

Report on improvements in ASW in Greenland

Submitted by the Greenland Home Rule Government

Referring to resolution 1997-1 on improving the humaneness of aboriginal subsistence whaling, the Greenland Home Rule Government would like to report the following on the process of improvements:

- A harpoon-cannon renovating program finished in 1998. In 2004 69 harpoon cannons were well functioning and safe. 42 vessels with a mounted harpoon cannon were active in the 2005 season. The harpoon cannons are inspected every second year, thereby reducing the risks for the hunters to a minimum and maximizing the efficiency when killing whales.
- A seminar on renewable resources was held 9 - 11 October 1998 in KATUAQ, the cultural centre in Nuuk, Greenland. Representatives from all relevant Greenlandic parties were gathered to discuss future ways for sustainable harvest, the situation of the living natural resources, hunting ethics, sharing the resources, etc.
- On 9 - 11 February 1999 the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO) held a workshop on methods used for hunting marine mammals. As the workshop was held in Nuuk, several Greenlandic hunters participated in this workshop and had the opportunity to share information on hunting methods with other hunters and whalers.
- From March to September 2000 several courses on the handling and use of the Norwegian penthrite grenade (Whale Grenate-99) were held for about 150 whalers, wildlife officers and the Greenland Trade Company (distributor of the grenade in Greenland). The whalers represented all the vessels with a mounted harpoon cannon. The courses were arranged in cooperation with Dr. Egil Ole Øen, from the Norwegian School of Veterinary Science, the Greenland Home Rule consultant Mr Peter Siegstad and the Department of Industry.
- In November 2001, NAMMCO held a workshop on weapons and ammunition in Sandefjord, Norway. The participants reviewed the ballistics related to hunting large mammals, including minke whales, fin whales and other marine mammals. Hunters and managers from Greenland participated in this workshop.
- In January 2003, NAMMCO held a conference entitled "Users Knowledge and Scientific Knowledge in Management Decision Making". Hunters, managers and scientists from Greenland participated in this conference. Ways of incorporating user's knowledge and scientific knowledge into management decisions were discussed. The proceedings of the conference have been published by NAMMCO.
- From April to August 2003, 9 courses on the handling and use of the Norwegian penthrite grenade (Whale Grenate-99) were held for about 75 whalers.
- During July and September 2004, 2 courses on the handling and use of the Norwegian penthrite grenade (Whale Grenate-99) were held, for 30 whalers.
- A new executive order on the protection and hunt of large whales in Greenland came in force in April 2005. Points of this executive order dealing with the humaneness of whaling include (many of this points were already covered by earlier regulations):

- There is a minimum calibre of harpoons used for both fin and minke whales.
 - It is mandatory to take the penthrith grenade course in order to purchase and handle harpoon grenades.
 - Harpoon canons should be mounted by authorised personnel and tested every other year.
 - Fin whales smaller than 15,2 meters, as well as adults accompanied by a young animal, are protected.
 - There is a minimum size for boats allowed to hunt fin whales.
 - Harpoon grenade is the obligatory primary and secondary weapon for killing fin whales.
 - Minke whales accompanied by offspring are protected, and so is the offspring.
 - There is a minimum size for boats allowed to hunt minke whales with harpoon.
 - The secondary weapons for minke whales hunted with harpoon are harpoon grenades or riffles with specified calibre and bullet type.
 - The hunting of minke whales with riffles (collective hunt) is allowed only when the local boats with harpoon canon cannot provide enough fresh meat for the community.
 - A minimum of 5 skiffs should cooperate in each collective hunt.
 - There are minimum riffle calibre and specified bullet type for use in the collective hunt.
 - Each skiff participating in the collective hunt needs to be equipped with a hand harpoon attached to lines and buoys in order to prevent the wounded whales from sinking.
 - During the collective hunt, the minke whales should be killed as effectively and quickly as possible.
 - Hunters of fin or minke whales have the obligation of ensuring that all the edible parts of the whale are utilised.
- During March 2006, one more course on the handling and use of the Norwegian penthrith grenade (Whale Grenate-99) was held.