

MARINE MAMMALS COMMITTEE

Chairman: Mr. Jón Jónsson
Rapporteur: Mr. S.G. Brown

1. The Chairman, Mr. Jón Jónsson opened the meeting and the Agenda was adopted by the Committee.

2. The nominal role of Committee members was called and the names of new members and substitute members for the meeting noted.

3. The Chairman presented the Administrative Report for 1967 and called for comments and discussion of the Report (Agenda item 4).

Professor Ruud (Norway) expressed appreciation of work done by Canada and the United Kingdom (especially in relation to the Seal Unit of the Natural Environment Research Council). He regretted that representatives of the USSR were not present to report on statistics on seals in the White Sea.

Dr. Sprules (Canada) indicated the Canadian work on seals was being reported to ICNAF but indicated that some reports on the Canadian whale research work might be included in the Annales Biologiques. In reply to a question by Professor Ruud, he briefly outlined the whale research work being conducted by Dr. E.D. Mitchell.

Dr. Hult (Sweden) said that work on grey seals in the Baltic, especially with regard to damage of salmon fishing gear, and on the age composition of the stock, was started last year and he hoped to present a report on this work to the meeting next year.

Dr. P.M. Hansen (Denmark) said that it was hoped to start work on whales and seals in Greenland. Catches of minke whales were being made there.

4. The Chairman asked for other comments for plans for future work.

Dr. Jonsgaard (Norway) indicated that extensive programmes of research on small whales were being developed. It was also hoped to examine the stomach contents of sperm whales taken in Norwegian waters with a view to comparing their food with that of sperm whales caught in the Antarctic.

Professor Ruud said that the seal research work carried out by Mr. Øritsland (Norway) will be continued, and, if possible, intensified.

Mr. Brown (U.K.) said that it was hoped to carry out further work on fin, sei and sperm whales at the Whaling Station in Iceland in 1969.

Dr. Sprules indicated that the seal work will continue as will the work on whales in the North-West Atlantic.

Mr. Lagarde (France) said that he would check what work on seals is being done at present in France.

Mr. Tienstra (Netherlands) said that work on whales done earlier would be continued.

Mr. Jónsson mentioned that there was material available in his laboratory for an examination of the relationship between the distribution of whales and plankton in Icelandic waters.

5. Agenda item 5. Mr. Brown gave a short report on the meeting of the Scientific Committee of the International Whaling Commission held in Tokyo in June 1968. He mentioned specifically that an item on fin whale stocks in the North Atlantic would be included in the Committee's agenda for its 1969 meeting.

6. Agenda item 6. Dr. Jonsgaard gave a short report on the meeting on Age Determination in Whales held in Oslo in February 1968 and summarised the main conclusions relating to baleen whale ear plugs and sperm whale teeth. A brief discussion on the problems of interpreting the laminae in ear plugs followed this report.

7. Agenda item 7. The Chairman drew the attention of the Committee to a one day meeting on the Application of Chemical Devices to Identify Fish Stocks to be held at the Council's meeting next year. It was agreed that if any work on serological or other similar techniques to identify whale or seal stocks was being done by member countries, they might submit papers on this work for this meeting.

8. The Chairman called attention to Agenda item 9. Communciations: In the absence of a representative from the USSR, the rapporteur introduced Doc.N:2.

The Committee felt that this paper presented some useful new data on the relationship between the size and age, and on several dimorphism in this little know species.

9. The Committee were informed that in the absence of Dr. Sergeant (Canada) Doc.N:3 had been withdrawn.

10. Dr. Jonsgaard gave an illustrated report on his paper, Doc.N:4. In July and August 1968 a cruise in a small whaling vessel was undertaken in the waters of north-west Iceland and off the south-east and south-west Greenland coasts. A three part programme was carried out for recording sightings of all whale species, for whale marking, and for studies of minke whales (Balaenoptera acutorostrata) captured by the vessel.

New information on the distribution of fin whales, and on an association of fin whales and white-beaked dolphins (Legendrhynchos albirostris) was obtained. Nineteen whales were effectively marked including seventeen fin whales, one minke whale and one sperm whale. One of the fin whales marked off south-east Greenland was captured eight days later some 280 nautical miles to the north-east by an Icelandic whale catcher.

Thirty-six minke whales were captured during the cruise and biological collections and other data were obtained from them all.

In the discussion following this contribution, Dr. Hansen outlined what was previously known of the distribution in Greenland waters of the various species mentioned in the paper. Professor Ruud mentioned earlier and current ideas on the distribution and migrations of fin whales in the northern waters of the North Atlantic. The value of the whole marking now being undertaken by Canada, Norway and Iceland in the North Atlantic was stressed.

11. Mr. Brown introduced Doc.N:5 and combined this with a progress report on the results in data of work on baleen whales taken in Iceland in 1967.

Dr. Jonsgaard indicated that the findings that fish predominated in the food of sperm whales in Iceland confirmed similar unpublished information available from sperm whales taken in Norwegian waters. It would be important to confirm that this behaviour persisted throughout the whaling season in different areas.

12. Under Agenda item 8, Other business, the Chairman opened a discussion on the problems of whale marking in the North Atlantic. There was general agreement by the Committee that it was important to have a central agency for the storage of copies of records of whale marking carried out in the region and for the circulation of information among member countries on the distribution of marking effort by species and areas. Professor Ruud suggested that the Whale Research Unit of the National Institute of Oceanography be asked to act as a central agency for whale marking records for the North Atlantic, and that the Unit be also requested to provide an annual statement of the marking carried out by member countries for inclusion in the Administrative Report. He pointed out that copies of records of Norwegian and Icelandic whale marking were already available to the Unit. Dr. Sprules indicated that Canada could agree to this arrangement if the Committee felt it necessary. Mr. Brown said that it would be possible for the Unit to act as this central agency.

The Chairman raised the question of a standard reward payment for the return of whale marks with appropriate data on the captured whales. In the absence of information on the amounts payed by the various organisations concerned, he will circulate member countries with a view to presenting such information at the next meeting of the Committee.

The question of publicity for whale marking was discussed. It was felt that recoveries from the large whales were being returned from whaling stations without the need for additional publicity, but it was agreed to recommend that member countries draw the attention of those interested to the increasing numbers of small whales of various species being marked in the North Atlantic.

2A. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE MARINE MAMMALS COMMITTEE

- 2A (1) That the attention of member countries should be drawn to the fact that small whales and dolphins of various species are being marked in the North Atlantic, and that whale marks may be found in any whales captured by small-whale hunters. It is requested that steps be taken to inform the persons concerned of the possible presence of marked whales among their catch and to request them to return to the appropriate authorities any whale marks recovered with the data and position of capture, species, size and length of the animal in which the mark was found. A reward will be paid for all marks returned with such data.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE MARINE MAMMALS COMMITTEE

B (2) That the Whale Research Unit of the National Institute of Oceanography of the United Kingdom be asked to act as a central agency for the storage of copies of records of whale marking carried out by member countries in the North Atlantic and that information on these whale marking activities be presented annually in the Administrative Report of the Committee.

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*By the Central
Whale Research Unit*

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C. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE MARINE MAMMALS COMMITTEE

- C (1) The attention of members of the Committee was drawn to the Recommendation C.M.1967/2:2 regarding the Application of ³¹⁰Chemical ^{Methods} Devices to Identify Fish Stocks. Members should ask the workers concerned in the different countries to contribute papers on their work on this subject in relation to Marine Mammals for presentation at a meeting on this subject planned next year.

