

Quota monitoring on Minke whale and Fin whale hunting in Greenland, 2005

Submitted by the Greenland Home Rule Government

The history of the monitoring of quotas in Greenland has been described in earlier documents, including one presented at the Infractions sub-committee during the IWC meeting in 2005 (IWC/57/INF5). The current system for the monitoring of quotas is valid since April 2005, when a new executive order on the hunt of large whales came into effect. Some of the main points addressed by the executive order, with emphasis on those who deal with limitations and monitoring of catches, are summarised in appendix 1.

As it can be seen in appendix 1, licences or special permits are required for the killing of large whales. In the small communities of Greenland, it would be difficult to kill, land and distribute a large whale without the local authorities noticing and asking for the relevant licence or permit. Nevertheless, fisheries and hunting inspectors monitor the hunt by making random checks in the field and in the open markets where the hunters sell their products.

An important part of the monitoring of the catch is the self-reporting system. Hunters deliver detailed information about each animal caught to the municipal authorities. This information is forwarded to the Ministry of Fisheries and Hunting, where it is kept as a hard copy and in an electronic database. The self-reporting system provides information about the size and sex composition of the catch, location, time to death, etc. As in previous years, the self-reporting system functioned satisfactorily in 2005.

In 2005, as in previous years, the catch limits for minke and fin whales set by the International Whaling Commission were respected.

The fin whale quota was set free in 2005, as it has been the case since 1994. In 2005, as in previous years, the quota for minke whales taken with harpoon cannon was set free.

The license system was administrated in close co-operation with the 16 municipalities and worked satisfactorily.

The Department for Fisheries and Hunting stopped the minke whaling with harpoon cannon in West Greenland the 29th of September 2005 and the rifle hunt 4th of November 2005. The whole quota was taken, and it was not exceeded.

The quotas for fin whales in West Greenland and for minke whales in East Greenland were not reached.

Appendix I

Summary of the points relevant to limitations of catch and monitoring of quota from the “Greenland Home Rule’s executive order nr. 10 of the 13th of April 2005 on the hunt of large whales”

Species:

- All baleen whales and sperm whales are protected, with the exemption of minke whales and fin whales, which can be taken following the rules specified in the executive order.
- Only adult fin whales that are not accompanied by immature animals can be taken.
- Minke whales can only be taken from April 1 to December 31. Mother/calf pairs of minke whales are protected year round.
- It is possible to apply for a special permit for the merciful killing of whales that are injured, entangled in fishing gear or captured in ice entrapments.
- Fin and minke whales that were caught legally, but that were sick and unsuitable for human consumption are considered as mercifully killed and are not counted as part of the quotas.
- The Ministry of Fisheries and Hunting decides how to use products derived from whales mercifully killed. It has been the custom that the meat of whales entangled in fishing gear is distributed freely among national institutions, such as hospitals or schools, and among the people from the community.

Requirements:

- Only Greenlandic boats registered in the Danish Maritime Authority can be used for whaling. Furthermore, there are restrictions related to the size of the boat and the equipment on board. These restrictions include the type of harpoon canon.
- Harpoon canons should be mounted and approved by authorised personnel. All harpoon canons have to be examined and approved every other year by authorised personnel.
- Only persons that have taken a special course on the handling and use of penthrite grenade can buy or handle harpoon grenades. A certificate of the harpoon grenade course, as well as a licence valid for the running year have to be shown in order to buy a harpoon grenade. Registers of all the purchases of harpoon grenades are kept at the Ministry of fisheries and Hunting.
- The boat and the equipment that will be used for whaling have to be approved before a hunter can obtain a licence. Only full-time hunters that have taken the course on handling and use of harpoon grenades can apply for licences for minke or fin whales (an exemption for this rule are the special permits for collective hunt described below). Only persons with licence or special permit can hunt large whales.
- Special permits for collective hunt of minke whales can be given in places where the local boats equipped with harpoon canon cannot satisfy the demand of fresh meat. Only full-time hunters that own skiffs and do not have access to boats with harpoon can apply for permits for collective hunt. There are further regulations concerning the equipment necessary on board the skiffs and the minimum amount of skiffs that can participate in a collective hunt.

Quotas and licences:

- After consulting with the municipalities and with the hunter’s organisation, the Ministry of Fisheries and Hunting decides every year the maximum number of fin whales and minke whales that can be taken from each municipality.
- The municipal authorities provide numbered licences that allow the owner to hunt whales with a specified boat during the running year. Licences for minke whales are restricted to one minke whale per licence.
- Licences for hunting of minke whales are given in numbered forms that are printed by the Ministry of Fisheries and Hunting and distributed to the municipal authorities. The municipal authorities issue licences for fin whales.
- Once the amount of licences allowed by the allocated quotas has been issued, the municipal authorities send information about the hunters, licences and boats to the Ministry of Fisheries and Hunting. This information is kept as hard copies and entered into an electronic database.
- A licence for the hunt of one minke whale in West Greenland is used up when the animal is captured or shot. A licence for the hunt of one minke whale in East Greenland is used up when the animal is captured.

Redistribution and reduction of quotas:

- The Ministry of Fisheries and Hunting can reduce the quota for the running year, or for the following year, if the quotas have been exceeded. Quotas can also be reduced if whales, including whales of protected species, have been shot or captured without permit.
- The municipal authorities and the Ministry of Fisheries and Hunting have the authority to move or cancel licences. Incorrect reporting of taken or wounded whales may lead to loss of licences.
- The quotas are redistributed in early fall. Unused licences cannot be used after the redistribution of quotas.

Sale of catch, biological samples and catch data

- The product of a catch cannot be sold before the municipal authorities have registered the hunt and stamped the licence. In order to obtain a stamp, whalers must show the receipt for the purchase of the harpoon grenade, as well as the used grenade with serial number (hunters from the collective hunt do not buy harpoon grenades and are exempted from showing receipts or used grenades).
- It is forbidden to export meat of large whales with commercial purposes.
- Any one who kills a large whale has the obligation to deliver a fresh tissue sample to the municipal authorities. The sample should be stored in containers with chemical solution provided by the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources, and sent to this institute as soon as possible. The sample should be accompanied by information about species, date, location, etc.
- Failure to comply with the regulations of this executive order can lead to fines