

**Aboriginal harvest of gray and bowhead whales by Russian indigenous people in 2008**

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The IWC allocated a block quota of 600 gray and 25 bowhead whales for Chukotka indigenous hunters for the period 2008-2012.

The harvest of gray and bowhead whales was supervised in 2008 by The Association of Indigenous Small Peoples of the North.

The Fisheries Council of Chukotka Autonomous Region distributed quotas among hunters on April 18 2008, although there was a need for quick regulation and redistribution of quotas during the harvest season. All redistributions were approved by the Council (see Annex 1).

Two female bowhead whales were taken in Chukotka waters in 2008. Their lengths and body weights were 11.5 m, 44.05 tons and 12.5 m 39.25 tons, respectively.

A total of 127 gray whales (63 males, 64 females) were harvested in Chukotka waters in 2008. Biological parameters for these whales are given in Annex 2.

Nine whales (6 males, 3 females) were taken in the western Bering Sea. Their body length varied from 8.0 m to 12.6 m (mean 9.45 m), and body weight varied from 6.0 to 21.1 t (mean 9.58 t). The remaining gray whales were harvested in the Chukchi Sea. Their body length varied from 8.0 m to 14 m (mean 10.1 m), and body weight varied from 6.0 to 29.3 t (mean 11.33 t).

The largest gray whale female was killed near Lorino settlement on October 15 2008. It was 13.9 m long and weighted 28.6 tons. The largest gray whale male was harvested near Lavrentiya settlement on October 17 2008. It was 14.0 m long and weighted 29.3 tons. The furthest distance a dead whale was towed to shore was 17.5 km and the shortest distance was 0.3 km.

42% of taken gray whales demonstrated aggressive behaviour during the hunt.

14 days (7%) of 200-days of harvest season were flat calm in 2008.

Two pregnant females were taken in 2008.

Two cases of killer whale attack were observed.

Ten of the 127 gray whales were considered as unfit for consumption in 2008 (samples were taken from 7 animals only).

Biological sampling was conducted on 44 gray whales.

Three gray whales were lost due to force majeure conditions in 2008.

All aboriginal whaling data were presented by Department of Industrial and Agricultural Policy of Chukotka Autonomous Region.