

Report of the

Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling Sub-Committee

This document

is confidential

until 10.00 on Monday 22 June 2009

Report of the Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling Sub-Committee

Wednesday, 17 June 2009, Madeira

1. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

A list of participants is given in Appendix 1.

1.1 Appointment of Chair

Jorge Palmeirim (Portugal) was appointed as Chair.

1.2 Appointment of rapporteurs

Pam Eiser (Australia) was appointed as Rapporteur, with assistance from Greg Donovan (Secretariat and Chair of the Scientific Committee's Small Working Group (SWG) on the Development of an Aboriginal Whaling Management Procedure (AWMP)).

1.3 Review of documents

The following documents were available to the Sub-Committee:

IWC/61/ASW

- 1 Draft annotated Agenda
- 2 List of documents
- 3 Aboriginal harvest of gray and bowhead whales by Russian indigenous peoples in 2008 (submitted by the Russian Federation)

IWC/60/Rep 1 Report of the Scientific Committee Report

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The adopted agenda is given as Appendix 2.

3. ABORIGINAL SUBSISTENCE WHALING MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE

3.1 Progress with the Greenlandic Research Programme

3.1.1 Report of the Scientific Committee

The Chair of the Scientific Committee's SWG on the Development of an Aboriginal Whaling Management Procedure, Greg Donovan (hereafter Chair of the SWG), reported on the Scientific Committee's work in this regard.

As it has stated on many occasions, the Committee has never been able to provide satisfactory management advice for common minke whales off West Greenland. Since 2006, it has focussed on developing assessment methods that rely on the observed sex ratio in the catches. In short, the broad lack of change in the catch sex ratio, despite the consistently high catch of females, implies that catches off West Greenland have not markedly affected population size. However, this inference is based on a number of assumptions; for example, there is no confounding of the trend over time in sex ratio and other factors. Developing a robust and tested way to use the sex ratio data to arrive at a lower confidence bound that can be used for management purposes is not a trivial task and has resulted in some extremely interesting and innovative science. Last year, the Committee agreed that it had two methods that provided the first scientifically justifiable way to overcome the Committee's past inability to provide management advice based on a population model.

Since last year's meeting, considerable progress has been made both at an intersessional workshop held in Copenhagen and at this year's Annual Meeting. As a result, the Committee has agreed that sufficient progress had been made to overcome the technical difficulties related to the specification and implementation of sex ratio-based methods of assessment. The method is now ready to be evaluated using simulation testing. It is particularly important to evaluate fully this method as it is a new and novel approach for conducting assessments. Considerable discussion on how best to achieve this occurred and an approach has now been adopted. Since the intention is that the ultimate goal is to use this approach for providing management advice, the assessment calculations and robustness evaluations will be conducted by the Secretariat. The details of this are included in the text of our report including initial robustness tests needed to allow us to decide if this method is sufficiently reliable in the face of uncertainty to be actually used in the real world. To get this far is a major achievement and the Chair of the SWG would particularly like to thank the scientists involved: Brandão, Witting, Butterworth, Schweder and Punt. To complete the work and allow us to answer the question of whether we can use the approach will require intersessional work and almost certainly an intersessional workshop.

The ultimate aim of the Committee is to develop *SLAs* for all species off West Greenland and work is beginning on this a matter of priority. Development of *SLAs*, as we have seen for BCB bowheads and eastern gray whales, benefits from having several potential developers. Finalisation of the sex ratio assessment method for common minke whales off West Greenland will provide an important basis for this work, as will examining the nature of the trials used for the *Implementation* of the RMP for North Atlantic fin whales and a short working paper will be developed for consideration next year. Development of *SLAs* that are sufficiently robust also requires some idea of what scenarios to consider in the future (i.e. the 100 year simulation period) with respect to need. This is not intended to be anything other than a guess for simulation purposes and, as for the Bowhead and Gray whale *SLAs*, the Committee has asked that the Chair of the SWG discuss this matter with the relevant delegation (Denmark and Greenland). Some of you may recall this is what we term a 'need envelope'.

3.1.2 Discussion and Recommendations

The Sub-Committee noted the report of the Scientific Committee and its recommendations.

3.2 Preparation of the *Implementation Review* for gray whales

3.2.1 Report of the Scientific Committee

The Chair of the SWG recalled that the Committee worked for a number of years to develop the *Gray Whale Strike Limit Algorithm* to provide safe long-term management advice as part of the AWMP. In developing this approach, a key element was the concept of undertaking an *Implementation Review* every five years. Last year, the Committee had expected to carry out an *Implementation Review* of eastern gray whales. However, as discussed also under Item 5.2, it was not possible to undertake the review this year, primarily because the revised series of abundance estimates are not yet available. The purpose of an *Implementation Review* is not to undertake an in-depth assessment but rather to examine whether there is any information to suggest that the 'parameter space' used to evaluate the *Gray Whale SLA* was inadequate. Depending on the results of the analyses mentioned under the Scientific Committee's Item 9.2.2, it may be necessary to conduct further trials incorporating the new information. The best manner in which to conduct the *Implementation Review* should be apparent by the time that papers need to be submitted under the data availability agreement i.e. the end of February 2010 if our meeting starts at the beginning of June next year as this year.

3.2.2 Discussion and Recommendations

The Sub-Committee noted the report of the Scientific Committee and its recommendations.

4. ABORIGINAL WHALING SCHEME (AWS)

4.1 Report of the Scientific Committee

The Chair of the SWG recalled that since 2002, the Committee has recommended scientific aspects of an aboriginal whaling scheme (AWS) intended for use in conjunction with *SLAs* (the specifications can be found in *Ann. Rep. Int. Whaling Comm. 2002: 74-5*). The Committee did not have time to consider this issue further this year, including any issues arising out of the bowhead *Implementation Review* but it is hoped to have a thorough discussion next year.

4.2 Discussion and Recommendations

The Sub-Committee noted the report of the Scientific Committee.

5. ABORIGINAL SUBSISTENCE WHALING CATCH LIMITS

5.1 Bering-Chukchi-Beaufort Seas stock of bowhead whales (annual review)

5.1.1 Report of the Scientific Committee

The Chair of the SWG noted that a number of interesting scientific papers had been received relevant to this stock of bowhead whales this year. This brief summary considers those aspects relevant to the status of the stock and the next *Implementation Review*. Three papers examined the potential impact of industrial activity in the habitat of bowhead whales, including seismic surveys and mitigation measures.

The Committee also considered three papers relevant to abundance estimates and in particular the use of mark-recapture data to estimate abundance. One of the advantages of this approach is that it allows abundance to be estimated in a bad ice year or prolonged periods of bad ice when the traditional census would be impossible. In that respect, the Committee was pleased to agree an abundance estimate of 11,800 (95%CI 7,200, 19,300) for 2004 from the photo-identification data that is suitable for use in the *Bowhead Whale SLA*.

The Committee looks forward to receiving additional information on approaches incorporating photo-id data next year and note that funding permitting, a census and a photographic survey will occur in 2010.

A total of 50 bowhead whales were struck resulting in 38 animals landed. Of the landed whales, 18 were males, 19 were females, and the sex was not determined for one animal. Hunters reported that one female was pregnant with a foetus ~3m in length. Hunters mistakenly harvested a calf thinking it was a small independent whale. Autumn calves are close in body length to yearlings and it is difficult to determine their status when swimming alone.

In 2008, two females were landed in Chukotka.

As part of its work on the AWMP, the Committee completed its work to develop a *Bowhead Whale SLA* in 2002 and an *Implementation Review* in 2007. The Committee reaffirms its advice from last year that the *Bowhead Whale SLA* remains the most appropriate tool for providing management advice for this harvest. The results from the *SLA* show that the present strike limits are acceptable.

5.1.2 Discussion and Recommendations

The Sub-Committee noted the report of the Scientific Committee and its recommendations.

5.2 North Pacific Eastern stock of gray whales (annual review)

5.2.1 Report of the Scientific Committee

The Chair of the SWG noted that the Committee was unable to complete an *Implementation Review* for gray whales this year. The Committee received a paper explaining the work required to finalise the abundance estimates and a time series from 1967/68 and looks forward to receiving this paper by February next year. The Committee also received an interesting paper looking at possible incorporation of environmental factors into the *Implementation Review*.

The Committee received a report on investigations of eastern gray whales taken in Mechigmentsky Bay during 2007/08. Perhaps the issue of most interest to this sub-committee and the Conservation Committee was that in 2007, two stinky whales were killed whilst there were eight in 2008. Research to try and understand this phenomenon, that renders the meat inedible, is underway.

The status of this population can be affected by a number of anthropogenic factors.

The Committee received information on a new marine port to be developed in Baja California by 2014 and draw this to the attention of the Commission. Gray whales pass near this area on both their northerly and southerly migrations to and from the calving grounds. The Scientific Committee is concerned at the possible effects this development may have on gray whales and stress the need to implement an ongoing research and monitoring programme as well as information on proposed shipping routes to allow the design of effective mitigation measures.

The Committee also noted that due to population increases and some environmental changes during the last decade (e.g., retreating sea-ice and a regime shift in the Bering Sea), eastern gray whales have begun foraging much more extensively in the Chukchi Sea. This is a region of increased interest for the development of offshore petroleum resources, and the Committee urges the Commission to request national governments to ensure that appropriate resource agencies pay additional attention to the changing role and habitat use of gray whales in the Arctic.

A total of 127 gray whales (63 males, 64 females) were taken in the aboriginal hunt in Chukotka waters in 2008 and three were struck and lost.

In discussion, it was noted that sex ratios in the aboriginal hunt in Chukotkan waters have historically been skewed towards more females. However the present sex ratio is more even. One reason for this difference is that the selectivity of the hunt changed after the early 1990's, when the harvest transitioned from using a catcher ship to shore based small boats.

As part of its work on an Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling Management Procedure (AWMP), the Committee completed its work on the simulation-tested *Gray Whale SLA* (Strike Limit Algorithm) in 2004. The Committee reaffirmed its previous advice that the *Gray Whale SLA* remains the most appropriate tool for providing management advice for this harvest. Use of this confirmed that the current limits will not harm the stock. The *Implementation Review* is now scheduled for 2010.

5.2.2 Discussion and Recommendations

Mexico thanked the Scientific Committee for drawing attention to the proposed port development in Baja California and noted that it would take heed of the recommendations and will work to implement them in due course.

The Sub-Committee noted the report of the Scientific Committee and its recommendations.

5.3 Common minke whale stocks off Greenland (annual review)

5.3.1 Report of the Scientific Committee

The Chair of the SWG reminded the Committee that there are two hunts to consider under this Agenda Item, that off West Greenland and that off East Greenland.

WEST GREENLAND

The Chair of the SWG first dealt with West Greenland. A key component of providing management advice is obtaining an estimate of abundance of whales in the area. A number of factors make this difficult for West Greenland, not the least of which are the environmental conditions for undertaking surveys. Another is that while the evidence is that the West Greenland area does not cover the full range of the stock, it is not known what the full extent of the range is. The

Committee was pleased to receive the results of analyses of the data from an aerial survey successfully conducted in August-September 2007. In fact the paper was a revision of one received at the intersessional workshop and the authors addressed the comments made there. The details can be seen in the Scientific Committee report but in summary two analytical approaches were presented, both of which had merit and for which the results were not substantially different. However, one method was more precise, based on more sightings and data from more whales were used in the availability bias correction. On balance, the Committee concluded that this estimate, although it might be more negatively biased, was the best estimate to use for management. The Committee therefore recommended the estimate of 17,307 (95% CI 7,628-39,270).

A total of 148 common minke whales were landed in West Greenland (86 females; 55 males; 7 unidentified sex) and 5 were struck and lost during 2008. No information was available on the number of genetic samples taken from the harvested whales at this time. The Committee recommended that this information, along with any updated information on sex of the animals caught, be provided to the Secretariat.

In 2007, the Commission agreed that the number of common minke whales struck from this stock shall not exceed 200 in each of the years 2008-2012, except that up to 15 strikes can be carried forward. As it has said on several occasions in the past, the Committee has never been able to provide satisfactory management advice for this stock, although in recent years, the situation has been improving. This year, in addition to the progress made with the sex ratio method for assessment, the Committee has adopted a new abundance estimate.

The Committee now has an agreed method for providing interim management advice and this was confirmed by the Commission last year. Such advice can be used for up to two five-year blocks whilst SLAs are being developed. Based on the application of the agreed approach, and the lower 5th percentile for the 2007 estimate of abundance (i.e. 8,918), the Committee agreed that an annual strike limit of 178 will not harm the stock. This is the first time that the Committee has been able to provide unequivocal advice on this stock and the Chair of the SWG noted that the work of the Greenlandic scientists and others to enable the Committee to provide advice is to be congratulated.

EAST GREENLAND

The Chair of the SWG noted that in 2007, the Commission agreed to an annual strike limit of 12 minke whales for East Greenland for 2008-2012. One female common minke whale was landed in 2008. The present catch limit represents a very small proportion of the Central Stock. The Committee repeats its advice of last year that the present catch limit will not harm the stock.

OTHER

The Chair of the SWG was asked to present the work of the Committee on an aspect of its work that was applicable to all Greenlandic fisheries, not that only related to common minke whales.

He noted that the Greenlandic need statement is expressed in terms of tonnes, not in numbers of animals. At last year's Commission meeting, the Chair of the Commission asked the Scientific Committee to take note of a request from Argentina seeking clarification of factors used to convert whales to tonnes (e.g. whether and how this included edible products in addition to meat). Discussion within the Committee focussed on whether it was possible to estimate a conversion factor per strike per species from the available data and if not, how it should be done, rather than the way that it had been done within the Commission in the past. It noted that it had not been requested to review the conversion factors used when they had been accepted by the Commission previously.

The Committee received two analyses addressing this question but agreed that neither provided sufficient information to allow it to answer the question referred to it by the Chair. The approach in SC/61/AWMP6, had methodological and data problems for example, in that it had treated the formula to convert lengths to weights given by Lockyer (1976) as precise while some estimate of the uncertainty should be incorporated. In addition, Lockyer's analyses for some species (e.g. humpback whales) included a large proportion of Southern Hemisphere animals which are larger than their northern counterparts. Finally no allowance was made for the actual conditions in Greenlandic operations that would affect yield. The primary difficulty with the approach of Witting in SC/61/AWMP8 was that although he used a considerable amount of data from the Greenlandic hunt itself to calculate a yield per strike in order to examine the strike limit that would be needed to meet the need request from Greenland, the reliability and representativeness of the data from the Greenlandic hunt that he obtained from the hunters' reports was unknown (e.g. whether weights are measured or estimated).

The Committee agreed that for it to be able to adequately address the question and to determine a conversion rate per strike, it would require reliable, representative data from the Greenlandic hunt. This would involve data on the measured weight of obtained edible products (meat, ventral grooves, blubber and skin) from an adequate sample of animals of each species and associated information on the individuals (sex, length, date of capture, position of capture). The Committee requested that Greenland collect such information and provide it, along with sampling and validation protocols and information on factors that may affect yield, to the Committee for its consideration.

5.3.2 Discussion and Recommendations

With respect to West Greenland minke whales, the UK expressed disappointment that no genetic information had been made available from harvested whales and sought clarification as to whether this information would be provided later.

The UK also referred to the issue raised under 'Other Matters' concerning conversion factors used to determine need in the Greenland aboriginal subsistence whaling hunts. Of the two approaches cited, it noted that the first analysis described had resulted in higher conversion factors than those used in Greenland's needs statements. The UK also drew attention to the comments on the reliability and representativeness of the data used in the second approach by Witting and also asked whether any steps might be taken to increase the efficiency of the flensing and processing operation. The UK asked Denmark to take this information into consideration in making any future quota requests.

Greenland (Denmark) responded that information had been provided from hunters over many years and that this had been a genuine process to collect information. It did confirm however that there could be some insufficient methods of information collection because of the situation at the flensing places and variability from place to place arising from the different hunters collecting the information. Greenland confirmed that the Greenland Home Rule Government is working to improve the collection of information and said they would submit more data in the coming years. It noted however that it could be very difficult to collect information from flensing areas as this can depend on weather (ice) and tidal conditions or what equipment is available for the weighing and therefore accurate determination of tonnes of meat, blubber and mattak obtained. Greenland advised that sufficient equipment to weigh pieces is not available in all places.

The UK expressed appreciation for any information that Greenland could provide on how whales are secured during the flensing process and further asked if it could elaborate on what the improvements in the collection of information referred to in its previous response might entail. Greenland advised it was looking for better coordination of information collected from hunters and wildlife officers involved in the process and improvements in information distributed to the hunters, but added that the Greenland Government does not have the finances to ensure the practicalities needed to collect all of the information required can be met. Greenland also noted that if biologists want to collect information that this needed to be coordinated with the hunters and the local hunters' associations.

In response to a question from Sweden concerning the term "edible products" and whether there is agreement as to what are edible and what are not edible, the meeting was informed that, for Greenland, edible includes meat, blubber and mattak. The Chair of the SWG further clarified that "blubber" can have different meanings in different places and that the Committee had been informed that in Greenland it relates to the ventral (throat) grooves but not necessarily all of the blubber¹.

The USA referred to the extract from the Scientific Committee report given at Item 8.4, noted that the Scientific Committee had considered at least two different approaches to the question of conversion factors but agreed that neither provided sufficient information to answer the question referred to it by the Commission, and asked if there was any sense that the Committee would be able to provide the advice requested. The Chair of the SWG noted that normally, the responsibility for dealing with the question of need lay with this Sub-Committee. However, of course the Scientific Committee will provide advice on scientific issues related to need if requested to do so. The USA recalled discussions at the 2008 Annual Meeting on Greenland's quota requests and concerns raised by a number of countries concerning issues such as the efficiency of the hunt, the basis for conversion factors used as well as some other aspects concerning the operation of the hunt and asked Denmark/Greenland if it could advise of any actions taken to address the concerns raised previously. In response, Denmark/Greenland noted that the Greenland paper (SC/61/AWMP8) presented information at the Scientific Committee which was based on data collected from nearly 1900 hunters and that the results obtained from this analysis fit very well with the conversion factors Denmark/Greenland has been using over time. It added that the information given has been provided freely and that the Greenland Home Rule Government will continue its best efforts to improve its information collection.

The USA expressed itself in a quandary *re* this issue. As the USA said in 2008, it noted the clear advice of the Scientific Committee that the quota requested for humpback whales would not harm the stock but also raised concerns that other parties had raised with respect to the needs statement and asked that these be addressed. In particular, the USA said it did not quite understand the issue concerning the availability of meat and how much can be collected due to tidal conditions which it was sure could be addressed in terms of protocols for how much meat could be obtained from the carcass. The USA sought help in better understanding the numbers of whales harvested and the Greenland needs statement.

Whilst recognising that Greenland is no doubt doing its best, Mexico too sought clarification. It said that at present there is a needs statement which expresses need in tonnes of meat which has to be converted to numbers of whales and this depends on a conversion factor that has not been understood and accepted. To adequately address this issue, Mexico noted that the Scientific Committee needs reliable data from the Greenlandic hunt and questioned Greenland if they are in a position to gather and provide such data.

Denmark (Greenland) reiterated its willingness to continue to collect data, to report on its hunt and to submit this information to the IWC. The information provided will come both from the hunters themselves and from the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources. In this respect it reminded members that a document had been submitted to the Scientific Committee and noted that the Scientific Committee could not come to an agreement yet. Denmark also recalled that in the late 1980s the Greenland Home Rule Government and Denmark had submitted a comprehensive report on

¹ the meat is separated from the blubber, ventral grooves are skin, blubber and fattened meat; mattak is skin and a thin layer of blubber

Greenland's whaling which included information concerning Greenland's conversion factors and also a needs statement. Both the report and the needs statement, showing that Greenland had a need for 670 tonnes from large whales from West Greenland, had been accepted by the IWC. Denmark expressed the view that the discussion by the USA from 2008 attempted to re-open the adopted needs document and added that it considered that the paper produced this year by the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources provided a very good basis on which to begin to look at the question and noted that the preliminary results obtained from this confirmed the figures used in its 1989 and 1990 documents of 1 minke whale being equivalent to 2 tonnes of edible product. Denmark added that it would ask the Secretariat to submit to the meeting the 1989/1990 documents.

The USA and Germany noted that a number of countries had hoped that a new updated needs statement to that tabled at the meeting in Anchorage would be provided that included a better justification for the estimate of 2 tonnes of edible product per minke whale, particularly when other methods indicate a different result.

The Sub-Committee noted the report of the Scientific Committee and its recommendations.

5.4 West Greenland stock of fin whales

5.4.1 Report of the Scientific Committee

The Chair of the SWG reported that the Committee was again pleased to receive the results of analyses of the data from an aerial survey successfully conducted in August-September 2007, this time for fin whales. This was fully reviewed at the intersessional workshop and the Committee agreed with the conclusion of the workshop that the results of one of the two approaches presented could be used for management. That estimate was 4,359 fin whales (95% CI 1,879-10,114). It was recognised that the estimate was negatively biased because no correction was applied for whales submerged during the passage of the survey plane.

A total of 11 (8 males; 3 females) fin whales were landed, and 3 struck and lost, in West Greenland during 2008. No information was available on the number of genetic samples taken from the harvested whales. The Committee recommended that this information be provided to the Secretariat when it becomes available.

In 2007, the Commission agreed to a quota (for the years 2008-2012) of 19 fin whales struck off West Greenland. As noted under Item 8, last year the Committee agreed an approach for providing interim management advice and this was confirmed by the Commission. Such advice can be used for up to two five-year blocks whilst SLAs are being developed. Based on the application of the agreed approach, as last year, the Committee agreed that an annual strike limit of 19 whales will not harm the stock.

5.4.2 Discussion and Recommendations

The UK sought clarification of an apparent discrepancy between the catch figure (11 landed; 5 struck and lost) given in the Scientific Committee extract and the catches reported earlier in the Whale Killing Methods and Associated Welfare Issues Working Group (IWC/61/WKM&AWI 6) which showed a total of 14 animals killed (11 landed, 3 struck and lost). Denmark confirmed that the correct figure is 11 landed with 3 struck and lost and that the figure in the draft Scientific Committee report needed to be corrected accordingly.

The Sub-Committee noted the report of the Scientific Committee and its recommendations.

5.5 West Greenland stock of bowhead whales

5.5.1 Report of the Scientific Committee

The Chair of the SWG noted that the Committee has agreed at the previous two Annual Meetings to consider a single stock of bowhead whales in this region as the 'working hypothesis' while acknowledging that there is still some uncertainty about the population structure of bowhead whales in eastern Canada and Western Greenland. The Committee expressed disappointment that the expected genetic analyses were not supplied this year to test the single stock hypothesis. The Committee agreed that a 'working' hypothesis of one stock implies that alternative hypotheses are still considered and therefore there should be consideration of both one stock and two stock hypotheses. The Committee strongly encouraged provision of genetic analysis to evaluate the appropriateness of the hypotheses considered.

In 2008, the Committee agreed on a negatively biased estimate of 6,344 (95% CI = 3,119-12,906) which pertains to the Baffin Bay-Davis Strait population i.e. that relevant to West Greenland.

The Committee was informed by one of its members that three bowhead whales were harvested under licence in the eastern Canadian Arctic in 2008, two in Nunavut and one in Nunavik, northern Quebec. No bowhead whales were harvested by Greenlandic whalers in 2008.

In 2007, the Commission agreed to a quota (for the next five years) of two bowhead whales struck annually off West Greenland but the quota for each year shall only become operative when the Commission has received advice from the Scientific Committee that the strikes are unlikely to endanger the stock. Greenland noted that three bowhead whales were taken in 2009 using the 2008 carryover. In 2008, the Committee was pleased to have developed an agreed approach for determining interim management advice. The Committee again agreed that the current catch limit will not

harm the stock. It was also aware that catches from the same stock have been taken by a non-member nation, Canada. It noted that should Canadian catches continue at a similar level as in recent years, this would not change the Committee's advice with respect to the strike limits agreed for West Greenland.

5.5.2 *Discussion and Recommendations*

In response to a question from the USA, the Chair of the SWG advised that there had been no discussion relating to the derivation of meat from the Canadian catches.

Mexico asked if there had been any increase in the Canadian bowhead quota and sought any information on trends – are these stable or increasing – and whether an increase in catches would affect the advice given by the Scientific Committee. The Chair of the SWG said that the Scientific Committee had no information on Canadian quotas, but assumed that this could be obtained from the Canadian Government; if a representative from the Canadian Government was present at the Annual meeting they could be asked. As to the second part of Mexico's question, the Chair of the SWG said that the answer would depend on how large any increase in catches might be. If the Scientific Committee has this information then it can provide advice based on this.

The Sub-Committee noted the report of the Scientific Committee and its recommendations

5.6 **North Atlantic humpback whales off St Vincent and the Grenadines**

5.6.1 *Report of the Scientific Committee*

The Chair of the SWG noted that no catch report has been provided to the Scientific Committee by St Vincent and the Grenadines. Clapham advised the SWG that he had been informed that a whale had been taken on 27 April 2009. The Committee noted that St Vincent and the Grenadines has submitted detailed catch information directly to the Secretariat during the Commission meeting over the past few years. It encouraged St Vincent and the Grenadines to also submit as much information as possible about any catches to the Committee via an annual progress report. It again strongly encouraged collection of genetic samples for any harvested animals as well as fluke photographs, and submission of these to appropriate catalogues and collections.

In recent years, the Committee has agreed that the animals found off St. Vincent and the Grenadines are part of the large West Indies breeding population. The Commission adopted a total block catch limit of 20 for the period 2008-12. The Committee agreed that this block catch limit will not harm the stock.

5.6.2 *Discussion and Recommendations*

The Sub-Committee noted the report of the Scientific Committee and its recommendations.

5.7 **Humpback whales off West Greenland**

5.7.1 *Report of the Scientific Committee*

The Chair of the SWG noted that the Committee was first asked to provide management for humpback whales off West Greenland in 2007 (IWC, 2008b).

Humpback whales found off West Greenland belong to a separate feeding aggregation whose members mix on the breeding grounds in the West Indies, with individuals from other similar feeding aggregations and the Committee has agreed that the West Greenland feeding aggregation was the appropriate management unit to consider when formulating management advice. Last year it had agreed a fully corrected estimate for 2007 (3,039, CV=0.45) for use in assessments and a rate of increase for humpback whales off West Greenland of 0.0917yr^{-1} (SE 0.0124).

No new information was available for this stock since the thorough review that occurred last year. Last year, the Committee agreed an approach for providing interim management advice and this was confirmed by the Commission. It had agreed that such advice could be used for up to two five-year blocks whilst SLAs were being developed. Using this approach, as last year, the Committee agreed that an annual strike limit of 10 humpback whales will not harm the stock.

5.6.2 *Discussion and Recommendations*

Denmark (Greenland) informed the Sub-Committee that it would be requesting from the Commission a quota of 10 humpback whales off West Greenland.

The Sub-Committee noted the report of the Scientific Committee and its recommendations.

6. **OTHER MATTERS**

Based on some information available, the Netherlands noted that there appeared to be 3 humpback whale deaths in Greenlandic waters and queried whether these animals were in good enough condition to use for consumption and whether any official documentation would be provided. Denmark advised that one of the whales had died as a result of euthanasia – the whale had been found with a 1½ metre wound on its back, possibly having been struck by a ship – and the meat from this whale had been distributed to institutions. The other two whales had been found dead as a result of entanglement and there was no information as to what state they were in or what happened to the carcass.

Mexico congratulated the Scientific Committee on the extraordinary amount of work undertaken in arriving at SLAs for a number of different stocks.

7. ADOPTION OF REPORT

The report was adopted 'by post' on 20th June 2009.

APPENDIX 1
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

ARGENTINA

Miguel Iñiguez

AUSTRALIA

Donna Petrachenko
Andrew McNee
Lesley Gidding
Nicola Beynon
Pam Eiser

AUSTRIA

Andrea Nouak
Michael Stachowitsch

BELGIUM

Alexandre de Lichtervelde
Fabian Ritter

BRAZIL

Andre Tenorio Mourao
José Truda Palazzo Jr.

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Barbara Galleti
Francisco Ponce

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Lars Witting
Nette Levermann
Helga Jakobsen
Amalie Jessen

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Thomas Schmidt
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Michele Alessi
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Geoffrey Palmer
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Mike Donoghue
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SWEDEN

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James Gray
Trevor Perfect
Sarah Archer
Panayiota Apostolaki
Mark Simmonds
Claire Bass

USA

Doug DeMaster
Roger Eckert
Allison Reed
Shannon Dionne
Cheri McCarty
Lisa Phelps
Ryan Wulff
Eugene Brower
Harry Brower Jr.
DJ Schubert
Robert Brownell
Keith Johnson
Rollie Schmitten
Michael Tillman
Doug Tedrick

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Arne Bjorge

SECRETARIAT

Greg Donovan

APPENDIX 2
AGENDA

1. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS
 - 1.1. Appointment of Chair Appointment of Rapporteur
 - 1.2. Review of Documents
2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA
3. ABORIGINAL SUBSISTENCE WHALING MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE
 - 3.1. Progress with the Greenlandic Research Programme
 - 3.1.1. Report of the Scientific Committee
 - 3.1.2. Discussion and Recommendations
 - 3.2. *Implementation Review* for gray whales
 - 3.2.1. Report of the Scientific Committee
 - 3.2.2. Discussion and Recommendations
4. ABORIGINAL WHALING SCHEME (AWS)
 - 4.1. Report of the Scientific Committee
 - 4.2. Discussion and Recommendations
5. ABORIGINAL SUBSISTENCE WHALING CATCH LIMITS
 - 5.1. Bering-Chukchi-Beaufort Seas stock of bowhead whales (annual review)
 - 5.1.1. Report of the Scientific Committee
 - 5.1.2. Discussion and Recommendations
 - 5.2. North Pacific Eastern stock of gray whales (annual review)
 - 5.2.1. Report of the Scientific Committee
 - 5.2.2. Discussion and Recommendations
 - 5.3. Common minke whale stocks off Greenland (annual review)
 - 5.3.1. Report of the Scientific Committee
 - 5.3.2. Discussion and Recommendations
 - 5.4. West Greenland stock of fin whales
 - 5.4.1. Report of the Scientific Committee
 - 5.4.2. Discussion and Recommendations
 - 5.5. West Greenland stock of bowhead whales
 - 5.5.1. Report of the Scientific Committee
 - 5.5.2. Discussion and Recommendations
 - 5.6. North Atlantic humpback whales off St. Vincent and The Grenadines
 - 5.6.1. Report of the Scientific Committee
 - 5.6.2. Discussion and Recommendations
 - 5.7. Humpback whales off West Greenland
6. OTHER MATTERS
7. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The terms of reference of the Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling Sub-committee are to consider relevant information and documentation from the Scientific Committee, and to consider nutritional, subsistence and cultural needs relating to aboriginal subsistence whaling and the use of whales taken for such purposes, and to provide advice on the dependence of aboriginal communities on specific whale stocks to the Commission for its consideration and determination of appropriate management measures (*Rep. int. Whal. Commn* 48: 31).