, there were many groups telling us that those numbers would never be high enough to allow us to harvest. There was a group calling itself the International Whaling Commission or IWC which, although apparently established to ensure whaling was conducted in a sustainable fashion (a practise with which we whole-heartedly agreed), was in function opposed to whale harvesting even when the best scientific advice suggested it presented no conservation concerns. The mixed messages and negative attitude towards whaling peoples such as ourselves confused us. We were, and are, proud of our way of life, our association with the sea, and mostly our ability to interact with the greatest animal created - the whale.

About the same time we were making these discoveries, other groups of whaling peoples were meeting and discussing their common interests. In 1992, the Mayor of Oshika Township in Japan, where a small whaling village is located, convened an informal meeting of whalers during the IWC meeting being held in Glasgow, Scotland. This group consisted of people from Canada, Norway, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Japan, Greenland, Iceland, and the Faroes. This group, about thirty-five in all, made a decision to hold a more formal, full day session the following year.

In 1993, the Japanese Small-Type Whaling Association organised a one day meeting prior to the opening of the IWC meeting in Kyoto. This time, over sixty people from those same nations attended, and a number of resolutions were adopted, including an agreement to meet yet again in the future. The 1993 meeting was entitled the "Second World Conference on Community-Based Whaling".

Some years passed, and the people who were at these first two meetings corresponded, met occasionally amongst themselves, and began to plan for the next time they could all get together. Some from this group learned that we had put whaling on the Treaty table as a substantive issue, and extended an invitation for us to participate in that next meeting. In June 1996, together with another of my people's whaling chiefs, Jerry Jack, I made my way to Berkeley, California to attend the meeting entitled the "Third International Conference on Community-Based Whaling". Both Jerry and I were pleasantly surprised by the warmth and camaraderie extended us by those in attendance, whaling peoples from over ten different nations. Through the course of that meeting, it became apparent that we had a remarkable number of common

interests. Truly brothers of the sea and the hunt, collectively we discussed a wide range of topics, ranging from the pride we took in our cultures, to the external influences that seemed hell-bent on destroying many of our chosen lifestyles. It was also during that meeting that those gathered expressed a desire to form a more formal relationship, one that could and would work for the betterment and survival of us all. Jerry and I were impressed by the actions and desires being expressed, and after consulting with our people back home, offered to provide housing for the proposed whaling organisation on the land of our people.

The reaction to our offer was supportive, and a small core of determined individuals began to lay out the groundwork for the establishment of a new Whaling Organisation. An organisation completely owned, managed and working for whalers the world over. By the end of 1996 a draft Constitution had been prepared, and invitations to the founding Board meeting had been sent. During early January of this year, representatives from five countries gathered in Vancouver, and finalised a working Constitution. Plans were made to incorporate, inform our kindred whalers, and set up a Secretariat.

I must admit that we struggled with the name for some time. Finally, recognising the need to be inclusive of all those peoples engaged in sustainable whaling, the choice was made and the World Council of Whalers was born. I am very pleased to inform you today that our offer of accommodation was accepted, that a functioning Secretariat now exists for this new organisation, that the incorporation has been accomplished, and that we are open for business.

The underlying theme of the World Council of Whalers is the support and promotion of communities engaged in sustainable whaling. The WCW intends to promote the sustainable and equitable use of living marine resources, to protect the cultural, social, economic and dietary rights of whaling peoples, and to address their concerns. This new group plans not to sit idly by and act solely as an advocacy group, but rather to become directly involved in matters of real concern to us all.

Four Committees have been organised, or are in the process of being established. Although their titles speak loudly as to their function, I would like to take a brief moment to review these with you. An Education Committee has been set up to encourage school students in whaling communities to correspond with students elsewhere in order to increase understanding of the social, cultural, economic, and environmental circumstances of coastal communities; and to help raise funds in order to establish an annual international prize for the best student essays on the benefits of sustainable use of marine mammal resources. A Human Rights Committee is being developed to monitor actions taken by governments, public interest groups, and international organisations relative to the obligations of states to protect the rights of user-community individuals and groups under international law; and to bring questionable actions of such bodies to the notice of national and United Nations agencies concerned with human rights violations. A Legal Issues Committee is being formed to upon request, inform user communities and states of their legal rights under international ocean, fisheries, and resources law when actions are taken by outsiders that may infringe upon those rights. And last, but certainly not least, a Nutrition and

NAMMCO Annual Report 1997

Health Committee is being set up to assist whaling communities and other interested parties in determining the nutritional and health benefits and in some cases, potential risks associated with the consumption of whale products; and to facilitate research related to health problems associated with dietary change in traditional whaling communities, and disseminate the results of such research.

As you can see, we do not plan to be idle. Some may say the WCW has even bitten off too much, but I don't think so. Collectively we, the whalers of the world and our allies, are a foundation to be reckoned with. This new organisation offers us for the first time a truly global umbrella, an opportunity to be united in strength, in actions as well as words. Individually, a few of us have the ability to face the obstacles and encumbrances in our path and deal with matters from science to cultural, but sadly many do not. United, looking after each other and our common interests, we cannot be defeated. I invite those of you involved with whaling to join us.

I am very proud to have been selected as founding Chairman for the World Council of Whalers. I clearly see the road in front of me and the WCW, and despite the obstacles, am certain that together, we will forge a lasting, meaningful alliance. We will be holding an Annual General Assembly of members later this year. I hope, and I trust to see many of you there.

I would like to thank NAMMCO for inviting me here to speak with you today. I am sure that I will learn a great deal over the next few days, and welcome the opportunity to discuss the WCW with any and all who are interested. I extend to you my sincere wish that your meetings here are successful, and look forward to working with many of you in the future.

AUDITED ACCOUNTS FOR 1996**1. PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT (NOK)**

	1996	1995
Income		
Contributions	2,730,000	2,480,825
Interest received (netto)	63,000	103,743
<u>Total income</u>	<u>2,793,000</u>	<u>2,584,568</u>
Expenditure		
Secretariat costs	2,189,000	2,118,450
Meetings	40,000	6,694
Scientific Committee	309,000	199,162
Projects, NAMMCO Fund	0	77,917
NASS-95	0	800,000
Conference	0	283,705
<u>Total operating expenses</u>	<u>2,538,000</u>	<u>3,485,928</u>
Operating result	255,000	-1,005,103

2. BALANCE SHEET 31 DECEMBER 1996 (NOK)

		1995
Current assets		
Bank deposits (restricted: 66,931)	1,564,069	1,371,408
Pre-payment, office rent	0	36,750
<u>Total assets</u>	<u>1,564,069</u>	<u>1,408,158</u>
Current liabilities		
Employees tax deduction & tax	86,918	53,940
Creditors	22,351	35,687
<u>Total current liabilities</u>	<u>109,269</u>	<u>89,627</u>
Restricted equity		
Relocation fund	200,000	200,000
NAMMCO Fund	319,664	238,722
<u>Total restricted equity</u>	<u>519,664</u>	<u>438,722</u>
Distributable equity (General reserve)	935,136	879,809
Total equity	1,454,800	1,318,531
<u>Total liabilities and equity</u>	<u>1,564,069</u>	<u>1,408,158</u>

PRESS RELEASE

At the Seventh Annual Meeting of NAMMCO - the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission - in Tórshavn, Faroe Islands from 27-30 May, it was concluded that the pilot whale hunt in the Faroe Islands is sustainable. The Management Committee of NAMMCO based its conclusion on the Scientific Committee's review of the status of the population in the Central and Northeast Atlantic, which reaffirmed the earlier abundance estimate of 778,000 as the best available.

Not only does this conclusion provide the Faroe Islands with a solid scientific basis for the continued utilisation of pilot whales for food, but it also reaffirms NAMMCO's important role in providing management advice, in accordance with Article 65 of the International Convention for the Law of the Sea.

NAMMCO also agreed to begin an exchange of international observers in sealing and whaling activities of member countries in 1998. Such an exchange is provided for in the Joint NAMMCO Control Scheme for the Hunting of Marine Mammals which was adopted by the Council at its last meeting in 1996.

The revised abundance estimate of 72,000 for the Central North Atlantic stock of minke whales, resulting from the Scientific Committee's review of recent sightings data, provides the basis for the Council's request to the Scientific Committee for an assessment of the status of this stock. This assessment, which includes an evaluation of the long-term effects of past and present removals, is currently being carried out by the Scientific Committee.

Having already provided thorough assessments on a number of marine mammal species and stocks as well as questions related to the role of marine mammals in the ecosystem, such as fish consumption by whales and seals, and sealworm infection, the Council requested the Scientific Committee to give priority to the following matters:

- New abundance estimates for harp seals in the Greenland, Barents and White Seas and hooded seals in the Greenland Sea are expected to be available in 1997 and the Scientific Committee's review of new information will provide a basis for further management discussion of these stocks in 1998.
- The harbour porpoise is found in the waters of all NAMMCO member countries and the Scientific Committee was asked to undertake a comprehensive assessment of this species throughout its range.
- The Scientific Committee was asked to provide advice on what scientific studies need to be completed to evaluate the effects of changed levels of removals of ringed seals in West and East Greenland.

- NAMMCO encourages scientific work that leads to a better understanding of interactions between marine mammals and commercially exploited marine

NAMMCO Annual Report 1997

resources. It was agreed that special attention should be paid to studies related to competition and the economic aspects of marine mammal-fisheries interactions.

The Council invited Canada and Russia to provide NAMMCO with information on catch levels and management strategies with respect to shared stocks of marine mammals.

The Council noted the health concerns related to high levels of pollution in marine mammals, and agreed to approach relevant international bodies for information on what measures are being taken to reduce emission levels affecting the marine environment.

NAMMCO has established working relations with a number of other intergovernmental organisations dealing with management and conservation issues. NAMMCO has recently provided scientific advice to CITES (Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora) on a proposal from Norway to transfer the Central and Northeast Atlantic stocks of minke whale from Appendix 1 to Appendix II.

NAMMCO's plans for an major international Conference on Sealing, with a focus on products and markets, are well under way, and the Council noted with appreciation the invitation from the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador in Canada to host the Conference in St. John's in November this year.

In 1998, a total of 200,000 NOK has been earmarked for the NAMMCO Fund, the purpose of which is to provide support for information projects which contribute to the understanding of the conservation and management of marine mammals.

The Council elected Arnór Halldórsson of Iceland as its new Chairman for the next two years, and Amalie Jessen of Greenland as its Vice Chairman for the same period.

Tórshavn, 30 May 1997

