



NAMMCO STATEMENT: JOINTLY TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE ARCTIC

NAMMCO is an international regional body for cooperation on the research, conservation, and management of all species of cetaceans (whales and dolphins) and pinnipeds (seals and walrus) in the North Atlantic, including the Arctic region.

Marine mammals are key components of Arctic biodiversity and are essential to Arctic Peoples, both as spiritual and material resources. The health of marine mammals is linked to the health of the whole Arctic ecosystem and therefore NAMMCO aims to better understand both the role of marine mammals in the system and the impact of anthropogenic activities on this system.

With due regard to the needs of coastal communities and peoples' right to their own means of subsistence as laid down in international instruments, NAMMCO provides science-based management advice to its Members, which also aims to take into account user knowledge and other considerations such as social, societal and economic impacts on communities.

At the 25th Meeting of the Council, in the Nuuk Declaration, NAMMCO Member Countries (the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland and Norway) confirmed their commitment to ensuring the effective conservation and the sustainable and responsible use of marine mammals through active regional cooperation on research, the improvement of hunting methods, and science-based management. Recognising the range of anthropogenic pressures facing North Atlantic marine mammals and the rapid environmental changes taking place, the Members further committed to increasing their efforts and cooperation in assessing the cumulative impact of non-hunting related anthropogenic stressors, particularly global warming, by-catch, pollution, and disturbance.

The necessity of maintaining the quality of the marine environment is an important factor in NAMMCO's approach to the conservation and management of marine mammals. Whales and seals are at the highest level of the marine food chain and are therefore especially vulnerable to the possible long-term effects of pollutants, as well as other anthropogenic disturbances. NAMMCO is presently exploring the possibilities for an enhanced level of collaboration with AMAP, so that AMAP expertise on pollution and disturbance can be better incorporated in the management advice of NAMMCO.

Governance in the Arctic is predominantly a regional responsibility, although many of the challenges faced are global in nature and addressing them calls for widespread collaboration. Climate change and pollution are good examples of such issues.

NAMMCO strongly believes that the unforeseeable consequences for marine mammals and coastal communities from the impacts of climate and other environmental changes make it essential to strengthen the cooperation between organisations working with an Arctic focus.



With this firm belief in the importance of collaboration, NAMMCO is an active member of the CAFF Marine Mammal Expert Group and has participated in the drafting and updating of the SAMBR report. In recent years, NAMMCO has also participated in many meetings and initiatives of the Arctic Council CAFF, AMAP and PAME Working Groups.

The Arctic Council and NAMMCO share the common goal of promoting cooperation and coordination amongst stakeholders on issues related to sustainable development and sustainable utilisation. Marine mammals are important resources for the peoples of the Arctic and will continue to be a significant element in future discussions on the conservation and development of the Arctic. Collaboration between the Arctic Council and NAMMCO can provide opportunities to explore these issues in greater depth through joint projects and events.

NAMMCO has greatly appreciated the efforts of the Icelandic Chairmanship to find ways of further engaging Observers in its work to enhance Arctic governance. NAMMCO is willing to take part in this increased engagement and regularly participates in initiatives directed towards Observers, e.g., the Arctic Governance Observer online event in April.

NAMMCO supports the Arctic Council in “together towards a sustainable Arctic” and looks forward to enhancing its cooperation with the Arctic Council and the Arctic Council Working Groups for the benefit of the conservation of the Arctic, its communities and its biodiversity.