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International management of seal Innovations for a new seal market

Preliminary Project

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Sammendrag:

Fra februar 2010 til mars 2011, jobbet dette forprosjektet mot å utvikle en søknad om hovedprosjekt. Dette har vært et internasjonalt samarbeid med partnere fra Norge, Island og Grønland, finansiert av NORA og Nordland fylkeskommune.
Søknaden om hovedprosjekt ble levert til NORA innen søknadsfristen den 1. mars 2011.

Summary:

From February 2010 to March 2011, this preliminary project was dedicated to initiate partners from Norway, Iceland and Greenland to design and develop a proposal for a main project. NORA and Nordland fylkeskommune was financial partners in this preliminary project.
The application for the main project was submitted to NORA by March 1st 2011.

Godkjent / Approved

Prosjektleder / Project leader

Håkon Sund
Avdelingsleder

Liv Jorunn Hind
Rådgiver

Acknowledgement

The duration of this preliminary project was from February 2010 to March 2011. NORA and Nordland fylkeskommune contributed as financial partners. We wish to thank these partners for their financial support in the preliminary project, and hope they will continue their financing during the main project.

The application for a main project was submitted to NORA by March 1st 2011.

We wish to thank our contacts for their contribution and enthusiasm for this project and its future goals. We also want to thank Nordland Research Institute for their contribution during the preliminary project.

Tjøtta, March 2011

Liv Jorunn Hind

Project leader, Bioforsk Nord Tjøtta

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Abstract

On May 5th 2009, the European Parliament passed through a legislation that imposed a ban on import of all seal products to the EU. Exceptions were made for products stemming from traditional Inuit hunt, tourist import and products from measures implemented to maintain marine resources, including fish stocks. The aim of the proposed legislation was to ensure that no products derived from seals killed and skinned in ways that cause pain, distress and suffering, find their way onto the European market. Hence, the legislation was based on animal welfare issues, and not the preservation of seal populations and species.

From February 2010 to March 2011 NORA and Nordland fylkeskommune was financial partners of this preliminary project. The project was dedicated to initiate partners from Norway, Iceland and Greenland to design and develop a proposal for a main project.

The three main tasks during the project period were to:

- Establish a network for the main project
- Identify some main challenges for sustainable seal hunt in each country
- Design and write a proposal for the main project

During the preliminary project we established a contact group existing of researchers, sealers, designers and regional administrators with a mutual interest for the future of the sealing industry. We also had some contact with relevant informants outside of the NORA main focus area, the most relevant being contacts in Canada, Finland or Scotland.

Through document studies and information from our contacts, we have briefly reviewed the overall sealing situation in countries included in the preliminary project as well as some of the countries we may wish to include in the main project. Each country has its own perspectives related to sealing, different ways of managing the industry and different challenges related to the EU legislation.

The application for the main project was submitted to NORA by March 1st 2011. This project has a two-dimensional goal:

- Evaluate the sealing industry as a traditional industry in local communities, and the effect of the EU ban.
- Contribute to cooperation and product development in the local sealing industry based on sustainability.

One of the biggest challenges in reaching this future goal is to apply for regional financing in the different countries. Getting all the co-financing in place is the next step in preparing the main project. We have already had positive feedback from some of the financial partners we have contacted.

1. Background

On May 5th 2009, the European Parliament passed through a legislation that imposed a ban on import of all seal products to the EU. Exceptions were made for products stemming from traditional Inuit hunt, tourist import and products from measures implemented to maintain marine resources, including fish stocks¹. The aim of the proposed legislation was to ensure that no products derived from seals killed and skinned in ways that cause pain, distress and suffering, find their way onto the European market. Hence, the legislation was based on animal welfare issues, and not the preservation of seal populations and species.

The legislation was met by praises and celebrations by opponents to sealing². On the other hand it was met with public and political resistance from nations where sealing is a more accepted part of sustainable harvesting of marine resources. The legislation was opposed by governmental officials in both Canada and Norway, and the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO) has described the EU import ban as “a huge step backwards” for sustainable development. National organisations on Greenland, such as KNAPK (Greenland’s Fishing and Hunting Association) and the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), have brought EU before the European Court of Human Rights as they believe the EU legislation is in conflict with WTO (World Trade Organization) agreements. A new hearing was set for August 16th 2010. The EU Parliament did not rule in favour of the complainant at this time, and the legislation was put in effect.

Some 900 000 seals are hunted each year around the globe, with the commercial hunt in Canada, Greenland and Namibia accounting for some 60 % of the seals killed each year. In Norway, Sweden and Iceland, sealing is conducted relatively small scale. According to the International Commission for Exploration of the Seas (ICES), today’s sealing is in accordance with scientific advices³. The Norwegian Ministry for Fisheries and Coastal Affairs claims that Norwegian regulations safeguard seal population as well as hunting methods, and are developed in close collaboration with biologists and veterinarians. According to the Norwegian Minister of foreign affairs, “*a ban on trade in seal products will set a dangerous precedent in the matter of sustainable harvesting for renewable resources*”⁴.

Sealing occurs in various parts of the world, especially in circumpolar areas, for commercial, survival and cultural reasons. In addition to the cultural and economic importance seals play in many countries, the sea mammal also has gained status as an icon for animal welfare groups and environmental organizations throughout the latest decades. The dualism in the way seals are perceived among different groups, challenges the management of the seal populations both nationally and internationally. Many coastal communities in the Arctic region have long traditions for sealing, which also constitutes cultural and social values and institutions. Although many communities no longer practice their traditions for sealing, certain coastal communities have kept their traditions alive and through new experiences have developed new methods for consumption and products for sale. Non-industrialized hunts generally lead to a fuller use of the seal than industrialized hunts, e.g. the traditional hunt where the whole seal is used vs. hunting where sealers are requested to specialize in the use of either skins or meat to increase the efficiency of the hunt.

Because of the social and cultural dimensions to sealing in indigenous groups, the proposed import ban made an exception for products stemming from Inuit hunt. However, the Inuit delegation following the decision making in Brussels stated that: “*we perceive the exception as humiliating for our people and it will not reduce the damaging effects the import ban in general will cause our economy*”⁵. Nunavut Premier Eva Aariak has stated that “*History has shown that the entire market*

¹ Environmental commission, press release: commission welcomes the agreement reached on seal product ban. 5th of May 2009, reference IP/09/698

² When it is not specified, “sealing” and “sealers” are referring to both saling on ice out at sea, and coastal seal hunt.

³ ICES, St.meld. 2008-2009 Norsk pattedyrpolitikk

⁴ Støre, J.G. 2009. Innlegg på møte i Europavalget, Stortingets Europautvalg, 25.05.2009

⁵ Dagsavisen, 21/7 2009: EUs selforbud vedtatt, <http://www.dagsavisen.no/utenriks/article414030.ece>

collapses when countries talk about banning seal products". Environment Minister Daniel Shewchuk, claims that there is a common misconception that an exemption protects Inuit. He points to the pointlessness of these exemptions in the 1980s as a result of the EU ban on white-coats. As hunt on white-coats was banned, they included an exemption for the Inuit. However, the market fell through and the Inuit communities still suffered. The fear is that this new import ban will have similar repercussions and again put a strain on the sealing industry.



Common seal (Photo: Bjørn Økern)

2. Results - Achieved goals

From February 2010 to March 2011 NORA and Nordland fylkeskommune were financial partners of this preliminary project. The project was dedicated to initiate partners from Norway, Iceland and Greenland to design and develop a proposal for a main project.

This preliminary project had three main tasks for the project period:

- Establish a network for the main project
- Identify some main challenges for sustainable seal hunt in each country
- Design and write a proposal for the main project (application submitted to NORA by March 1st 2011)

2.1 Network/organisation

One of the main objectives of this project was to initiate partners from Norway, Iceland and Greenland. As a result of the preliminary project, partners from these countries are interested in continuing working in a main project - focusing on seal as a sustainable and harvestable product.

Sealers in these countries represent various kinds of sealing industries. Whereas some target their products for the tourist market, others hunt seal for traditional purposes such as home use or as part of larger food and fur industries. These various purposes for sealing make a broad picture of hunting activities and dynamics on a transnational scale.

2.1.1 Project leaders

During the preliminary project, Bioforsk Nord - Tjøtta signed agreements of collaboration (samarbeidsavtaler) with marine biologist Mona Gilstad and Arild Gjertsen on behalf of Nordland Research Institute. These agreements include collaboration on the project development for the main project. Unfortunately Nordland Research Institute could not partake in the main project. The main project will be divided into two work packages. Gilstad is responsible for work package 2; Sustainable product development. Liv Jorunn Hind from Bioforsk Nord - Tjøtta, is lead partner and as such responsible for project administration in addition to work package 1; Sealing, local perspectives.

2.1.2 Other active collaborators

Outside of the lead group, we have some collaborators taking an active part in the project. From Norway we have Inger Hansen and Thomas Holm Carlsen, researchers from Bioforsk Nord - Tjøtta. From Greenland we have Aksel Blytman who is a consultant at Greenland's Fishing and Hunting Association (KNAPK) and Martin Schjøtz-Christensen who is an officer at the Business Development Section in Sermersooq County. From Iceland we have Guðbjörg Helga Jóhannesdóttir from the Farmers Association of Iceland (Bændasamtök Íslands).

We have also some people representing sealers in Norway. Bjørn Økern, seal hunter, designer, author and former leader of Greenpeace Norway, has competence in coastal seal hunting. Anders Thingnes and Fredrik Duvholt Haug from the University of Tromsø, have competence within sealing on ice out at sea.

2.1.3 Plans to expand the partnership

In addition to the project partners, we have been in contact with or have been recommended to contact relevant informants outside of the NORA main focus area. The most relevant countries to

precede contact with in the main project are Canada and Scotland, as they have different but interesting approaches to sealing.

Canada

Canada is especially active in the international debate going on regarding the EU import ban. Their interest and angle is focused on their sealing industry, but also in relation to the importance sealing has in regards to the indigenous population. We have listed some contacts and organisations that may be relevant in the main project:

- Nicole Hynes, Sealing Industry Consultant. Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Fisheries, Newfoundland and Labrador Government. She has agreed to be of some assistance in gathering information on sealing issues related to the EU ban. She will be able to forward us to the appropriate individuals as well.
- Guy Beaupre, the lead on matters pertaining to science and management of the Canadian seal harvest. Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO).
- Tanya Schlossek, director of renewable resources. The Nunatsiavut Government. Can provide perspectives for Northern Labrador (Inuit).
- Wayne Lynch, director of the Nanutsiavut Government. Working on sealing issues for Nunavuts.
- Glenn and Rebekah Williams, sealers and product developers.

Scotland

From earlier international seal projects (chapter 2.2.3) we have some contacts that can be relevant in case we include Scotland in our main project: Fisheries development officer Dafydd Morris from the Highland Council and Dr Richard Robinson from Scottish Natural Heritage are some of these contacts.

2.2 Activities

2.2.1 Meetings with project partners



Tjøtta on the 2nd of September 2010 (Photo: Thomas Holm Carlsen)

Hind, L.J. Bioforsk Rapport vol. 6 nr. 35 2011

The partners have primarily communicated via e-mail and by phone. In addition three project meetings were held during the preliminary project.

- March 5th 2010: Preliminary meeting. Location: Tjøtta, Norway. Present was represents the aforementioned Norwegian participants to the project who signed the agreement of collaboration. Goal: Discussing the preliminary project, planning the main project and agreeing on work tasks.
- March 12th 2010: Meeting with Mona Gilstad and Liv Jorunn Hind. Location: Vega, Norway. Goal: get an account of earlier established contacts - nationally and internationally. Important contacts to include in a main project.
- September 2nd 2010: International meeting with project partners. Location: Tjøtta, Norway. Present was partners from Norway, Iceland and Greenland. A representative from the Faroe Islands was also present. Goal: Presenting the ideas of the main project to our international collaborators.

2.2.2 Marketing

Mona Gilstad and Liv Jorunn Hind were invited to hold a presentation each at an international conference on Greenland on the 26th - 27th of May 2010; *Marine Ecosystem Management - How to Make it Sustainable* (attachment 1). Gilstad was going to hold a presentation on "Products from the seal - potential and possibilities". This was based on an earlier international project and will be the foundation for work package 2 in the main project.

Hind was going to hold an orientation of this preliminary project and our goal for a main project. At the end of day two, an invitation to a meeting about the project presented earlier, was included in the program. We wanted to use this forum to present more detailed information about the project. We also wanted to discuss different challenges different countries are faced with, which informants we would gain the most from including, and possibly get some partners that would be interested in participating in the main project.

The conference was however postponed due to the volcanic eruption on Iceland spring 2010. According to the organizers, a new conference is to be held during the spring of 2011. We hope to be included in the program at that time. For our project, the postponement might prove useful as it gives us more time to develop the project further before presenting it.

2.2.3 Connection to other international projects

Our project benefits from another seal project: "Seal - our mutual resource" ("Selen - vår felles ressurs"). This international project lasted from 2004 - 2006 and included partners from Norway, Sweden and Finland. The main goal was to promote ecological management of the seal population in a way that was considerate to the coastal population in designated areas. The project sought to achieve this goal by:

- Creating conditions for a sustainable utilization of a renewable and valued resource
- Contribute to increased cooperation between organizations and government
- Educate hunters in ethical hunt, and cooks and craftsmen in how to utilize seal as a resource

Mona Gilstad and Bjørn Økern had important roles in this project. Their work, experiences and contacts from this project, will to some extent be continued in our project, mainly in work package 2.

2.3 Different perspectives to sustainable sealing

Each country has its own perspectives related to sealing, different ways of managing the industry, and different challenges related to the EU legislation. We have briefly reviewed the overall situation in countries included in the preliminary project, as well as some of the countries we may wish to include in the main project.

Norway

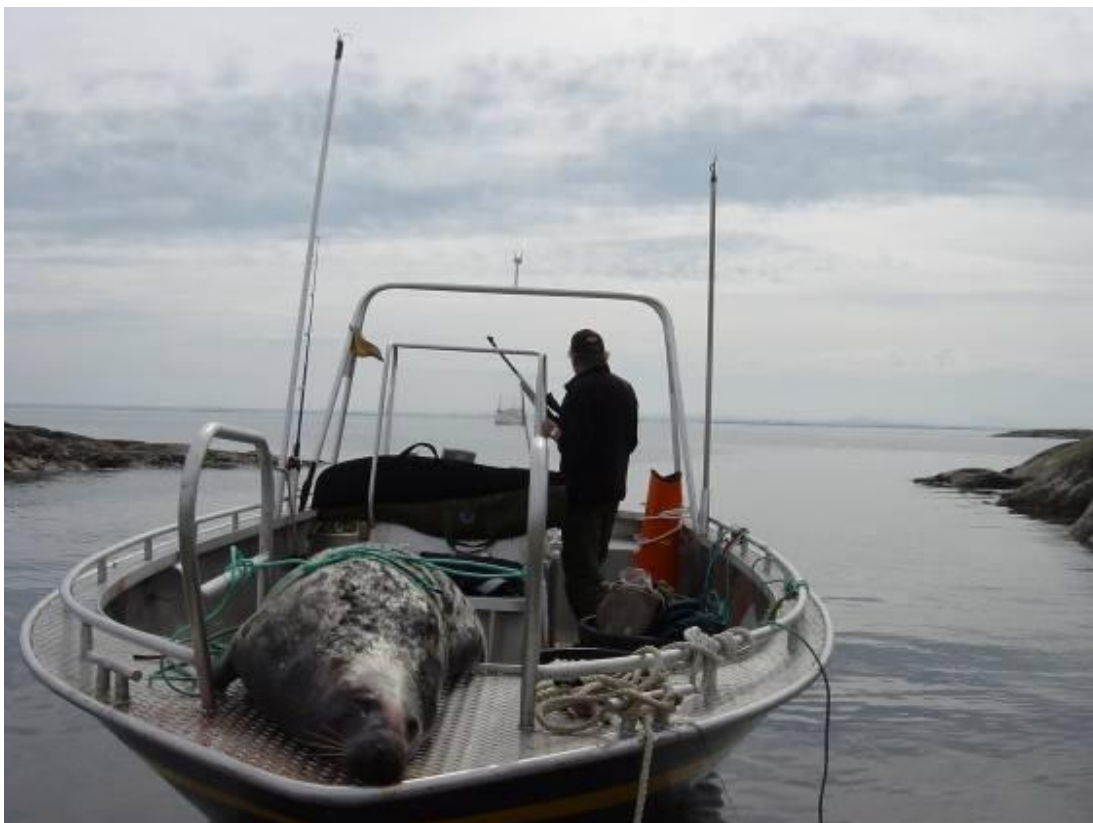
There are two methods of sealing in Norway; coastal hunting with a rifle, and sealing on ice at sea with a rifle and a pickaxe (hakapik, invented in Norway). Sealing on ice out at sea is mainly on harp seal (*Pagophilus groenlandicus*) and hooded seal (*Cystophora cristata*). None of these species are endangered, and they are subject to limited exploitation in accordance to regulations established by the joint Norwegian - Russian Fisheries Commission. Coastal hunting is mostly concentrated on common seal (*Phoca vitulina*) and grey seal (*Halichoerus grypus*), while ringed seal (*Pusa hispida*) and harp seal are also to some degree hunted in the north.

The political view in Norway is that sealing is necessary in keeping the seal population at a reasonable level. Seals can eat considerable amounts of fish. When seals over populate an area, they can travel a great distance to find food. Migrations of this kind can be perceived as massive invasions along the coastal line as the seals take a big share of edible fish which is important both for the fish industry and the local fishermen's private food supply. In addition, they inflict extensive damage to fishing equipment and fish farms, and tens of thousands of seals have drowned as a consequence of getting stuck in nets.

Coastal hunting

Coastal hunting is in most cases considered a recreational activity or at best, a limited industry at certain locations along the coast. The hunt is regulated by national management strategies regarding seal on the Norwegian coastline. These regulations entail yearly quotations, hunting seasons and demands put upon the hunters.

Coastal hunting is considered a demanding form of hunting, and an approved examination for big game hunting is required.



Coastal hunting on a smaller boat (Photo: Roger Lyngvær)

Sealing on ice

Norwegian seal vessels go out to *Vesterisen* (east of Greenland) and before 2007, they went out to *Østisen* as well (an area outside the White Sea in the economic zone of Russia). The Norwegian catch quota is based on recommendations from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), the North-West Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) and the Norwegian Institute of Marine Research. Based on these recommendations, the management strategy takes into consideration how a reduction of the seal population will influence other species.

Sealing in Norwegian waters are strictly regulated in regards to hunting seasons, quota, killing methods, vocational training and approved vessels. On board the Norwegian vessels there is an inspector who ensures that regulations are being met. Recent years there has been an international observer on board as well, monitoring the methods.

According to regulations the seals are to be killed as quickly and considerately as possible. Adult seals are to be shot with a rifle. Although seal pups can be hunted with a pickaxe, most pups are shot with a rifle. As a precaution, all seals are hit with the pickaxe in the head in addition to being shot to ensure a quick kill. Although the pickaxe may look primitive, it is an effective tool ensuring instantaneous unconsciousness and rapid death. Since 1989 Norwegian sealing no longer permits hunting on pups that are still with their mother (sucklings).

Boycotts against Norwegian sealing during the 1980's, resulted in a changeover in the industry as it became less economical viable. That is why since 1991, Norwegian sealing has been subsidized by the government in order to survive as an industry. The survival of the industry is considered to be important to ensure a safe management of the seal population. In addition, it keeps the traditions and knowledge of sealing alive so that one will be able to govern the population in an appropriate fashion in the future. At the same time there is an innovative focus on developing new seal products that will allow for a more self-sufficient industry.



Hunting adult, harp seal (Photo: Frode Grøtnebø)

Greenland

There are about 10 million seals in the Greenlandic waters. These are mainly harp seal populating different locations of Greenland from March/April to December. Traditionally the harp seal spawn near Newfoundland, although recently they have moved further south into south west Greenland. As the seal population has doubled from 5 to 10 million seals since the 1990's, there are no administrative limitations to sealing on adult harp seal, although white-coats are protected against all hunting. Other administrative regulations to sealing on Greenland were made public on the 12th of November 2010:

“Fredning

§3. Naalakkersuisut kan fastsætte fredningstid for individuelle sælarter på baggrund af internationale aftaler, biologisk rådgivning, brugerviden samt høring af Fangstrådet.

Stk.2. Hunner, der ammer, samt diende unger er fredede.

Stk.3. Unger med lanugo hår (netsider, grønlandssæler og remmesæler) er fredet.

Stk.4. Spættet sæl er totalfredet. Fredningen opretholdes indtil biologisk rådgivning viser, at fredningen kan ophæves.

Stk.5. Gråsæl er totalfredet. Fredningen opretholdes indtil biologisk rådgivning viser, at fredningen kan ophæves.”⁶

Sealing has a strong tradition among the Greenlandic people. Each year about 110.000-150.000 seals are hunted. The hunt is primarily implemented as a supplementary food resource. People in coastal areas of Greenland are dependent on the income from seal skins. Normally about 68.000 skins have been exported to the EU and other countries each year. The seal skin market has had its ups and downs, and in the 1980's the market fell through as a consequence of the EU ban on white-coats. Slowly the market built itself up again until the EU legislation in 2010 again has made the skin difficult to sell. Today Great Greenland A/S (a leading Greenlandic seal skin company) stores some 270.000 untradeable seal skins. Due to this strained market situation, the sealing industry is surviving on subsidies from the government.

Sealing is essentially accepted as an important industry on Greenland. However, situations where skinned carcasses have been found floating in populated coastal areas and harbors, strengthen the conflict concerning the utilization of the whole seal and the hunting morale of the industry is put into question. This kind of handling of the carcasses is not in compliance with the notion of sustainable sealing where as much as possible of the animal is being used. In addition it is bad publicity for sealing in general. As part of the regulations published in November, there was a subsection on application of the catch: “All meat, lard, skin and other usable parts of a brought down seal, shall be brought home or deposited according to regulations” (own translation).

Iceland

The common seal and the grey seal are the only two species to breed on Iceland - and consequently the only who are hunted there. The ringed seal, harp seal, hooded seal and bearded seal (*Enignathus barbatus*) are occasionally seen off the north coast, but are not harvested.

Historically, products from sealing played an important role in the family household, with most parts of the animal being used. Today the skin is the most used resource. In the 1980s the popularity of seal cuisine declined, but in the 21st century it is said to be increasing again.

Sealing today is small scale on Iceland, with just 200-300 animals being killed annually, almost entirely pups. These are hunted when they are a few weeks old, just towards the end of lactation. From the viewpoint of the national economy, sealing is insignificant. But for a few coastal farmers the hunt is an important source of income. Iceland's seal hunters have established the Seal Farmers Society with a membership of 100 people.

⁶ “Selvstyrets bekendtgørelse nr.16 af 12. november 2010 om beskyttelse og fangst af sæler”.
http://www.lovgivning.gl/gh.gl-love/dk/2010/bkg/bkg_nr_16-2010_dk.htm



*The seals are skinned, washed and cooled down before stored away on the sealing vessel.
(Photo: Anton Siomonsen)*

Canada

There are two major areas for commercial sealing: an area off Newfoundland known as the Front, and the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

Four species of seal are harvested: harp seal, hooded seal, grey seal and ringed seal. By far the harp seal is the most hunted with a quota from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans in 2007 of 270 000. Annual quotas for hooded and grey seals are rarely more than 10 000. Commercial hunting for harp seal pups younger than 2-3 weeks (known as white-coats) and hooded seal (known as blue-backs), has been illegal since 1987.

The grey seal hunt is a small part of the overall Canadian hunt, but grey seals are an issue for fishermen because they live in the Gulf of St. Lawrence all year round. The seals frequently damage the gear of lobster fishermen in the area, and a study by the Department of Fisheries of Prince Edward Island in 2001, estimated the damage to lobster gear in one year in that province alone at \$6.3 million.

The ringed seal population is estimated to be between 1.5 and 3 million. Annually around 30 000 ringed seals are harvested in Nunavut Territory. This is considered well within the sustainable yield of the population. Populations and harvest levels are monitored by the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board. The harvest of ringed seal is practiced on a small-scale, with the main purpose being to provide food. The skins are used first to meet home needs, such as clothing and arts and crafts, while surplus skins may be sold.

Commercial sealers in Canada fall into two categories: landsmen and offshore sealers, depending on where and how they hunt. The landsmen hunt involves smaller boats and takes place close to land (usually no more than 15 miles offshore). The boats are returning to shore every night. The offshore hunt involves bigger vessels of 35-65 feet in length, most being closer to 65 than 35 feet. Offshore sealers often follow seal herds and may travel 100 miles or more on trips that take up to two weeks. These two categories are comparable to the Norwegian categories of coastal hunting and sealing on ice.



Hunting gear for coastal hunting (Photo: Bjørn Økern)

Scotland

In theory, sealing is a non-existing industry on Scotland, even though there is an old tradition in hunting seal and utilizing seal products. As an example, the pouch on the kilt formal attire, is traditionally made either of seal skin or of sheep. Nowadays however the seal is protected by the national management, even though there in 2009 was reported to be 164 000 grey seals and a minimum of 20 000 common seals in Scotland. There is an imbalance between national political management and both seal biology and local traditions related to sealing. However, even though it may not be talked about in public, sealing still occurs in some Scottish communities.

3. Future aim

This report marks the end of this preliminary project. An application for a main project has been submitted to NORA. This will be a three-year project lasting from August 2011 to August 2014.

The main project has a two-dimensional goal:

- Evaluate the sealing industry as a traditional industry in local communities and the effect of the EU ban.
- Contribute to cooperation and product development in the local sealing industry based on sustainability.

The expected results of the main project are as follows:

- Concrete results:
 - Seal Centre; a website focusing on information, discussion and marketing of products.
 - “What to do when the seal is shot”; guidelines focusing on sustainable resource utilization and product development.
 - Courses in sustainable sealing and product development.
 - International publication.
- Guidelines and course in sustainable product development will contribute to a greater focus on sustainable utilization of the seal resources.
- Product development rooted in the local community will contribute to continuation of local, small scale sealers and in consequence to recruitment into the industry.
- We will contribute to the international sealing debate by publishing information on the local social perspectives and sustainable product development.

One of the biggest challenges in reaching this future aim is to apply for regional financing in the different countries. Getting all the co-financing in place is the next step in preparing the main project. We have already had positive feedback from some of the financial partners we have been in contact with.

4. Attachments

Nr	Topic
1	International Conference on Marine Ecosystem Management - How to make it sustainable

International Conference on
**MARINE ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT –
HOW TO MAKE IT SUSTAINABLE?**

THE NORDIC COOPERATION IN FISHERIES 2010

2nd Announcement



Source: Institute of Marine Research, Norway

26 - 27 May 2010

**Hotel Arctic
Ilulissat, Greenland**



NAALAKKERSUISUT
GOVERNMENT OF GREENLAND



norden

Nordic Council of Ministers

Background of the conference:

There are different opinions on how to interpret the concept of sustainable ecosystem management. The perspective is vastly different if one compares the views shared by communities dependent on harvesting from marine ecosystems, with the views of the public far away from such realities, typically living in the cities of the large industrialized countries.

The marine ecosystems house a range of species, including marine mammals that are important to the inhabitants of the coastal and island communities in the North Atlantic. According to the 2008 Declaration on Seals and Society by the Nordic Council of Ministers governments should strive to achieve a balance between protection and use in the management of marine resources. This view is apparently not shared by the EU which in 2009, laid down restrictions on the imports and sale of sealskins.

Who shall attend the conference:

Users of the ecosystem, policymakers, managers, scientists and NGO's.

Programme of the conference:

25th of May:

Arrival and registration

5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. Practical information

6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. Reception - welcome speech by the Honourable Minister of Fisheries, Hunting and Agriculture Ane Hansen

26th of May:

Introduction (8:30 a.m.):

Keynote speaker the Honourable Minister of Fisheries, Hunting and Agriculture Ane Hansen opening speech.

Chair: Hans Peter Poulsen.

Session 1:

The Ecology of the North Atlantic:

- Session 1 will give the management organs, users and NGO's a basic introduction of the current ecological status of the marine environment, and how this information is processed into scientific advisory on harvest rates.
 - What is the status of the distribution and migratory patterns of marine mammals in the North Atlantic and the Arctic Ocean and how do scientists apply population assessments in order to advise on harvest rates? - Dr Fernando Ugarte, Institute of Natural Resources in Greenland
 - What is the status of the distribution and migratory patterns of the most valuable fish and shellfish in the North Atlantic and the Arctic Ocean and how do scientists apply population assessments in order to advise on harvest rates? - Dr Hans Lassen, ICES
 - From science to management advice - single species to ecosystems. - Dr Christina Lockyer, General Secretary of NAMMCO

Attachment 1

Further questions to be discussed:

- Are marine mammals implemented in the assessment of the marine ecosystems?
- Is the current knowhow good enough to give advisory on sustainable management?

Lunch

Session 2:

Policy-making in marine ecosystem management:

- Session 2 will focus on the different management regimes of marine ecosystems, and which political guidelines these are based on.
 - Which political considerations form marine ecosystem management? - Gert Verreet, Policy Advisor with the Flemish Government - Environment, Nature and Energy Department
 - Culling of seals and cormorants in the Baltic Sea, a political controversial management tool. - Heikki Lehtinen, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Finland

Further questions to be discussed:

- Is it political or biological concerns that should govern how the marine ecosystems are being managed?
- Is the debate on hunting vs. conservation of the top predators in the marine ecosystems a form of cultural imperialism?

Boat trip (5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.).

27th of May:

Session 3 (8:30 a.m.):

Implementation of socioeconomic considerations in sustainable management:

- Session 3 will focus on the economical impact the marine mammals have on fish stocks, and the socioeconomic value of the hunt.
 - How does the ecological interaction between marine mammals and fish stocks impact the economic value of the marine ecosystem? - Dr Arne Eide, Associate professor in resource economics at the Norwegian College of Fishery Science, University of Tromsø
 - Does sustainable marine ecosystem management conflict with socioeconomic factors in Greenland? - KNAPK - The Organization of Fishermen and Hunters in Greenland
 - Products from seal - potential and possibilities. - Mona Gilstad, Marine Biologist
 - Pilot project: International management of seal - Networking to meet common challenges. - Liv Jorunn Hind, Scientist at Bioforsk Nord, Norway

Further questions to be discussed:

- Can decreased stocks of marine mammals increase the yields in fishery?
- Is protection of marine mammals suppressing the coastal communities?

Lunch

Attachment 1

Session 4:

Ethics in sustainable management of the marine ecosystem - cultural and environmental aspects:

- Session 4 will focus on the ethics ecosystem management.
 - Manipulation of the marine ecosystem for economic benefits - is it right? - Patrick Lewis, WWF International Arctic Program
 - How should culture and identity influence sustainable ecosystem management? - Finn Lynge, former member of IWC for the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and former MEP
 - Ecosystem management - an indigenous approach. - Aqqaluk Lynge, ICC Greenland

Further questions to be discussed:

- Is conservation of marine mammals based on the animal rights movement or concern of the ecosystems?
- How are our different cultures influencing marine ecosystem management?

Closing remarks.

The objective of this conference is to compose a policy paper on sustainable marine ecosystem management.

Invitation to discuss the pilot project presented by Liv Jorunn Hind (5.00 p.m.)

Workshops will be arranged during the conference.

Dinner (7:00 p.m.) - Hosted by the Minister for Fisheries, Hunting and Agriculture

28th of May:

Departure

Registration:

Please register on <http://norden2010.fo/Default.aspx?ID=9842> not later than Friday 7 May 2010.

Steering group:

Amalie Jessen, Ministry of Fisheries, Hunting and Agriculture (Greenland)
Tore Riise, Ministry of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs (Norway)
Madeleine Nyman, Metsähallitus - Natural Heritage Services (Finland)
Charlotte Winsnes, North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO)

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