Greenland's International obligations

- a report on Greenland's fulfillment of international conventions and agreements on nature protection, species, conservation and wildlife management

By Thor Hjarsen, EcoAdvise

© WWF Canon / Fritz PÖLKING

Title:
GREENLAND's INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS
- a report on Greenland's fulfilment of international conventions and agreements on nature protection, species conservation and wildlife management

Published by:
WWF Denmark, November 2003

Author:
Thor Hjarsen (M.Sc.)
EcoAdvise & Communication, Copenhagen
ecoadvise@ecoadvise.dk

List of contents:

Overview of tables in the report:

1. PREFACE

In the last few years, increasing attention has focussed on the poor quality of nature management in Greenland. WWF Denmark, therefore, decided to carry out its own investigation of nature management in the country during the summer of 2003. The aim was to build a clearer picture of the extent of the problems in Greenland. WWF Denmark then put forward a number of recommendations as to how the Greenlandic and Danish authorities could help solve existing problems.

The result of this investigation is this report. Its contents are disturbing. The state of the nature protection and wildlife management is in a far worse condition than we imagined. In fact, our investigation shows that Greenland does not comply fully with any of the international nature conventions or agreements. Even when it comes to very simple obligations Greenland fails – in terms of legislation and in terms of management. The simple conclusion is that Greenland has no control over its own nature management.

This report shows that Greenlandic politicians and administrators have not focussed on proper solutions or taken difficult but necessary decisions to solve nature management problems. Where decisions have been made, the report shows that they are not implemented properly. The responsibility for solving these problems is shared by Denmark as well as Greenland. Denmark has clearly failed to assist Greenlandic politicians and administrators in creating efficient solutions.

Denmark has had great success giving environmental assistance to countries in Eastern Europe and a number of developing countries through capacity building in relation to, management of international nature conventions for example. This makes it all the more surprising that it has failed to do the same for Greenland, a dependent Danish territory. The experience gained from these projects should have benefited Greenland.

WWF Denmark hopes this report will get the attention from Greenlandic and Danish politicians, decision makers and administrators. We hope that the report and the many recommendations in it will inspire action on behalf of Greenland's nature - before it is too late.

Mr. Kim Carstensen
Secretary General, WWF Denmark

2. SUMMARY

In the past few years there has been increasing attention focussed on the way in which Greenland manages its living natural resources. Is the hunting of birds and marine mammals done on a sustainable basis? Lately, serious doubts have also been raised about the way Greenland fulfils its international obligations under the many international environmental conventions and agreements which Greenland has signed on to.

This WWF report is looking at how Greenland is fulfilling its commitment to these "green" conventions and agreements of which it is either a direct member or is included in through its membership of the commonwealth of Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands. The list includes:

The Convention on Biological Diversity, The Washington Convention/CITES, The International Whaling Commission, The Ramsar Convention, The Oslo Convention on management and protection of polar bears, The Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna, CAFF/Arctic Council, The North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO), The Canada/Greenland Joint Commission on Conservation and Management of Narwhal and Beluga (JCNB), IUCN, and UNESCO's World Heritage Convention.

The outcome of our research is not encouraging. It demonstrates that Greenland lacks relevant legislation and management capacity in a number of crucial areas. In a number of cases, Greenland has:

- Failed to introduce domestic legislation to implement the legally binding conventions and agreements
- Failed to build up nature and wildlife management to meet the goals and implement the recommendations put forward by the conventions and agreements, e.g. regarding the size of quotas or protection of nature
- Failed to report back violations of legislation in spite of this being a demand of several conventions
- Failed to report back inadequate management in spite of this being expected under certain agreements
- Failed to sufficiently monitor populations and protected areas, in spite of this being a condition in a number of the agreements, and so failed to provide the basis for relevant recommendations from international scientific working groups

The problems are serious, not least because in international forums Greenland often describes itself as respecting nature and operating sustainable harvests of wildlife.

The failure to implement legally binding conventions and agreements is not Greenland's responsibility alone. As the leading nation in the commonwealth of Denmark, Greenland and the Faeroe Islands, Denmark must take its share of responsibility.

Some examples from the report:

Greenland has promised the International Whaling Commission to curb the use of rifles for hunting minke whales. Nevertheless, the amount of minke whales killed by rifles has grown to 44 % of all minke whales killed in Greenland.

The obligation under the Ramsar Convention to protect bird areas of international importance has not been implemented in Greenland, and only a small fraction of the identified Ramsar sites in Greenland are under protection. This means that wildlife is protected only in a very small fraction of the areas designated as Ramsar areas.

Trade in endangered animals and parts of animals is regulated by CITES. Greenland is a member of this convention, but nevertheless continues to export parts of endangered and declining species like walrus, beluga and narwhal – without any controls.

On several occasions Greenland has promised to solve these problems. Several legislative initiatives have been taken, documents have been prepared, and public hearings have been held, all dealing with the protection status of species such as guillemot, eider, walrus, beluga, narwhal and polar bear. A new Nature Protection Act has been discussed in Parliament for several years. But so far none of these has been approved.

The list of examples of failures to meet international obligations is long. In this report WWF seeks to cover most of them. WWF also presents a series of recommendations. It is our hope that the report will be used by politicians and authorities to identify gaps and to act accordingly.

3. INTRODUCTION

3.1 Spotlight on Greenlandic nature management

The image of Greenland as an ecologically sustainable hunting community in harmony with nature is not a true one.

During the last two to four years, media and NGOs have increasingly reported about excessive hunting in Greenland on sea birds, whales, walrus and polar bears. International coverage, and with it bad publicity for Greenland, appeared on BBC World television, Newsweek magazine, the internet, and in newspapers in Denmark and Greenland and various magazines issued by NGOs.

Following stories about the killing of more than 30 killer whales (orcas) and a new bird legislation, which permitted spring hunting, more than 1,300 e-mails arrived in the mail boxes of Greenlandic politicians and Government officials in less than two months in 2002.

The attention from the outside world made the Greenlanders act. In April 2002 the Greenlandic Homerule Government wrote the following on its own website, http://www.nanoq.gl:

"…the following problems should be solved:

- *Stricter management of several of our marine mammal populations, especially beluga whales and walrus.*
- *The high hunting pressure on several bird species, especially Brünnich's guillemot and common eider.*
- *The many examples of over-fishing of the arctic char, e.g., by placing gill nets across streams and rivers.*
- *Problems with the harvest on the musk ox and rein deer populations in Kangerlussuaq.*
- *General problems with hunting ethics and the possibility for acquiring a hunting license with no prior hunting experience.*
- *Problems with the control of whether hunting regulations are followed.*

At the same time the Greenlandic Premier at the time, Mr. Jonathan Motzfeldt, promised that the management of Greenlandic animals and birds would be changed for the better.

The furore around Greenland's poor nature management began to worry Greenlandic companies. The Greenlandic shrimp exporters and tourist businesses urged the Homerule Government to act.

As a result, the Homerule Government declared that a strategy for sustainable use of living resources should be formulated. In addition to this, the Homerule Government also wanted information campaigns and new legislation to be implemented.

With substantial economic support from the Homerule Government, Greenlandic companies, private trusts and foundations in Denmark and Greenland and the Danish Environmental

Protection Agency, Greenland launched a campaign for sustainability *Tulugaq*[1] in 2003. Tulugaq is planned to last three years. Its aim is:

> *"…to create an improved dialogue between the different stakeholders and to communicate present knowledge about the state of the living resources. The object is to promote a common understanding of the needs for nature protection for future generations."*
>
> Extract from Tulugaq's website at http://www.nanoq.gl

Like most of the world's other countries Greenland has ratified a number of international conventions and signed on to a number of nature management agreements. In some cases Greenlandic obligations under these conventions and agreements result from being part of the Danish kingdom. In other cases Greenland has entered bi- and multilateral agreements on its own.

These conventions and agreements deal with use, protection, conservation and management of, for example, habitats, ecosystems and species. Several of these conventions and agreements have been in place for more than 20 years.

This report intends to assess the implementation of these in Greenland. Does Greenland fulfil the requirements and where does it fail?

3.2 The political environment in Greenland

In the two to four year period in which there has been a negative focus on Greenland's nature management planning, there has been an unstable political situation in Greenland. Numerous changes in the Government and several parliamentary elections have occurred. This has taken its toll on decision making.

Five changes in the Government in just 20 months have clearly affected the workload of Government offices and legislative processes have been delayed.

However, in spite of this, there have been some successes.

WWF Denmark is aware of a number of positive initiatives made by Greenland during the last few years. A number of new regulations dealing with many of the problems have been promised for several years although little has really been implemented yet. However, the following regulations have in fact been in public hearing in Greenland in the last two years, which is at least a step along the road towards implementation and hopefully better protection:

Regulation on sustainable use of seals

Regulation on sustainable use of walrus

[1] *Tulugaq* is the Greenlandic word for the bird raven. According to the Greenlandic myth the raven is the bird that came with the sun and it is highly visible and noisy.

Regulation on sustainable use of polar bear in Greenland

Regulation on sustainable use of beluga whale and narwhal

Regulation on sustainable use of small cetaceans other than beluga whale and narwhal

Regulation on CITES

Law on nature protection

A single regulation intended to cancel a two year old bird protection regulation has been proposed in various forms by different Homerule Governments since early 2002:

Regulation on protection of birds

As mentioned above, the Greenlandic Homerule Governments has promised several times to impose new hunting regulations on different species. However, none have yet been implemented.

It is the sincere hope of WWF Denmark that the political environment in Greenland soon becomes more stable and that the necessary political will is generated to implement much needed wildlife regulations and nature protection law. But laws and regulations are not the only things that are needed: a sincere will to manage any new legislation also needs political support.

Sustainable walrus hunt in Greenland

Extract from the website of the Greenlandic Institute of Natural Resources (http://www.natur.gl), September 2003):

"Aerial counts at the beginning of the 1990's indicate that there are no more than about 1000 walrus during the winter in west Greenland. This estimate also includes submerged animals. For the hunt to be sustainable, the take must be 20 to 70 animals a year. But hunting statistics (*Piniarneq*) show that since 1993 an average of 200 walrus from the West-Greenlandic population have been caught annually. There is little doubt about what this leads to, and this actual catch figure does not even take into account the number of walrus that are killed but lost during hunts. These animals are most likely not reported in hunting statistics at all. In 1995 the scientific committee of NAMMCO assessed the walrus in western Greenland and recommended a reduction in the take. However, this has not yet happened; in fact the hunting statistics show that the catch has increased."

3.3 International obligations do oblige

International conventions and agreements on wildlife management oblige participating countries to do a wide range of things.

As an example CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) is a legally binding convention in which member states are expected

to formulate and implement national legislation that makes, for example, customs inspection and legal confiscation possible.

The Danish – and thereby the Greenlandic – membership of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) is a legally binding agreement that obliges the member states to adopt whaling quotas and reporting formats and undertake monitoring programmes.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has a number of more loosely formulated objectives. But where the method of implementation is the decision of each member state, the goals are common and include, for example,, the sustainable use of natural resources, protection of gene pools, and involvement of local populations in decision-making and management of natural resources.

Other agreements and organisations that Greenland has signed on to are of a more scientific, advisory and non-binding character. This is the case with the Canada/Greenland Joint Commission on Conservation and Management of Narwhal and Beluga (JCNB), Conservation of Arctic
Flora and Fauna (CAFF) and the North Atlantic Marine Mammal
Commission (NAMMCO).

Greenland is covered by the following international “green” conventions and agreements, either through Danish ratification or by becoming a signatory itself:

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) ensuring protection of biodiversity through sustainable use and monitoring, local involvement and other issues.

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) regulating and monitoring trade of wild species, their parts and products.

The International Whaling Commission (IWC) is making decisions on whaling quotas (for aboriginal subsistence whaling) and guidelines for best practices for whaling and for the protection of whales.

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands protecting internationally important wetlands with unique aggregations of birds and other wildlife.

The Agreement on conservation of polar bears protecting polar bears in the circumpolar countries.

Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF), Arctic Council, setting common goals for management of arctic flora and fauna and exchanging information and knowledge among scientists and managers although it is not legally binding.

North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO) issuing specific management recommendations in terms of hunting levels and protection.

Canada/Greenland Joint Commission on Conservation and Management of Narwhal and Beluga (JCNB) issuing specific management

recommendations in terms of hunting level and protection.

World Conservation Union (IUCN) giving management advice and cooperating on information exchange.

UNESCO World Heritage Convention ensuring classification and protection of unique nature and cultural sites.

In addition to these agreements Greenland is member of the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers where cooperation in terms of environmental protection and nature protection also takes place. These councils are advisory and not binding in any terms that can be compared with the conventions and agreements listed above.

What criticism has been put forward?
Danish journalist Kjeld Hansen's book "A farewell to Greenland's nature" is one of the most famous critiques of Greenland's failure to manage its wildlife sustainably. However, the book which was published in Danish, Greenlandic and English, was not the only voice raised.

WWF Denmark, together with other NGOs such as the Danish Ornithological Society/BirdLife Denmark, The Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society and the two small Greenlandic nature conservation organisations Uppik[2] and Timmiaq, also became involved. Several pointed out that Greenland did not comply with the international standards of the conventions and agreements to which it had signed either directly or through its Danish sovereignty..

In addition, the discussion in Greenland has also been intense. The national newspapers AG/Grønlandsposten and Sermitsiaq have printed numerous articles, comments and editorials on nature conservation, hunting and whaling, written by a range of authors from interested and concerned readers to experts, NGOs, politicians and journalists.

Much of the criticism of Greenland relates to the country's failure to follow the guidelines and mandates established by the conventions and agreements it is party to:

Convention on Biological Diversity: Greenland does not seriously implement ecologically sustainable management of wild populations, and harvests in many cases exceed the regenerating capacity of wild populations.

CITES: Greenland does not have relevant legislation in place to control shipments and confiscate illegal specimens. On top of this, products of Appendix I species (eg. sperm whale, bowhead whale and fin whale) are sold to tourists and exported.

The International Whaling Commission: Greenland exports whale meat and blubber to Denmark on what appears to be commercial terms, fails to monitor fin and minke whale populations that are harvested, and submits error ridden reports to the IWC on legal whaling.

[2] http://www.uppik.org

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands: Greenland has ignored the fact that the convention obliges Greenland to protect 11 Ramsar sites.

The Agreement on conservation of polar bears: Greenland permits unsustainable hunting levels of polar bears. In fact, reports of polar bear hunting are so limited that it is not possible to say anything authoritative about the current status of polar bears in Greenland.

Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF): Greenland has not implemented the common management plans for seabirds.

North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO) and **Canada/Greenland Joint Commission on Conservation and Management of Narwhal and Beluga (JCNB):** Greenland is ignoring management recommendations for reduction of hunting pressure on walrus, beluga whale and narwhal.

In the following chapters WWF Denmark looks in more detail at whether Greenland is fulfilling its obligations under the different international conventions and agreements outlined above.

4. CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY, CBD (1992)

Ratified by Denmark 21st of December, 1993 and entered into force 21st of March, 1994.

Covers Denmark in addition to the dependent territories: Greenland and the Faeroe Islands.

Main problems with Greenland's fulfilment of the Convention on Biological Diversity

- Greenland has not made any "Red Lists" on wild species that could help contribute to a more objective assessment of the state of fauna and flora in Greenland,
- Greenland has failed to make a strategy for sustainable use of, for example, marine mammals and sea birds hunted and used commercially. The Home Rule Government promised this plan in April, 2002 but now, one and a half years later it has still not been published. The convention requires such plans,
- Greenland has not submitted the required progress reports to the CBD,
- The current Greenlandic Nature Protection Act (1982) is clearly outdated in terms of fulfilling the requirements of the convention,
- unsustainable hunting of a number of marine mammals and sea birds takes place in Greenland and contradicts both national and international scientific recommendations.

The objective of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is to promote sustainable use of biodiversity on all levels. That is on a gene, species, and ecosystem level. In addition to this, the Convention also has regulations on equal distribution of the benefits obtained using the biological diversity among the stakeholders.

CBD not only focuses on the protection of biodiversity but also obliges member states to take socio-economic considerations into account when managing and using the living resources of nature. The convention also seeks to ensure the rights of local human populations.

When ratifying CBD, Greenland declared to the Danish government that Greenland will not take responsibility for any economic costs following the obligation of the convention[3]. How this is to be interpreted when it e.g. comes to restrictions in commercial hunting is not clear to WWF Denmark.

The responsible Greenlandic agency is the Greenlandic Ministry of Environment and Nature (in Danish: Direktoratet for Miljø og Natur) in addition to other agencies.

According to the website of the Home Rule Government (http://www.nanoq.gl) the national follow-up of the convention is:

[3] http://dk.nanoq.gl/TEMA.asp?page=tema&objno=34049

"… to make Greenlandic strategies, plans and programmes for protection and sustainable use of the biological resources, and to adjust current management tools of this character with reference to the requirements of CBD."

Up till now Greenland has published two reports (in Danish and Greenlandic) that can partly be the guidelines for such work:

- **The biodiversity of Greenland – a country report (1999):** a short summary of current knowledge on flora and fauna, habitats and ecosystems, etc.

- **Status 2000 (2000):** an overview in table format on all Greenlandic animal species harvested. The tables include population status and biologists' management recommendations[4].

Beyond this there seems no political will to update and strengthen regulations in line with obligations to international agreements. Greenland has not yet introduced the necessary strategy for sustainable use of biodiversity as required by Article 6. Neither has Greenland submitted any national reports to the Convention Secretariat in accordance with Article 26[5].

The World Conservation Union (IUCN) in Switzerland has for many years had guidelines for classification of wild species in terms of whether they are endangered or threatened. This classification is the basis for the so called "Red Lists" that identify the most vulnerable wild species globally, regionally or nationally. These classifications are very useful for comparisons of population status between countries and for making priorities for conservation. The objective of the IUCN Red List categories is: *"…to provide an explicit, objective framework for the classification of the broadest range of species according to their extinction risk[6]*." The categories that follow in the box below are an example of the categories:

Extracts from the IUCN Red List categories for evaluation of state of wild populations of flora and fauna (version 3.1, 2001)[6]

CRITICALLY ENDANGERED (CR)
- An observed, estimated, inferred or suspected population size reduction of ≥90% over the last 10 years or three generations, whichever is the longer, where the causes of the reduction are clearly reversible AND understood AND ceased.
- An observed, estimated, inferred or suspected population size reduction of ≥80% over the last ten years or three generations, whichever is the longer, where the reduction or its causes may not have ceased OR may not be understood OR may not be reversible.
- An observed, estimated, inferred, projected or suspected population size reduction of ≥80% over any ten year or three generation period, whichever is longer (up to a maximum of 100 years in the future), where the time period must include both the past and the future, and where the reduction or its causes may not have ceased OR may not be understood OR may not be reversible.

[4] Status 2000 is currently under revision but WWF Denmark could not get any information on when the new edition will be published.
[5] According to e-mails to the author dated 12th November 2003 from both the convention's secretariat and the Danish national CBD focal point The Forest and Nature Agency.
[6] http://www.redlist.org/info/categories_criteria2001.html

ENDANGERED (EN)
- An observed, estimated, inferred or suspected population size reduction of ≥70% over the last ten years or three generations, whichever is the longer, where the causes of the reduction are clearly reversible AND understood AND ceased.
- An observed, estimated, inferred or suspected population size reduction of ≥50% over the last ten years or three generations, whichever is the longer, where the reduction or its causes may not have ceased OR may not be understood OR may not be reversible.
- An observed, estimated, inferred, projected or suspected population size reduction of ≥50% over any ten year or three generation period, whichever is longer (up to a maximum of 100 years in the future), where the time period must include both the past and the future, and where the reduction or its causes may not have ceased OR may not be understood OR may not be reversible.
- Quantitative analysis showing the probability of extinction in the wild is at least 20% within 20 years or five generations, whichever is the longer (up to a maximum of 100 years).

VULNERABLE (VU)
- An observed, estimated, inferred or suspected population size reduction of ≥50% over the last ten years or three generations, whichever is the longer, where the causes of the reduction are: clearly reversible AND understood AND ceased
- An observed, estimated, inferred or suspected population size reduction of ≥30% over the last ten years or three generations, whichever is the longer, where the reduction or its causes may not have ceased OR may not be understood OR may not be reversible
- An observed, estimated, inferred, projected or suspected population size reduction of ≥30% over any ten year or three generation period, whichever is longer (up to a maximum of 100 years in the future), where the time period must include both the past and the future, and where the reduction or its causes may not have ceased OR may not be understood OR may not be reversible
- Severely fragmented or known to exist at no more than ten locations.
- An estimated continuing decline of at least 10% within ten years or three generations, whichever is longer, (up to a maximum of 100 years in the future)
- Quantitative analysis showing the probability of extinction in the wild is at least 10% within 100 years.

The species database run by the World Conservation Monitoring Centre in Cambridge shows that the following species in Greenland are internationally endangered:

Species	**IUCN Redlist category**
Bowhead whale *Balaena mysticetus*	Endangered
Minke whale *Balaenoptera acutorostrata*	Lower risk – near threatened
Bluewhale *Balaneoptera musculus*	Endangered
Fin whale *Balaenoptera physalus*	Endangered
Humpback whale *Megaptera novaeanglinae*	Vulnerable
Sperm whale *Physeter catodon*	Vulnerable
Beluga whale *Delphinapertus leucas*	Vulnerable
Orca *Orcinus orca*	Lower risk – conservation dependent
Narwhal *Monodon monoceros*	Data deficient
Harbour porpoise *Phocoena phocoena*	Vulnerable
Polar bear *Ursus maritimus*	Lower risk – conservation dependent
White-tailed sea eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*	Lower risk – near threatened

The list above is the Red List classification used to assess the state of the global populations of the concerned species. However, the same categories can be used on a regional or national

scale. One of the obligations following CBD is that the member states make their own, national Red Lists. In such national Red Lists the species may of course end in different categories than on the international list.

These national Red Lists are comparable between countries if the IUCN classifications are used. They can be important tools to identify which species need the attention of the managers, and therefore contribute to conservation priorities.

If the IUCN classification was used on, for example, the west Greenlandic population of beluga whales they would be classified as *Endangered*. The species is still hunted intensively in Greenland with a harvest that at its best is seven to eight times the recommended level.

Denmark, like many other countries, has made its own, national Red List.

However, the IUCN Red List categories have not yet been used for Greenlandic species. Instead the Greenland Home Rule Government has published its report "Status 2000" where a number of self-invented criteria have been used. It has not been possible for WWF Denmark to get any information from Greenlandic authorities on the implications of this classification in Status 2000.

Status 2000 (Institute of Natural Resources, Nuuk)
(Note: "threat" categories in bold)

Important species with problems (due to hunting or other), and where current scientific knowledge is sufficient for management initiatives in Greenland:
Beluga whale, Brünnich's guillemot, arctic tern, common eider and king eider

Important species with possible problems (due to hunting or other), and where current scientific knowledge to some extent is lacking but sufficient for management initiatives in Greenland:
Walrus, polar bear, harbour seal, narwhal and harbour porpoise

Important species without problems (due to hunting or other), and where current scientific knowledge to some extent is lacking but where the harvest in Greenland is regulated:
Minke whale, fin whale, bowhead whale, humpback whale, fulmar, great cormorant, Iceland gull, glaucous gull, black guillemot, little auk, pink-footed goose, white-fronted goose, barnacle goose, rock ptarmigan, rein deer (farmed), rein deer (wild), musk ox.

Important species apparently without problems (due to hunting or other), and where current scientific knowledge to some extent is lacking but where there is no need for any regulation of the harvest in Greenland:
Harp seal, Hooded seal, ringed seal, bearded seal

Important species apparently without problems (due to hunting or other), and where current scientific knowledge to some extent is lacking but where there is no regulation of the harvest in Greenland:
Sheep, vegetation

In April 2002 the Home Rule Government announced the formulation of a national strategy for sustainable use of the living resources. It was planned that this strategy should be published together with a proposal of a new nature protection act. On the website of the Home Rule Government the following is said concerning the needs for regulation of hunting and a better management of the living resources:

> *"In order to counter any negative development there is a distinct need for two concrete initiatives: 1. An information campaign and an open and honest dialogue about the problems in this country, and 2. The formulation of an overall policy for the solution of the problems, resulting in an actual strategy and action plan.*
>
> *Both initiatives are required now if something is to be done in terms of solving existing problems and if, at the same time, we want to communicate our credibility to the world, a credibility which we are jeopardising at the moment in respect of our management of our nature and environment. Therefore the Home Rule Government has decided that administratively the implementation of the initiatives must be given high priority. This includes a very necessary dialogue on the subject with relevant interested parties in our society[7]."*

If the Greenlandic Government succeeds in formulating a strategy for sustainable development it will be in line with Article VI of CBD. Naturally it is also important that such a strategy receives sufficient political back-up during the implementation phase.

4.1 Recommendations of WWF Denmark

Greenland is urged to compile and publish a national Red List using the internationally recognised classifications of IUCN.

Greenland is urged to take national and international scientific advice on hunting levels into account as soon as possible. This advice has called for reduction of hunting pressure on the following species in decline: beluga whale, narwhal, walrus, polar bear, Brünnich's guillemot, common eider and king eider.

If Greenland follows these recommendations the country will make a leap forward concerning the level of fulfilment of CBD and sustainable use of wildlife.

[7] http://dk.nanoq.gl/tema.asp?page=tema&objno=33302

5. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora/CITES (1973)

Ratified by Denmark 3rd of March, 1973 and entered into force 24th of October, 1977.

Covers Denmark in addition to the dependent territories: Greenland and the Faeroe Islands[8].

Main problems with Greenland's fulfilment of the Convention on Biological Diversity

- Greenland has no legislation in place that prevents ongoing import and export of Appendix I specimens
- Greenland has no legislative instruments that make customs control and confiscation of illegal specimens possible
- Appendix I specimens are on sale in tourist hotels and souvenir shops all over Greenland
- Export of meat and blubber from fin whale, minke whale, narwhal and beluga whale to Denmark on what seems to be commercial conditions
- No border inspection of CITES specimens or documents

Greenland has no Scientific Authority which is obligatory according to the convention to decide whether any transaction is non-detrimental to the wild populations as required by Article IV

The member states meet every second year (Conference of the parties) where decisions are made, for example, on the listing of species.

Appendix I includes species threatened with extinction. Trade in specimens of these species is permitted only in exceptional circumstances.

Appendix II includes species not necessarily threatened with extinction, but in which trade must be controlled in order to avoid use incompatible with their survival.

Appendix III contains species that are protected in at least one country, which have asked other CITES Parties for assistance in controlling the trade.

Greenlandic species listed in Appendix I include sperm whale, bowhead whale, fin whale and humpback whale. Beluga whale, narwhal and minke whale are listed in Appendix II. Walrus has been listed in Appendix III by Canada.

[8] At the ratification Denmark informed the CITES Secretariat that the convention did not enter into force at the Faeroe Islands before the local government made the necessary legislation. However, today after 25 years the Faeroes has still not any CITES legislation in place. Apparently there is a legislative "vacuum" on the islands although Denmark has accessed the convention. This situation has made it possible to export minke whale meat from Norway to the Faeroes in 2003 in contradiction with CITES and IWC.

The Greenlandic Ministry for Health and Environment is responsible for the national implementation of the convention while the Ministry for Fishery and Hunting is responsible for the international relations.

Today the legal frame for implementation of CITES in Greenland is fragmentary and spread over number of regulations. With almost no exception, the same law is lacking in all regulations: it is not possible to confiscate illegal specimens found at the border or within Greenland's territory.

Table 1 summarises the legal situation.

According to the Home Rule Government all older regulation should still be the legal framework for implementation of CITES in Greenland. That is: Regulation no. 14 of 10th of December, 1981. However, this regulation has not been in use for several years, but was apparently "re-discovered" very recently by the Government officials after the international critique claiming that Greenland did not have the required legislation to implement CITES.

In fact Greenland has not had proper CITES legislation since Greenland left the EEC (now the European Union) on 1st of February 1985.

The uselessness of this 1981-regulation is illustrated by Article 3 of the regulation:

"Article 3. Permits [for export from Greenland] are issued by the Danish Ministry for Greenlandic Affairs on behalf of the Greenland Home Rule."

The Danish Ministry of Greenlandic Affairs was made redundant when Greenland gained Home Rule in 1979 and therefore does not exist any more.

Table 1: *Overview of current Greenlandic legislation with relevance for CITES implementation*

Species or group	**CITES appendix**	**CITES related regulations**	**Lacking legal framwork**
Fin whale, bowhead whale and sperm whale	I	- Export of meat for commercial purposes is illegal (§ 22 in Reg. no. 12 of 3.4.1998) - violation of §22 may be fined (§23 in Reg. no. 12 of 3.4.1998)	- No regulations on export of other parts or products - No regulations on export for other purposes or imports for all purposes - No regulations on inspections or confiscations
Minke whale	II (West Greenland) and I (East Greenland)	- Export of meat for commercial purposes is illegal (§ 22 in Reg. no. 12 of 3.4.1998) - violation of §22 may be fined (§23 in reg. no. 12 of 3.4.1998)	- No regulations on export of other parts or products - No regulations on export for other purposes or imports for all purposes - No regulations on inspections or confiscations
Narwhal and beluga whale	II	- Export of parts or derivates requires a prior permit (§15 in Reg. no. 30 of 11.10.1995)	- No legal sanction possible if § 15 is violated - No indication about which type of permit is required in §15

			- No regulations on inspections or confiscations
Orcas, harbour porpoises and other small tooth whales	II	Since there is no current legal framework for these species no CITES regulations are in place at all	- Export, import and trade can happen unhindered without any control from authorities
Polar bear	II	- Export of parts or derivates requires a prior permit (§6,1 in Reg. no. 20 of 11.5.1994)	- attempts of illegal export will lead to a fine but probably not confiscation due to the formulation of article 9[9]
Wolf	II	- no legislation in the wolf protection regulation (Reg. no. 9 of 5.5.1988)	- not possible to enforce CITES on wolf specimens
Birds of prey		- export of birds of prey, their parts or derivates are prohibited (§9,1 of reg. no. 38 of 6.12.2001)	- CITES is implemented above required standard by a general export ban of totally protected bird species which includes birds of prey.

Import of whale meat into the EU is in general prohibited. However, Denmark has negotiated a special exemption. Greenlanders living in Denmark are permitted to import whale meat and blubber. This exemption is, however, extended also to Danish nationals that either have lived in Greenland, or even just have relatives or friends in Greenland[10]. The restriction imposed on these import is a 5 kg limit on each shipment but no annual or personal limits.

In practice this regulation is not controlled by Danish authorities which is giving way to an unhindered export of whale meat from Greenland to Denmark. The import is supposed to be non-commercial according to the EU exemption, however, whale meat in Greenland is very often available either on the open-air meat markets in the town or in supermarkets. So, most commonly whale meat is traded commercially within Greenland reaching prices at DKK 180-200 pr. kg (c. USD 25-29 pr. kg).

For this report WWF Denmark has documented that it is possible to order whale meat at a supermarket in Nuuk and have it shipped to Denmark.

The export from Greenland to Denmark of whale meat has been significant during the years. In total 42 tonnes have been recorded by the Danish CITES authorities as imported to Denmark from 1985 to 2001 (see *Table 2*). This amounts to around 2.5 tonnes annually.

The question is whether these shipments of whale meat and blubber exported from Greenland to Denmark should be regarded as commercial or not. The Danish and Greenlandic CITES management authorities are of the impression that they should not.

Table 2: *Import in kilos of Greenlandic whale meat and blubber to Denmark , 1985-2001*

[9] "Article 9. Infractions of the regulations may lead to a fine, as well as confiscation of meat, fur and other parts of illegally hunted or acquired polar bears (…)".

[10] The Danish CITES M.A./The National Forest and Nature Agency writes in a letter dated 29th of January 2003 (file no. SN 2001-3712-0187): "*…whale meat … import is permitted for non-commercial purposes to Greenlanders resident in Denmark in addition to families and friends [in Denmark] of Greenlanders and Danish nationals living in Greenland*".

Year	Fin whale	Minke whale	Beluga	Narwhal	Pilot whale	Annual totals
1985	0	2	0	0	0	2
1986	0	1,819	5	0	0	1,824
1987	0	1,802	0	2	0	1,804
1988	0	0	0	20	0	20
1989	0	2,423	0	516	0	2,939
1990	194	2,190	808	100	0	3,292
1991	0	1,550	706	10	0	2,266
1992	6	1,751	2,650	0	0	4,407
1993	0	870	200	1,052	60	2,182
1994	5	1,446	40	355	6	1,852
1995	0	3,200	1063	382	134	4,779
1996	0	3,039	579	1,023	0	4,641
1997	0	810	814	1,093	735	3,452
1998	0	3,084	585	2,558	332	6,559
1999	0	346	0	0	0	346
2000	0	658	196.5	209.3	0	1,063.8
2001	0	422	214.6	120.2	0	7,56.8
Totals	205	25,412	7,861.1	7,440.5	1,267	42,186
Annual average	12.1	1,494.8	462.4	437.7	74.5	2,481.5

(Source: the CITES database at the World Conservation Monitoring Centre, UK)

According to Article IV of CITES import and export of specimens included in Appendix I and II may only take place if a special appointed national scientific authority is satisfied that the transaction is “non-detrimental” to the wild populations of the species involved.

Greenland has not and has never had such scientific authority.

Even back in 1996 the international Animals Committee of CITES reminded the member states that a Scientific Authority is required according to Article IV, paragraph 2(a) of the convention if a CITES permit has to be issued on a legal basis. At a 1996 meeting of the committee in the Czech Republic the committee was concerned about the Greenlandic stock of narwhals and export of narwhal tusks since no monitoring programmes took place. In addition the committee was concerned due to the fact that Greenland had not assessed if the exports where non-detrimental to the wild population of narwhals. The Greenlandic CITES Management Authority then presented information on stocks that at that time satisfied the committee.

However, since then tourism in Greenland has gone up and so have demands for souvenirs. And Greenland still lacks a scientific authority.

So, due to this, it is still possible to export large quantities of carved souvenirs, eg, walrus and beluga teeth, from Greenland as the wild populations are harvested well above their carrying capacity according to the biological population estimates and official harvest data.

In 2001 the Home Rule Government introduced a new system for management of CITES permits. Now, CITES permits are pre-issued and submitted in large quantities to souvenir shops. A shop may receive around 20 to 40 pre-printed CITES export permits for narwhal or walrus without any consideration of sustainability of this trade. According to WWF Denmark sources, the number of CITES export permits used for tourist export out of Greenland has risen ten-fold since pre-2001 time.

To investigate this, WWF Denmark has for several months tried to get information about CITES export from Greenland from the CITES Management of Greenland. However, Greenland has not published any annual reports since 1999.

It has been impossible to acquire new figures although the Greenlandic Ministry of Health and Environment on several occasions has promised to supply WWF Denmark with more recent export figures. Our latest request that was submitted by e-mail on 14th of October 2003 was also ignored.

The logo of the Greenlandic CITES campaign in 2001

Trade in Greenland with CITES souvenirs is significant and according to the Home Rule's Government own estimates the value of this trade to tourists reach around DKK 20 million (c. USD 3 million). WWF Denmark is aware of traders who cannot get enough carved teeth or tusks to cover the demand from tourists visiting Greenland. This has also affected prices (see box below).

Unit prices on CITES souvenirs in Greenlandic tourist shops

Raw beluga teeth (App. II)	DKK 50-100
Beluga teeth necklace in leather string	DKK 250 – 400
Complete narwhal tusk (App. II)	DKK 10,000 – 12,000
Narwhal tusk necklace in leather string (App. II)	DKK 350 – 600
"Thule necklace" in narwhal tusk (App. II)	DKK 2,000-4,000
Large polar bear hide (App. II)	c. DKK 15,000
Small polar bear hide (App. II)	c. DKK 10,000
Large polar bear skull (App. II)	c. DKK 6,000
Carved sperm whale tooth ("tupilak") (App. I)	DKK 2,500 – 4,000
Walrus skull with tusks (App. III)	DKK 3,000 – 5,000
Bracelet/necklace with carved piece of baleen of Bowhead whale (App. I)	DKK 400

Prices collected during several visits in souvenir shops in Ilulissat, Sisimiut, Nuuk and Kangerlussuaq during 2002 and 2003.

Whole sale prices on raw narwhal tusk

Quality I: DKK 800 per kilo (complete tusk in perfect condition)
Quality II: DKK 700 per kilo (complete but broken tip)
Quality III: DKK 300 per kilo (broken tusk)
Qulity IV: DKK 200 per kilo (low quality, "drift tusk")

Prices are what the Greenlandic trade company Pilersuisoq *paid a hunter for the tusks in 2003. A tusk easily weights 10-15 kilos.*

Greenland has very recently published a draft regulation on CITES. The regulation was in public hearing until 17th October, 2003. The outcome of the public hearing and how this will affect the final regulation is not known at this time.

However, the Greenlandic draft CITES regulation seems to fulfil most of the requirements of the convention. For example the regulation creates a long awaited legal basis for enforcement of CITES by making Customs control, internal inspections and confiscations. In addition the draft regulation also gives way for the creation of a Scientific Authority.

5.1 Recommendations of WWF Denmark

Greenland should as soon as possible introduce the legal frame for a national implementation of CITES.

The draft CITES regulation that has been in public hearing seems to fulfil the requirements of the convention. It is a very positive development and deserves full support from stakeholders.

The Greenlandic cabinet must give support to Greenlandic government agencies so that they can start an effective enforcement of CITES within Greenland.

With current price levels and demands from the souvenir market there is a risk that trade in some CITES specimens stimulates further hunting pressure.

Greenland must as soon as possible start the process of having all CITES species evaluated by biological experts to determine whether the trade and/or export currently affects, or in future may affect the wild populations.

WWF Denmark find that this work could be initiated independently of the adoptation of the proposed CITES regulation. If Greenland initiates this work it would be an important signal to the international CITES community showing the Greenlandic seriousness of securing sustainable use of wild fauna. Such assessment seems to be most urgent for narwhal, polar bear and walrus.

However, if the draft CITES regulation is adopted, the formation of an independent Scientific Authority in Greenland is also needed.

Sources[11] have told WWF Denmark that the demand from tourists and collectors for narwhal tusk, polar bear hides and walrus tusks are very high. At times, WWF Denmark was told, it is impossible to cover demands for especially narwhal tusks. One source claimed that apparently narwhal tusks "disappear" from Greenlandic public trade and are maybe smuggled out of the country. It has not been possible to check this information with recent CITES trade figures from Greenland since the last available CITES report from Greenland is from 1999. The Home Rule has for several months in 2003 ignored WWF Denmark's request for more recent CITES export figures. By March 2004 these CITES annual reports has not yet been published.

[11] The names of these anonymous sources are known to WWF Denmark but their anonymity is respected.

Last song of the Greenlandic beluga soon to be heard?

Extractt from the website of the official information campaign, Tulugaq, http://www.nanoq.gl:

Biological data
Approximately 8,000 in western Greenland (4,000 – 15,000 with 95% confidence limit) and approximately 13,000 in the Nordvatten [a large polynia between northern Canada and Greenland].
State of the population
Declining. The Greenlandic Institute for Natural Resources estimates a population reduction at 50-60% since the beginning of the 1980's.
Biological advice about the hunting level
Reduction of catch. Regional quotas are necessary. The catch must be reduced to 100 belugas annually if further decline is to be avoided.
If present catch level continues the beluga will probably be extinct as Greenlandic species within the next 20 years.
Catch statistics
1996: 542. 1997: 570. 1998: 723. 1999: 493. 2000: 609. 2001 (Jan to Sept.): 260
The Greenlandic Institute for Natural Resources estimates that around ¼ of all hunted animals are either not reported or is lost during the hunt

(Note: If IUCN's Redlist categories were to be used on the Greenlandic population of beluga the species would most likely be classified as *Endangered* according to experts consulted by WWF Denmark, since the decline is more than 50% over the last 3 generations).

Greenlandic press stories on the whale meat trade

Extracts from the website http://www.knr.gl, the national radio KNR, on 10th of November 2003:

NUKA* and Air Greenland are positive about the idea of air supplies of whale blubber
The proposal about transporting fresh whale blubber and meat from polar bears from the remote settlements in Greenland to the town are received with interest by Air Greenland and NUKA A/S*. MP Ane Hansen has on the current parliamentary assembly in Nuuk suggested that the government financially supports the air freight so that the population in major towns can enjoy such fresh wildlife products when it is at its best. Air Greenland finds the idea interesting but notes that it will not be cheap. (…)
- We can at a maximum store the meat for five to six days before we have to send it off. If we want to ship the products from, e.g., Savissivik in the north to Nanortalik in the south it must be secured that the products reach the destination fast, says Tom Andersen, director of sales, NUKA A/S.

Extracts from the website http://www.knr.gl, the national radio KNR, on 6th of December 2002:

Greenland is floating in whale meat
Greenland is floating in whale meat – but is in shortage of whale blubber. NUKA A/S decided recently to limit the buying from the hunters of whale meat since it has been impossible to sell the large amounts on the home market. But at the same time the whale blubber available is below demands. (…) This has lead NUKA A/S to make contacts to Norway to start exchanging products. The Norwegians may have our whale meat in exchange for their whale blubber.
However the rules for export of whale meat are strict – therefore NUKA A/S and KNAPK** has suggested the formation of a working group that can look at how the rules for import and export of whale products may be eased. (…)

***** NUKA A/S is a home rule owned meat and fish trading company that prepare, sell and export products of wild species of marine mammals and fish.
** KNAPK is the national association of professional hunters and fishermen in Greenland.

6. The International Whaling Commission (1946)

The International Whaling Commission (IWC) – International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling, inaugurated in Washington, 2nd of December 1946

The Convention covers Denmark in addition to the dependent territories: Greenland and the Faeroe Islands

Main problems with Greenland's fulfilment of the Regulations of the International Whaling Commission

- Insufficient monitoring programmes exist for tracking the activities of whale populations.
- Population estimates of the fin and minke whales that are hunted in accordance with the IWC quota for Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling (ASW) are outdated by several years.
- Consistently large unused percentage of annual whaling quotas undermines Greenland's arguments which cite continuously high demands of whale meat.
- Increasing use of rifles in hunting of minke whale is at least highly questionable if not unacceptable for reasons of animal welfare. Greenland has repeatedly promised the international community to reduce the rifle hunting; yet, rifle usage has in fact increased steadily.
- Incidents of illegal hunting if humpback whales continue to occur every year.

The objective of IWC is to secure protection and sustainable management of the large whales. IWC was formed as a response to the rapidly decreasing whale populations resulting from commercial whaling. During the first years IWC worked to establish common and binding whaling quotas.

48 member states participate in the annual meetings. IWC consists of a plenary assembly, a technical committee and a scientific committee.

Whaling regulations must be passed by a 75% majority vote, while other decisions are made by simple majority vote.

In 1986/87 IWC decided to stop all commercial whaling.

However, at the same time IWC also decided to make exceptions for aboriginals, i.e. the ASW quotas (ASW: Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling). The ASW quota is regularly negotiated and is the fundament for the current whaling of baleens in Greenland.

Extract from the article "How to maintain the quotas decided by IWC and other organisations?*" by Amalie Jessen in Arctic Research Journal (Arktisk Forskningsjournal), no. 1, 1997:*

"Despite the difficult quota negotiations, we Greenlanders are courageous. At the IWC whaling quota negotiations in Iceland in 1991 as an example there was a member of our delegation who was very skinny. The person looked like someone who had not eaten any whale blubber, whale meat or dried meat. For fun we made plans to use this person to prove to the other delegates and IWC that by only eating whale meat, blubber and dried meat one can stay healthy. We returned from the negotiation with very satisfying results, as the West Greenlandic minke whale quota was increased by 10 whales to a total of 100, and the fin whale quota was set to 21. Our experience showed us that all manner of tricks can be used at the negotiation in order to maintain the desired access to traditional Greenlandic food.

(The author was then the head of the Division for Whaling and Hunting at the Greenlandic Homerule administration, and is today the general director of the Ministry of Fisheries and Hunting in Nuuk).

If an IWC member state votes against a decision on whaling or a certain quota the same member state is not required to follow that decision or quota. Such positions have been made by Norway and Japan.

The Greenlandic whaling quotas are set in five year intervals by the IWC. At the latest meeting in the summer of 2003 in Berlin, the annual Greenlandic ASW quota was set at 19 fin whales (for all of western Greenland) and 187 minke whales (175 in West Greenland and 12 in East Greenland).

However, the setting of this quota still presented Greenland with problems. After 15 years without any monitoring (by Greenland) of the fin whale and minke whale populations, IWC only granted the quota on the condition that Greenland immediately initiate the much needed surveys.

The issue was previously discussed in 2002, as documented in the following excerpt from a 2002 IWC meeting (IWC 2002, IWC/54/5):

"The Scientific Committee has never been able to provide satisfactory management advice for either the fin or minke whales off Greenland. This reflects the lack of data on stock structure and abundance and is the reason for the Committee to first call for the Greenland Research Programme in 1998.
This inability to provide any advice on safe catch limits is a matter of great concern, particularly in the case of fin whales where the best available abundance estimate dates from 1987/88 and is only 1,096 (95% CI 520-2,106). The Scientific Committee noted that there is to be an abundance survey this year and further satellite tagging attempts.
The Committee stressed that obtaining adequate information for management should be seen as of very high priority by both the national authorities and the Commission. It reiterated its previous recommendation that every effort be made to obtain tissue

samples for genetic analysis from the catch and that efforts to compare these samples with those from neighbouring countries be continued.

Without this information, the Committee will not be able to provide safe management advice in accord with the Commission's management objectives, or develop a reliable SLA[12] for many years, with potentially serious consequences for the status of the stocks involved."

Prior to the 2003 meeting of the IWC, the Greenlandic Institute for Natural Resources initiated a monitoring programme of the cetaceans following the critique in 2002. However, the count proved inaccurate due to the use of incorrect methods. In 2003 the criticism grew concerning the lack of usable population estimates. Accordingly the Institute received DKK 1.3 million extra in 2003 to improve the whale surveys.

In addition to the survey problems encountered in attempting to set and maintain quotas, Greenland apparently also has a large problem in failing to consume all the whale meat made available by the quotas.

IWC has accepted that one fin whale is equivalent to 10 tonnes of whale meat and blubber, while one minke whale equals 2 tonnes. These conversion figures make it quite simple to calculate how much whale meat and blubber the IWC quotas grant Greenland each year. By looking at the Greenlandic whaling statistics one can calculate how much of the available whale meat is harvested.

The resulting conclusion of such a calculation seriously weakens the Greenlandic arguments for maintaining the current annual IWC quota (19 fin whales and 187 minke whales) since the quota is simply not being used. The available quotas equal 564 tonnes of whale meat and blubber, the potential of which has not been exhausted, and yet Greenland seems determined to obtain an even larger quota from the IWC:

Extract from the article "How to maintain the quotas decided by IWC and other organisations?*" by Amalie Jessen in Arctic Research Journal (Arktisk Forskningsjournal), no. 1, 1997:*

"In the 1989 quota negotiations Greenland made its positions at IWC very clear. This was supported by a 200 page report in English that documented our need for meat supplies. On top of this we made enormous efforts to maintain the [whale] marine mammal meat quota.
The most important part of this documentation was to prove the need for 670 tonnes [of whale meat and blubber] per year (in western Greenland)."

From 1998 to 2002 Greenland has accumulated an unused whaling quota percentage which equals a total of 47 fin whales. This means that it has not been possible for the Greenlandic whalers to use up the complete fin whale quota granted by the IWC. In total, according to the IWC conversion factor this equals 470 tonnes of available but

[12] SLA is the "Strike Limit Algorithm" and is the total recommended quota from the Scientific Committee. The SLA also contains estimates for losses and on-shootings.

unused whale meat and blubber. Per year this is an average of 94 tonnes (see also *Table 3*).

From 1998 to 2002 Greenland has accumulated an unused whaling quota percentage equalling 160 minke whales or 320 tonnes of consumable whale products. Per year this is an average of 64 tonnes (see also *Table 3*).

Following these calculations, over the past 5 years Greenland has failed to take advantage of 790 tonnes of available whale meat and blubber – or almost 150 tonnes per year. In spite of this Greenland and Denmark still work toward increasing the whale quota at the IWC meetings due to "national meat demand".

Table 3: *Fin and minke whale catch in Greenland (incl. loss and infractions), 1998-2002 (W = Wes Greenland, E = East Greenland)*

	1998	**1999**	**2000**	**2001**	**2002***
Fin whale QUOTA	19	19	19	19	19
Fin whale CATCH	9	7	6	7	13
Minke whale QUOTA	W: 175*** W: 12***	W: 175*** E: 12***	W: 175*** E: 12***	W: 175*** E: 13***	W: 175*** E: 13***
Minke whale CATCH	W: 165 (169**) E: 9 (10**)	W: 170 E: 14	W: 145** E: 10**	W: 139** E: 17**	W: 139**** E: 10****

NOTE:
The catch statistics have been gathered mainly from the official reports submitted to the IWC by Denmark and Greenland
* In 2002 51 minke whales of the quota remained unused (Press release from Greenlandic Homerule, 22.1.2003)
** Figures from a draft of the revised Status 2000 (*in prep.*). These figures are not in line with the official reports first submitted to the IWC.
*** In 1998 IWC approved that Greenland may transfer a maximum of 18 unused minke whales from one year to the following.
**** The 2002 catch has not yet been reported to the IWC but was stated in a press release from 22.1.2003.

A total of 71 fishing vessels in Greenland have a harpoon gun mounted on the deck. However, all these vessels are located in West Greenland meaning that all baleen whaling in East Greenland is done by killing the whales with rifles. The fishing ships equipped for harpoon whaling are, according to the Homerule, generally not very active in whaling. For example, only 25 of the ships with harpoon guns participated in whaling during 2001 "*…mainly because the whalers are fishermen with licenses for commercial fishery which they prefer*" (quote: speech by Amalie Jessen, Ministry of Fishery and Hunting at a public hearing on 4th of October, 2003 in Stockholm arranged by the Nordic Council).

Although it has not been the scope of the current investigation, probable reasons behind the significantly large percentage of the IWC quotas which goes unused include:

- The demand for whale meat in Greenland is lower than the availability. This might be because the whale meat and blubber is an expensive food. Retail prices for whale meat are DKK 80 per kilo and for whale blubber DKK 185 per kilo.

- The earnings from whaling are outweighed by the costs involved, and are too small in comparison to what whalers can earn from commercial fishery.

In an attempt to stimulate the whalers to use the total IWC quota, the Homerule has "released the quotas" during the last few years. This means that any whaler with a harpoon gun may shoot a minke whale on sight regardless of local need or lack thereof. Otherwise the Homerule normally sets regional and local quotas based on local needs in agreement with the organisation of professional hunters, KNAPK, and the association of municipalities, KANUKOKA.

More important, the Homerule has increased the rifle quota.

Rifle whaling – or "collective whaling" – of minke whales takes place from small boats (often 18 to 24 feet long) whereupon a group of whalers shoots at the minke whale. The method is to distress and weaken the whale each time it emerges to breathe and thereby discourage it from surfacing. When the whale is weakened due to lack of oxygen, blood and rest, a hand-thrown harpoon secures the whale. However, the rifle shooting often continues in order to kill the whale.

This hunting method has been strongly debated and criticized by animal welfare and whale conservation NGOs, and Greenland has on several occasions promised the IWC to reduce the amount of rifle hunting. Mr. Simon Olsen, the former Greenlandic minister for fishery and hunting, was quoted in the Greenlandic newspaper AG/Grønlandsposten on 31st of May, 2001 as saying that the rifle hunting may not be stopped completely but will be stabilised at around 30 minke whales a year. Ten years earlier Greenland wrote the following in a correspondence to the IWC:

> "…the general trend is that the number of applicants [for rifle whaling licences] are falling and has now reached a fairly stable level of about 30-35 dispensations this year [1990]. In 1986 the number of applications for dispensation was 56, whereas there were 35 in 1987 and 33 in 1988. In 1989 the number of applicants was a low as 15, which was, however, due to the extraordinarily low quota for 1989".
>
> *(IWC Doc. TC/42/HK2)*

However, this trend of decline seems to have reversed completely.

In 1994 the rifle quota climbed to 38 minke whales.

In 2002 the Homerule announced a rifle quota on 50 minke whales in West Greenland.

The Homerule surpassed itself in 2003 when it announced a rifle quota of 55 minke whales for West Greenland, with the possibility of increasing that figure to 57 minke whales, depending on the catch statistics.

In must be reiterated that all minke whales in East Greenland are caught with rifles since no fishing vessels are equipped with harpoon guns there. Taking that into consideration, the total rifle quota in Greenland can reach up to 70 minke whales.

In the Greenlandic annual reports to the IWC it is possible to find the official figures for whaling with harpoons in addition to the total catch each year. Clearly the difference must be the number of minke whales killed with rifles. This calculation reveals that the use of rifles in the Greenlandic minke whale catch increased to 44% in 2001 (see also **Table 4**). The 2002 figures are unknown to WWF Denmark at the time of this report.

Table 4: *Use of rifles in Greenlandic Minke whale hunting, 1997-2001*

Year	Total catch reported to the IWC	Number of whales caught with harpoon	Difference (killed with rifles)	Percentage killed with rifles
1997	162	99	63	39%
1998	176	115	61	35%
1999	184	116	68	37%
2000	155	94	61	40%
2001	154	86	68	44%

Sources: IWC Whaling Reports and press releases from the Greenland Homerule

In 2002, the then-incumbent Greenlandic minister for fishery and hunting, Mr Hans Enoksen, participated in the IWC meeting which took place in Japan. Mr. Enoksen is currently the Prime Minister of Greenland in a center-left coalition government. In an interview with the Greenlandic newspaper *Sermitsiaq,* Mr. Enoksen purposed an initiative for a Greenlandic whaling quota of humpback whales to be implemented within five years' time.

The humpback whale, a species that has suffered a serious decline from an estimated 240,000 whales before commercial whaling to a mere global population of approximately 12,000 whales today, is under the complete protection of the IWC.

Yet, as recently as August 2003, two humpback whales were shot with rifles in Greenland. An adult whale and its 9.5 meter long calf were located wounded at sea near Ilulissat in Disco Bay. The calf was wounded and exhausted and was accordingly killed by order from the Homerule. The adult whale was assessed not to be lethally wounded and therefore not killed by the Homerule.

6.1 Recommendations of WWF Denmark

It is recommended that Greenland improves its reporting to the IWC, as it has been found in a number of cases to be insufficient.

With the amount of whaling that takes place in Greenland and the Faeroe Islands, Denmark is the largest whaling nation in the world. In contrast to Norway and Japan who conduct whaling on orca, pilot whale, narwhal, beluga, harbour porpoise, Denmark's use of the minke and fin whales does not violate any international legally binding agreements or conventions. Yet there is great attention paid to the whaling, the reporting, the monitoring, and hunting methods that goes on within Danish territory. Such attention warrants a great deal of care in adhering to all international regulations and agreements in order to maintain the current international support within the IWC for the Greenlandic whaling. As a result of the outstanding incomplete annual reports to the IWC and the apparent inconsistency between real management and promises made, Greenland currently jeopardizes international confidence in Denmark's ability to manage the IWC quota for fin whale and minke whale.

The sources of Greenland's "image problems" are easily identified: 1) the unsustainable whaling of small tooth whales, beluga being the major problem, 2) the numerous incidents involving the illegal whaling of humpback whales, and 3) the use of rifles to kill minke whales of only 5 to 10 tonnes weight.

It is therefore also recommended that Greenland makes a serious effort to reduce the use of rifles on minke whales. Although this is a question of animal welfare which is not normally included in the agenda of WWF, we fear that this problem may damage international support for the IWC approved whaling in Greenland.

7. The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (1971)

Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat

Ratification by Denmark on the 19th of August 1977, entered into effect 19th of December 1977.

The Convention also covers Greenland and the Faeroe Islands.

Protocol to Amend the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat known as the Paris Protocol adopted at the Extraordinary Conference of the Contracting Parties, Paris, France, 2-3 December 1982.

The Paris Protocol covers Denmark, Greenland and the Faeroe Islands.

The "Regina Amendments" to the Convention on Wetlands, 1987, reservation made for Greenland and the Faroe Islands.

Main problems with Greenland's fulfilment of the Ramsar Convention:

- Only an insignificant percentage of the 11 "Ramsar Sites" (Wetlands of International Importance) are protected by conservation regulations to manage human disturbance and ensure sustainable use.
- No management plans have been developed for any of the Greenlandic Ramsar Sites.
- Regardless of negative developments in several Ramsar Sites in Greenland, no proper reporting has been made to the convention secretariat and no serious attempts have been made to address these developments.

The Convention on Wetlands, signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971, is an intergovernmental treaty which provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. There are presently 138 Contracting Parties to the Convention, with 1317 wetland sites, totalling 111 million hectares, designated for inclusion in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance.

Contracting Parties commit themselves to:

- **Designate at least one site** that meets the Ramsar criteria for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance (the *Ramsar List*), and ensure the maintenance of the ecological character of each Ramsar site. Countries are expected to include in the *List* as many wetlands that meet the criteria as possible. Listed sites do not necessarily require protected area status, provided their ecological character is maintained through a wise use management approach;

- **Include wetland conservation within their national land-use planning**, so as to promote the wise use of all wetlands within their territory;
- **Establish nature reserves on wetlands**, and promote training in wetland research and management;
- **Consult with other Parties** about the implementation of the Convention, especially with regard to transfrontier wetlands, shared water systems, shared species, and development projects affecting wetlands.

In 1987 the Greenlandic parliament, the "Landsting", designated 21 wetlands to be included in the Ramsar List (see *table 6* below). A recent report from the Danish National Environmental Institute evaluates the status of the areas, and even identifies further wetlands which fulfil the requirements for designation.

Table 5: *Overview of the current 11 Greenlandic Ramsar Sites, their ornithological status and protection level according to the Danish National Environmental Research Institute (Egevang og Boertmann 2001)*

Locality name (Danish and Greenlandic	**Area and location**	**Status of birds**	**Protection level**
Mudderbugten and Kvandalen (Aqajarua and Sulloesuaq)	224 sqkm on the east side of Disco Island	Breeding geese and king eiders. Large decrease of moulting king eiders due to human disturbance. Probably increasing population of white-fronted goose	The site is without protection. The site has no management plan
Nordfjord and Stordal (Qinnquata Marraa and Kuussuaq)	65 sqkm on the west side of Disco Island	Breeding geese and moulting king eiders	The site is without protection. The site has no management plan
Kuannersuit Kuussuat	52 sqkm at the end of a fiord on Disco Island	Few important bird species	The site is without protection. The site has no management plan
Grønne Ejland (Kitsissunnguit)	69 sqkm rocky archipelago in the southern part of Disco Bay	One of the most diverse bird areas in Greenland. Probably the world's former largest colony of arctic tern (maybe 100,000 pairs in 1950) now decreased to c. 18,000 (2002)	Breeding reserve with no admittance covers 1.8% of the total Ramsar Site. The rest of the site is without protection. The Ramsar site has no management plan
Lersletten (Naternaq)	1840 sqkm inland wetland area south of Disco Bay	Maybe 10% of the Greenlandic white-fronted goose (ssp. *flavirostris*) moult in the	Breeding reserve with no admittance covers 4% of the total Ramsar Site. The rest of the

		area	site is without protection. The site has no management plan
Eqalummiut Nunaat and Nassuttuup Nunaa	5795 sqkm wetlands in West Greenland near Kangerlussuaq	Maybe 6% of the Greenlandic white-fronted goose (ssp. *flavirostris*) moult in the area	A reindeer breeding area in the southern area. No other protection. No management plan
Ikkatoq and archipelogo	449 sqkm shallow fiord area in South Greenland	Important moulting area for red-necked grebe. Breeding area for 1% of the isolated Greenlandic population of white-tailed sea-eagle	The site is without protection. The site has no management plan
Kitsissut Avaliit	45 sqkm of rocky islands off the coast in Southwest Greenland	Largest population of common guillemot in Greenland. Large population of harlequin duck	Breeding reserve with no admittance during summer. No other regulations. Problems with illegal egging and disturbance. No management plans.
Heden/Jameson Land	2524 sqkm tundra at Scoresbysund in East Greenland	Large breeding population of pink-footed goose and barnacle goose in addition to many waders	The site is without protection. The site has no management plan
Hochstetter Forland	1848 sqkm lowland area in East Greenland	One of the most important moulting areas for pink-footed goose (2% of the migrating population)	Totally protected as part of the National Park. Almost no human activity due to remoteness
Kilen	513 sqkm high arctic tundra in North East Greenland	Most important moulting area for brent goose (ssp. *hrota*) in Greenland. Several other high arctic species	Totally protected as part of the National Park. Almost no human activity due to remoteness

The Greenlandic Homerule has, in connection with the proposed Nature Conservation Act, made a regulation that will form the basis for implementation of international conventions and agreements. However, the regulation does not mention which conventions or to what extend they will be implemented.

The act that now has been put forward by the Greenlandic cabinet in multiple versions contains several regulations on establishment of protected areas (the articles 11-16 and 25).

Although the cabinet has put forward drafts of bird regulations during the last two years that both increased and decreased the length of the hunting season, one more bird area will become protected ground during the breeding season (in bold below). In total 13 areas will be designated as bird protection areas where admission is prohibited during the breeding season. Some of the areas are located inside larger Ramsar areas – this has been indicated. The list is:

1) Lion Øer south of Qerqertat (Avanersuaq municipality)
2) Kuup Apparsui / Kap Schackleton (Upernavik municipality)
3) Toqqusaaq (Upernavik municipality)
4) Kingittuarsuk, northwest of Angissoq (Upernavik municipality)
5) Upernaviup apparsui / Sandersons Hope (Upernavik municipality)
6) Kippaku Apparsuit (Upernavik municipality) NEW
7) Salleq (Uummannaq municipality)
8) Assissut / Brændevinsskær at Kronprinsens Ejland (Qeqertarsuaq municipality)
9) Nunatsiaq / Rotten at Hunde Ejland (Aasiaat municipality)
10) Saattuarssuit at Grønne Ejland (Aasiaat municipality) **Part of RAMSAR Site**
11The fjord Tasiussarssuaq near Naternaq at Nordenskjölds Glacier (Kangaatsiaq and Qasigiannguit municipality) **Part of RAMSAR Site**
12) Appat / Ritenbenk (Ilulissat municipality)
13) Ydre Kitsissut (Qaqortoq municipality) **RAMSAR-site**

Extracts from the website of the Ramsar Convention, http://www.ramsar.org, November 2003:

"Contracting Parties commit themselves to:

- **Designate at least one site** that meets the Ramsar criteria for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance (the *Ramsar List*), and ensure the maintenance of the ecological character of each Ramsar site. Countries are expected to include in the *List* as many wetlands that meet the criteria as possible. Listed sites do not necessarily require protected area status, provided their ecological character is maintained through a wise use management approach;

- **Include wetland conservation within their national land-use planning**, so as to promote the wise use of all wetlands within their territory;

- **Establish nature reserves on wetlands**, and promote training in wetland research, management and wardening;

- **Consult with other Parties** about the implementation of the Convention, especially with regard to transfrontier wetlands, shared water systems, shared species, and development projects affecting wetlands.

The 'Wise Use Guidelines' call upon Contracting Parties to:

- **Adopt national wetland policies**, involving a review of their existing legislation and institutional arrangements to deal with wetland matters (either as separate policy instruments or as part of national environmental action plans, national biodiversity strategies, or other national strategic planning);

- **Develop programmes** of wetland inventory, monitoring, research, training, education and public awareness; and

- **Take action at wetland sites**, involving the development of integrated management plans covering every aspect of the wetlands and their relationships with their catchments.

7.1 Recommendations of WWF Denmark

WWF Denmark recommends that Greenland implement the Ramsar Convention without further hesitation in regard to beginning the process of developing management plans, and improve the conservation of the ecosystems of the designated Ramsar Sites.

Since there are no specific obligations in the convention on how to implement the objectives Greenland can decide on the most appropriate method to achieve better protection of ecosystems, flora and fauna within the Ramsar Sites.

Some of the Greenlandic Ramsar Sites are already protected due to their location within the National Park in North East Greenland. It should be noted that human threats to the National Park can be considered insignificant due to the absence of human settlements. Clearly the initiatives for better "wise-use" of the Ramsar Sites should focus on the sites where human pressure is highest. A list making such priority distinguishable is already available in the report *The Greenland Ramsar Sites* (Egevang and Boertmann, 2001) from the National Environmental Research Institute of Denmark (NERI).

Additionally, NERI identifies further localities in Greenland that fulfil the Ramsar criteria for appointment as Ramsar sites. Apparently these areas contain so many birds that they officially qualify as internationally important wetlands. Such areas also need attention.

The NERI report gives highest priority to the following current and potential Ramsar Sites and WWF Denmark recommends that Greenland initiates the appropriate action to improve wise-use of these areas in line with the objectives of the Ramsar Convention:

- Qinnquata Marraa and Kuussuag (international Ramsar no. 386)
- Kitsissunnguit/Grønne Ejland (international Ramsar no. 388)
- Naternaq (international Ramsar no. 389)
- Eqalummiut and Nassutuup Nunaa (international Ramsar no. 390)
- Ikkattoq and archipelago (international Ramsar no.. 391)
- Kitsissut Avaliit/Ydre Kitsissut (international Ramsar no. 392)

- Itsako in Uummannaq municipality (71°45'N, 54°05'W) (*potential new Ramsar site*)
- Umiiarfik in Upernavik municipality (72°05'N, 54°60'W) (*potential new Ramsar site*)
- Qilangaarsuit and archipelago in Nuuk municipality (63°55' N, 51°40'W) (*potential new Ramsar site*)

8. The Agreement on Conservation of Polar Bears (1973)
Agreement on Conservation of Polar Bears, 15th November 1973.

Ratified by Denmark the 25th of January, 1978.

Covers Greenland.

Main problems with Greenland's fulfilment of The Agreement on Conservation of Polar Bears

- The current catch levels are not sustainable according to the assessments of the biologists.
- The current hunting takes place without sufficient knowledge of population status and trends.
- There are great uncertainties on how the current hunting level affects the Greenlandic polar bear population.

The purpose of the agreement is to ensure multilateral co-operation between the Arctic states on conservation and management of polar bears. This is done by exchanging scientific results and management experiences. Participating states are: Canada, Denmark and Greenland, Norway, Russia and USA.

The Greenlandic Ministry for Fishery and Hunting is responsible for national implementation of the agreement as well as all international co-operation concerning polar bears.

The co-ordination of the research activities is made possible by Greenland's participation in the IUCN bear specialist group where researchers from the Greenlandic Institute for Natural Resources retain a seat. The ministry and the professional hunters association KNAPK have observatory status in the group.

The agreement obliges the participating states to:

"…take appropriate action to protect the ecosystems of which polar bears are part … and shall manage polar bear populations in accordance with sound conservation practices based on the best available scientific data" (article II)

The agreement continues in prohibiting the hunting of polar bears with the following exceptions:

"… any contracting party may allow the taking of polar bears … for scientific purposes …wherever polar bears have or might have been subject to taking by traditional means by its nationals…" (article III)

Lastly, the agreement prohibits commercial use of any parts and / or derivatives of polar bears (article II, 2). The agreement makes exception for the trade of parts which originate from traditional hunting.

To what extent Greenland fulfils the objectives of the agreement is questionable when considering the status information provided by Greenlandic biologists (see *table 7*).

Table 6: *State of the polar bear population in Greenland according to "Status 2000"*

	Kane Basin	**Baffin Bay**	**Davis Strait**
Population size	Appr. 200	Appr. 2,200	Appr. 1,400
Annual catch	12	123	57
Population trend	Possibly excessive harvest level Population decline?	Stable or Possibly excessive harvest level	Possibly excessive harvest level Population decline?
Management advise	Reduction of hunting	Reduction of hunting	Reduction of hunting

Similar advice has been given over the years from the IUCN polar bear specialist group.

The current legislation in Greenland on polar bear hunting does not have any quota set to secure a maximum take. The restrictions as they stand are:

1) The hunter must have a professional hunting license (about 1,000 hunters have such a license)
2) Polar bears are protected between 1st of July and 31st of August
3) Juvenile bears under two years of age and females with cubs are protected all year

The current legislation regulating polar bear hunting is from 1994.

Trade of parts and derivatives from polar bears in Greenland can be considered significant. Several types of souvenirs produced from fur or claws are commonly available in tourist shops. A large skull with teeth costs between DKK 3,000 – 6,000, and a complete hide with head, skull and claws prepared for tourist trade often reaches a retail price of DKK 15,000 – 20,000. Commercial trade of hides for fur making earns the hunter maximum DKK 3,500 (highest quality, 1999)[13]. Claws polished and put on necklaces are very common and a popular souvenir and offered at DKK 400 – 600 a piece. Polar bear is on CITES appendix II and export from Greenland requires a CITES export permit.

Locally in North Greenland the hides are used for making boots and trousers which are very useful for dog sledging. The meat is very popular and mainly used for human consumption locally and prior to the year 2000 the meat was also popular at tourist hotels in Greenland (Sandell *et al.*, 2001).

[13] This price is stated in Sandell *et al.* (2001). All prices collected by WWF Denmark in Greenlandic souvenir shops in 2002 and 2003.

Although it seems to contradict the agreement, it may be worthwhile to assess the possibilities for the commercial trophy hunting of polar bears. Trophy hunting in other parts of the world contributes significantly to local economies and provides incentives for local engagement in conservation. The "market price" for a trophy hunt on polar bear is probably significant and income would be provided for hunters, cooks, transport and logistics, and of course the government through the fee collected for licenses. If local communities experienced significant income from strictly regulated trophy hunting of polar bears, incentives for maintaining a healthy local population of polar bears would likely be created. WWF Denmark is aware that such interests have been expressed by the tourist sector in Greenland. Such use of polar bears would presumably also be in line with the more up-to-date intentions of the Convention on Biological Diversity in providing income for the local communities when using the natural resources.

During spring 2002 the Homerule send out a draft regulation for sustainable management of polar bears. The regulation, if adopted by the Cabinet, will make it possible to establish hunting quotas following the advice of biologists and hunters. However, this regulation has not yet been approved by the cabinet (November 2003).

8.1 Recommendations of WWF Denmark

WWF Denmark is concerned that trade of souvenirs manufactured from polar bear parts and derivatives stimulate hunting. However, the current high prices do little to give weight to this concern. Since Greenland does not have the management of CITES in place (see *chapter 5*) there is no assessment of such concern by experts.

Current scientific knowledge on the status of the polar bear population in Greenland is incomplete at best, and current management has not set precautionary quotas or taken into consideration the uncertainty regarding population trends which has been expressed by the biologists at the Greenland Institute for Natural Resources (see *table 7*).

WWF Denmark strongly recommends that:
- Greenland allocates the necessary resources to estimate polar bear populations and trends including the effects of the commercial trade with parts and derivatives, as soon as possible.
- Greenland sets precautionary hunting quotas for polar bears which take in to account the best biological knowledge available, as accords with the agreement.

9. Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna/CAFF, the Arctic Council (1992)

Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna/CAFF is a multilateral forum for cooperation within the framework of the Arctic Council.

The agreement of cooperation between the Arctic states was signed in 1992.

Denmark and Greenland are members of the Arctic Council.

Main problems with Greenland's fulfilment of strategies regarding birds outlined in the CAFF

- The management of the eider and guillemot populations does not maintain sustainability and therefore fails to meet the standard of the management strategies formulated by CAFF
- The protection of breeding, moulting and wintering areas for eiders and guillemots is insufficient and does not ease hunting pressure
- The general remarks and objectives of CAFF on conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity are only partly implemented.

The CAFF programme was established by the Arctic Council to address environmental protection and nature conservation in the Arctic. CAFF is one of four programmes within AEPS, the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy.

In 1991 AEPS was undersigned by the members of the Arctic Council: Canada, Denmark/Greenland, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and USA. In 1992 CAFF was formed at a meeting in Canada.

In the CAFF Strategic Plan 1998-2002, programme activities were focused around five objectives. These objectives were:

- Monitoring of Arctic biodiversity;
- Conservation of Arctic species and their habitats;
- Establishment of protected areas;
- Conservation of nature outside protected areas;
- Integration of conservation objectives and measures in economic sectors of society.

Since its foundation CAFF has also been a forum for the exchange of information and experience among scientists, managers and government officials.

In 1998 the ministers of the AEPS member states responsible for matters of the Arctic agreed on a *Strategic Plan for Conservation of Arctic Biological Diversity.* This strategy contains several objectives which should serve as guidelines not only for cooperation among the member states, but more importantly also for the individual member states' national activities and policies within this field:

Objective 1: *Enhance efforts to monitor Arctic biodiversity, paying particular attention to species, populations, habitats, and ecosystems, which are of greatest ecological, cultural, social, economic or scientific value.*

Objective 2: *Support and implement measures for the conservation of Arctic genetic resources, species, and their habitats.*

Objective 3: *Establish protected areas in the Arctic region where they contribute to the conservation of ecosystems, habitats, and species.*

Objective 4: *Manage activities outside protected areas in order to maintain the ecological integrity of protected areas and to ensure the conservation of biodiversity.*

Objective 5: *Enhance integration of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use objectives into sectoral and cross-sectoral plans and policies. Identify approaches and develop strategies by which information on the conservation of Arctic biological diversity can be made available in an appropriate manner to those making socio-economic decisions.*

Extracts from http://www.caff.is/sidur/uploads/stratplan.htm.pdf

One of the activities accomplished by the various working groups of scientists and managers within the CAFF frame has been to formulate further strategies for sub-areas within CAFF and assess the progress of each member state in following such strategies. One of these working groups is specialised in sea birds: The Circumpolar Seabird Working Group, CSWG.

CSWG has agreed on two strategies especially relevant for Greenland. The strategies cover Brünnich's guillemot and common eider. The objective of these strategies is primarily to guide research and management of the species conducted by the member states.

The following extract from *The International Murre*[14] *Conservation Strategy and Action Plan*[15] illustrates this:

"The goal of this strategy and action plan is: To facilitate circumpolar implementation of initiatives to conserve, protect and restore murre populations in the Arctic. To achieve this goal, thirty-one specific action items are set out in the context of the following objectives:
- to ensure that consumptive use of murres is managed to be sustainable

[14] Murre is the American name used for Guillemot (*Uria* sp.)
[15] http://www.caff.is/sidur/uploads/murres.htm.pdf

- to ensure that non-consumptive use of murres is sustainable and takes place with due consideration for conservation requirements
- to minimize the deleterious effects on murre populations and their habitats from commercial activities and industries in coastal and marine areas, such as shipping and commercial fishing
- to ensure that murre habitat identification, protection and enhancement measures are undertaken to ensure that the quality and quantity of murre habitat is maintained or restored
- to implement communications and education programs to ensure public support for protecting murre populations and their habitats
- to facilitate circumpolar coordination of murre research and monitoring programs,
- to provide the common knowledge base needed to conserve and manage murres and their habitats".

Guillemots in decline

Extract from the website of the Homerule national campaign for sustainability, Tulugaq (http://www.nanoq.gl) on Brünnich's guillemot:

"Decreasing. The breeding population has been halved over the last 70 years. Within that time period 16 breeding colonies have disappeared while the others have declined by 35-50 %. The colonies in Qaanaaq (Thule) municipality and northern Upernavik are considered to be stable. Total breeding population: 350,000 pairs.

Biological management advice: Reduction of hunting pressure. The Greenlandic Institute for Natural Resources estimates that "non-reported catch" is around 50% of the reported catch.

The guillemot is most vulnerable to hunting during spring and summer when the birds are very sensitive to disturbances in the breeding colonies and because the hunting during summer harvests mainly the reproductive adult birds. Therefore hunting during winter is more appropriate.

According to the Greenlandic Institute of Natural Resources it is just as damaging to harvest one adult in North Greenland during the breeding season as harvesting15-20 birds from the wintering population due to the fact that the Greenlandic breeding population is "dissolved" 15-20 times by the numerous foreign birds that arrive to the wintering areas in Southwest Greenland. This effect is even reinforced by additional biological circumstances.

Reported hunting:
Summer hunting: 28,000 – 38,000 (until 31st of May, in Thule municipality until 15th of June)
Winter hunting: 160,000 – 217,000
Total in 2000: 176,942

The *Circumpolar Eider Conservation Strategy and Action Plan*[16] contains very similar objectives although it is much more comprehensive and detailed. In brief, the strategy has in its own words the following objectives:

"The goal of the Strategy is to facilitate circumpolar efforts to conserve, protect and restore eider populations.
To accomplish this goal the Strategy identifies six broad objectives for eider conservation:
- *Ensure that consumptive use of eiders is sustainable.*
- *Encourage non-consumptive uses of eiders that will benefit the economies of local communities.*
- *Minimize adverse effects of commercial activities on eiders.*
- *Protect key habitats to ensure the continued viability of eider populations that depend on them.*
- *Encourage an interest in eider conservation and awareness of the Strategy, and participation in its implementation.*
- *Provide reliable information about eiders needed to implement the Strategy."*

Once there were eiders

Extract from the website of the Homerule national campaign for sustainability, Tulugaq (http://www.nanoq.gl) on Common eider:

"80% decrease in the breeding population during the last 40 years in central and northern West Greenland. 70% of the breeding colonies in Upernavik, Uummannaq and Ilulissat has been abandoned or reduced in numbers compared to 40 – 80 years ago.

It is assumed that eider eggs were collected from not less than 110,000 eider nests in West Greenland 150 years ago. This figure is estimated to be the minimum of the breeding population at that time. Current breeding population in West Greenland: 12,000 – 15,000 pairs."

The official hunting statistic (Piniarneq 2003): 1996: 83.810, 1997: 76.991, 1998: 72.109, 1999: 71.041, 2000: 61.702.

Notes[17]**:**
According to the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources it is estimated that the sustainable harvest level of common eider would approximate 37,000 birds annually. At this level the current breeding population is assessed as able to maintain its numbers.

Approximately 460,000 eiders, mainly from Canada, winter in Greenlandic waters in addition to the 40,000 Greenlandic eiders (breeders and non-breeders).

[16] http://www.caff.is/sidur/uploads/eiderstrategy.htm.pdf

[17] Source: Reference: F. R. Merkel. (submitted manus): Impact of hunting and gillnet fishery on wintering eiders in Nuuk, Southwest Greenland. *Biological Conservation*, 2003.

The facts clearly show the necessity of reducing current hunting levels of guillemots and eiders. In the 1970's several thousand guillemots were killed by being caught in Greenlandic cod trawls, which of course adversely affected the populations. Though this particular threat to the eider and guillemot breeding populations of Greenland is no longer an issue, it has been replaced with today's threat of excessive hunting.

Early in 2001 the acting Greenlandic Cabinet decided to improve protection of bird by significantly reducing the duration of the bird hunting seasons (see *table 8*). However all subsequent Cabinet administrations have worked towards prolonging the hunting seasons again. The current bird regulation from 2001 replaced regulations from 1989. The 2001 regulation was approved by the Cabinet after extensive negotiations between hunters, green NGOs, scientists, managers and game wardens. However, after the approval of the regulation the hunters protested fiercely and cited administrative mistakes involving the Greenlandic *Ombudsmand* to support their case.

The 2001 Cabinet and the subsequent Cabinets then drafted various bird legislations where the hunting season were re-extended. For example one of the drafts submitted for public hearing during summer 2003 suggested extending the hunting season in Thule on guillemots and eiders a full two weeks longer than the season set by regulations from 1989 (see *table 8*).

To circumvent the effects of the unpopular 2001 regulation, as soon as early 2002 the Cabinet decided to implement an exemption from the hunting regulations protecting, e.g., the eider and guillemots from the spring hunt by extending the hunting season until 30th of April:

Press release dated 10th of April 2002 from the Greenlandic Ministry of Environment and Nature:

"The Cabinet decided the following in its meeting today:
- To permit hunting on kittiwakes in the South before 30th of April. The birds may be sold.
- To permit a limited catch for personal consumption in the South of common eider and king eider before the 30th of April. A week quota of 5 birds is set.
- To permit hunting on kittiwakes in the North and on the east coast before 30th of April. The birds may be sold.
- To permit a limited catch for personal consumption in the North and on the east coast of common eider and king eider before the 30th of April. A week quota of 5 birds is set.
- To permit hunting on kittiwakes in Qaanaaq [Thule] before 15th of June. The birds may be sold.
- To permit a limited catch for personal consumption in Qaanaaq [Thule] of common eider and king eider before the 30th of April. A week quota of 5 birds is set.

However on 30th of October 2003 the Cabinet turned around and distributed a draft of bird legislation with much more bird-friendly regulations than what had been proposed

during the previous two years. In *table 8* these new regulations are listed together with the current legislation and former regulations.

Table 7: *Development in bird hunting seasons, 1989-2003*
A: The region from Kap Farvel to the northern border of Kangaatsiaq municipality
B: The region north of Kangaatsiaq municipality to Qaanaaq (Thule) municipality's southern border
C: Qaanaaq (Thule) municipality

	Hunting season in the 1989 regulation	*Hunting season in the 2001 regulation* ***(current)***	*Hunting season in the draft in public hearing 4.6-15.07.03*	*Hunting season in the draft submitted October 2003*
Great cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*	**1. Oct. – 31. March**	**1. Oct. – 31. March**	**1. Oct. – 31. March**	**1. Sept. – 31. March**
Great northern diver *Gavia immer*	**16. Aug. – 31. May**	**1. Sept. – 31. Dec.**	**1. Sept. – 31. Dec.**	**1. Sept. – 31. Dec.**
Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*	**16. Aug. – 31. May**	**1. Sept. - 30. April**	**1. Sept. - 31. May**	**1. Sept. - 31. May**
White-fronted goose *Anser albifrons*	**16. Aug. – 30. April**	**1. Sept. – 15. Oct.**	**1. Sept. – 15. Oct.**	**1. Sept. – 15. Oct.**
Canada goose *Branta Canadensis*	**Totally protected**	**Totally protected**	**1. Sept. – 15. Oct.**	**1. Sept. – 15. Ot.**
Pink-footed goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*	**16. Aug. – 30. April**	**1. Sept. – 30. April**	**1. Sept. – 30. April**	**1. Sept. – 30. April**
Barnacle goose *Branta leucopsis*	**16. Aug. – 30. April**	**1. Sept. – 30. April**	**1. Sept. – 30. April**	**1. Sept. – 30. April**
Common eider *Somateria mollissima*	**1. Oct. – 31. May** (Except: North of Kangaatsiaq municipality: **16. Aug – 31. May**)	**15. Oct. – 15. Febr.**	**A. 15. Oct. - 30. April** **B. 15. Oct – 31. May** **C. 15. Ot. – 15. June** Bag limit **15. Oct. – 15. Feb**: Professional hunters: 30 birds / Leisure hunters: 10 birds, but 5 birds from **16. Febr.**	**15. Oct. – 28/29. Febr.** In Qaanaaq and Ittoqqortoormiit bag limits from **1. March – 15. June/31. May**

King eider *Somateria spectabilis*	**16. Aug. – 31. May**	**15. Oct. – 15. Febr.**	**A. 15. Oct. - 30. April** **B. 15. Oct – 31. May** **C. 15. Oct. – 15. June** Bag limit **15. Okt. – 15. Feb**: Professional hunters: 30 birds / Leisure hunters: 10 birds, but 5 birds from **16. Febr.**	**15. Oct. – 28/29. Febr.** In Qaanaaq and Ittoqqortoormiit bag limits from **1. March – 15. June/31. May**
Long-tailed duck *Clangula hyemalis*	**16. Aug. – 31. May**	**15. Oct. – 15. Febr.**	**15. Oct. – 15. Febr.**	**1. Sept. – 28/29. Febr.**
Mallard *Anas plathyrhynchos*	**16. Aug. – 31. May**	**1. Sept. – 15. Febr.**	**1. Sept. – 15. Febr.**	**1. Sept. – 28/29. Febr.**
Iceland gull *Larus glaucoides*	**16. Aug. – 31. May**	**1. Sept. – 30. April**	**1. Sept. – 30. April**	**1. Sept. – 30. April**
Glaucous gull *Larus hyperboreus*	**16. Aug. – 31. May.** (Except: All year in Illoqqor-toormiut and Thule)	**1. Sept. – 30. April**	**1. Sept. – 30. April**	**1. Sept. – 30. April**
Great black-backed gull *Larus marinus*	**16. Aug. – 31. May**	**1. Sept. – 30. April**	**1. Sept. – 30. April**	**1. Sept. – 30. April**
Black-legged kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*	**16. Aug. – 31. May**	**1. Sept. – 15. Febr.**	**A. 1. Sept. – 30. April** **B. 1. Sept. – 31. May** **C. 1. Sept. – 15. June**	**1. Sept. – 28/29. Febr.**
Brünnich's guillemot *Uria lomvia*	**16. Oct. – 14. March** (Except: **1. Sept. – 31. May** north of Kangaatsiaq; and all year hunt in Illoqqortoor-miut and Thule)	**1. Sept. – 15. Febr.** (Except: **15. Oct. – 15. Febr**. in SW Greenland; and **1. Sept. – 15. June** in Thule)	**A. 15. Oct. - 15. Febr.** **B. 1. Sept. - 31. May** **C. 1. Sept. - 15. June** Bag limit **15. Oct. – 15. Febr.**:	**A. 15. Oct. – 28/29. Febr. B and C. 1. Sept. – 28/29. Febr.** In Qaanaaq and Ittoqqortoormiit bag limits from **1. March –**

			Professional hunters: 30 birds / Leisure hunters: 10 birds, but 5 birds from **16. Febr.**	**15. June/31. May**
Common guillemot *Uria aalge*	**16. Oct. – 14. March** (Except: **1. Sept. – 31. May** north of Kangaatsiaq; and all year hunt in Illoqqortoor-miut and Thule)	**1. Sept. – 15. Febr.** (Except**: 15. Oct. – 15. Febr**. in SW Greenland; and **1. Sept. – 15. June** in Thule)	**A. 15. Oct. – 5. Febr.** **B. 1. Sept. – 31. May** **C. 1. Sept. – 15. June** Bag limit **15. Oct. – 15. Feb**: Professional hunters: 30 birds / Leisure hunters: 10 birds, but 5 birds from **16. Febr.**	**A. 15. Oct. – 28/29. Febr. B and C. 1. Sept. – 28/29. Febr.** In Qaanaaq and Ittoqqortoormiit bag limits from **1. March – 15. June/31. May**
Little Auk *Alle alle*	**16. Aug. – 31. May** All year in Illoqqortoormiut and Thule	**1. Sept. – 30. April** (Except **1. Sept. – 15. June** in Illoqqortoor-miut and Thule)	**1. Sept. – 30. April** All year in Illoqqortoor-miut and Thule	**1. Sept. – 30. April** All year in Illoqqortoor-miut and Thule
Black guillemot *Cepphus grylle*	**16. Aug. – 31. May**	**1. Sept. – 15. Febr.**	**1. Sept. – 15. Febr.**	**1. Sept. – 28/29. Febr.**
Rock ptarmigan *Lagopus mutus*	**16. Aug. – 31. May**	**1. Sept. – 30. April**	**1. Sept. – 30. April**	**1. Sept. – 30. April**
Raven *Corvus corax*	**1. July – 31. March** (Except: All year in Illoqqor-toormiut and Thule)	**15. august – 28/29. februar**	**15. august – 28/29. februar**	**1. september – 28/29. februar**

Source: Greenland Ministry of Environment and Nature, 30th of October, 2003

Last news:
A new Greenlandic bird protection order entered into force 15th of January, 2004

On the 15th of January – after the finalisation of this report – the Greenlandic Premier Mr. Hans Enoksen at last signed the new bird protection legislation. This new legislation is the first serious Greenlandic attempt made in many years to ensure an

ecologically sustainable wildlife harvest. The legislation is a very important step and will be followed closely by WWF Denmark.

However, the job is not done by new legislation alone; it has only begun. The Homerule, the wildlife inspectors and the police now face the challenge to explain, implement, and enforce the new regulations. A crucial element of this process is engaging focus on the issues that remain unresolved by the legislation:

• **The Ramsar Convention which** requires improved protection of 11 internationally important bird areas has not yet entered into force in Greenland. In December 2003 the Greenlandic parliament passed a new nature conservation act, following several years of international critique. One of the reasons cited for not having implemented international conventions such as Ramsar earlier was the lack of a national legal structure. The nature conservation act was meant to fill out this very gap. However, the new bird legislation passed less than a month and a half later leaves quite a lot to be desired, as it fails to extend improved protection to even the most threatened Ramsar areas.

• The Greenlandic population is still exposed to serious risk of lead poisoning from the lead shot used in the hunting of birds. In fact the Homerule government has removed the ban against lead shots from 1st of January, 2005 which was included in the draft legislation submitted for public hearing on 4th of June, 2003. No reason for removing this ban was stated prior to the premier's approval of the new bird protection legislation.

• The National Environmental Research Institute of Denmark (NERI) has published several reports on the lead poisoning of Greenlandic seabirds. In a recent report (2002) NERI writes: "*A calculation of the human lead intake from the diet shows that birds killed with lead shot is a significant lead source, probably the most important single source, of lead in the diet of Greenland population. The highest exposure must be expected in Southwest Greenland during winter, when most seabirds are killed on their wintering grounds. One single eider meal will result in a mean lead intake, which is almost 6 times higher than FAO/WHO's value for "tolerable lead intake" on a daily basis.*" (NERI Technical Report no. 408, http://www.dmu.dk)

Lead is transferred to babies in breast milk and excessive lead intake may cause learning disabilities.

• In 2001, professional hunters were given the legal permission to collect and sell eggs from two species of gulls. This was in order to grant the hunters the possibility of earning additional income. The Homerule Government has not assessed whether this possibility gives any significant income that may justify such disturbance of bird colonies.

• Greenland still needs to introduce a system to improve the skills of the hunters. Currently any resident of Greenland can obtain a hunting license without proving any level of knowledge of wildlife, understanding of hunting regulations, or aptitude with weapons. Today the only requirement for obtaining a hunting license is to pay DKK 50

(USD c. 7.50) to the municipality. For example, knowledge about shooting ranges is apparently lacking and on-shooting of seabirds seems to be a significant problem, as documented by a recent report from Greenlandic biologists which shows that approximately one third of the common eiders in the Nuuk Fjord found dead of unnatural causes had been killed with lead shot.

9.1 Recommendations of WWF Denmark

A few days after this report was finalised WWF Denmark was informed that the Homerule submitted a new draft of bird protection regulation. The draft was send to the Hunting Council. The Hunting Council is the minister's advisory body made up of members who represent the hunting associations, the municipalities, scientists, etc. (Note: No conservation NGOs are represented in the Hunting Council). The hunting periods were now much more in line with the biologists' advice (see right column in *table 8* above). The Hunting Council issued a statement after having read the draft; a statement which did not support the proposed changes to the hunting seasons:

> *"A number of the members of the Hunting Council had many critical comments to the regulations of the draft [bird regulation] on hunting seasons, the quotas and the regional divisions where several of the members found the season too short, the quotas for guillemots and eiders too small, and the regions inappropriate. (…) So, the Council does not agree on the draft (…)."*
>
> Extract from press release from the Homerule dated 31st of October, 2003 (http://www.nanoq.gl)

WWF Denmark supports the current bird protection legislation in place (the 2001 regulation) that respects no hunting during the pre-breeding and breeding seasons. However, if it is to be cancelled, the best alternative would be the last draft submitted in October 2003 to the Hunting Council.

The work doesn't end with this, however. Greenland still fails to fulfil many of the international obligations and strategies in relation to sustainable use and protection of birds. As mentioned in *chapter 7,* the Ramsar Convention is far from totally implemented, and as documented in this chapter, Greenland is also behind when it comes to implementation of the CAFF strategies. WWF does not expect Greenland to accomplish these objectives all at once, but the process must be initiated without further hesitation and thereafter followed by actual implementation and enforcement.

WWF Denmark recommends that Greenland increase the number of bird sanctuaries significantly, e.g., including "no-hunting reserves" to provide migratory birds some protection against disturbances and hunters. Such reserves seem to be necessary near large settlements.

10. North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission/NAMMCO (1992)

Commission with recommendative functions concerning the management of marine mammals.

Greenland and the Faroe Islands have been members of the Commission since its foundation April 1992.

Main problems with Greenland's fulfilment of the recommendations made by NAMMCO

- Greenland has not yet reduced the hunting level on beluga and narwhal, even though NAMMCO has recommended this on several occasions (e.g., 1996, 2002 and 2003).
- Greenland has ignored NAMMCO's recommendation in 1995 to reduce the hunting pressure on walrus.

NAMMCO is a regional multi-lateral agreement that focus on management of marine mammals in the North Atlantic. The members of the agreement, or the commission, are: Greenland, the Faroe Islands, Norway and Iceland, e.g., all whaling nations in the North Atlantic.

NAMMCO is made up of the following groups: the Council, the Management Committee, the Scientific Committee and the Secretariat (in Norway) in addition to a number of technical working groups. The working groups ensure exchange of management information and research results on whales, seals and walrus. The science committee and working groups also assess population data and trends and issue recommendations for management. These recommendations do not include large whales in accordance with a uniform agreement among the member states.

The NAMMCO-agreement does not substitute the member state's obligations to other international agreements or conventions such as IWC.

The Greenlandic delegations participating in the NAMMCO meetings very often have many delegates indicating the Homerule's high regard for NAMMCO.

The council and the management committee may ask the scientific committee and working groups specific questions and during the last years a large amount of NAMMCO's attention has been directed towards the state of the Greenlandic beluga population. In 1999 the scientists were asked: *"How many belugas may be caught in West Greenland without compromising the wild population"* [18].

In June 2000 NAMMCO submitted its latest assessment of the beluga whale population in West Greenland. The main results were:

[18] Rydahl & Heide-Jørgensen, 2002

- Aerial counts showed that the population had decreased by 60% from 1982 to 2000,

- The present hunting pressure is several times higher than what the population can tolerate,

- If the present hunting level of 500-700 belugas annually continues it is very likely that the West Greenlandic population will be extinct within 20 years,

- If the present population decrease is to be stopped and the population stabilised the annual hunting level must be decreased to a maximum of 100 belugas annually.

In 2001 the scientific committee of NAMMCO also recommended that the hunting level should be reduced significantly if the population is to have any chance of regeneration. The committee said that delays in reduction of the hunting pressure to 100 whales annually will cause further delay in the regeneration of the population of belugas in West Greenland.

However, Greenland does not seem prepared to follow the recommendations of NAMMCO. A new regulation for beluga whale management has been proposed by several Greenlandic cabinets over the past few years but nothing has yet been approved. The director of the Greenlandic Ministry of Fishery and Hunting announced to the Greenlandic press in April 2003 that a beluga quota would be set in October 2003 which was expected to be set at 400 belugas annually. As of now, March 2004, such a quota has still not been set.

Greenland must protect the walrus

"While recognizing the over all priority of further work to clarify and confirm the delineation and abundance of walrus stocks in the North Atlantic area, the Management Committee recommends Greenland to take appropriate steps to arrest the decline of walrus along its west coast".

Extract from the NAMMCO Annual Report 1995

The beluga whale will be extinct in 20 years

"In 2000 the Scientific Committee concluded that the West Greenland beluga stock is substantially depleted and that the present harvest levels are several times the sustainable yield, and, if continued, will likely lead to stock extinction within 20 years.
(…)
Landed catches in the 1990s are not sustainable, and are the reason for the continuing decline. The models all estimate a sustainable harvest around 100, and certainly not more than 150.
(…)

The Council reiterated its continued deep concern over the depleted status of the Beluga off West Greenland…"

Extracts from the NAMMCO Annual Report 2001

10.1 Recommendations of WWF Denmark

WWF Denmark strongly recommends that the Greenlandic cabinet without further hesitation decrease the hunting of belugas to maximum 100 whales annually in accordance with the recommendations of NAMMCO.

The scientific recommendation from NAMMCO regarding the beluga whale is the result of several years of research. The field work has been extensive and the population models have not been called into question by any experts. The need for reduction of the whaling on belugas is extremely urgent and if Greenland continues to ignore the very specific NAMMCO recommendation there is great risk of the extinction of beluga among the West Greenlandic species. Such backward policy is not only in direct contradiction to the objectives of NAMMCO but also in violation of many other international conventions, agreements and strategies.

WWF also strongly recommends that Greenland without further hesitation decrease the catch of walrus, which currently exceeds the carrying capacity of the population, by a significant amount.

Greenland has ignored the concerns of NAMMCO regarding the continuous decline of Greenlandic walrus population for 8-9 years by now. Action is urgently needed. The current unsustainable hunting level and the ongoing commercial trade of trophies is very likely to constitute a violation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and CITES.

Lastly, WWF Denmark strongly recommends that the narwhal becomes prioritised for research and management in Greenland.

Current knowledge also strongly indicates an excessive harvest of the narwhal population in Greenland. Precautionary hunting quotas must be set until better scientific knowledge is available on how populations are affected by the Greenlandic hunt.

11. Canada/Greenland Joint Commission on Conservation and Management of Narwhal and Beluga/JCNB (1989)

Bilateral agreement of cooperation between Canada and Greenland with advisory functions concerning management of narwhal and beluga.

Established in 1989.

Greenlandic membership.

Main problem with Greenland's fulfilment of the recommendations made by JNCB

- Greenland has not yet reduced the hunting level on beluga as recommended.

The Joint Commission for the Conservation and Management of Narwhal and Beluga (JCCM), also known as The Joint Commission on Narwhal and Beluga (JCNB), is a bilateral agreement of cooperation between Canada and Greenland on the management of narwhal and beluga and on research of the shared populations.

The commission submits recommendations about the management of the two small whale species covered by the agreement based on the results from the scientific sub-committee.

As with NAMMCO the JNCB is not legally binding but plays an important advisory role.

The Greenlandic hunters association KNAPK enjoys an observatory privilege in the meetings of the commission and hunters from Greenland and Canada are often invited to give presentations at various JNCB meetings. A whale scientist of the Greenlandic Institute of Natural Resources holds the position of chair of the JNCB scientific working group.

The attention of the committee has been on the state of the belugas for several years. A serious decline in the West Greenlandic population led in 1997 the commission to recommend a significant reduction of the hunting (Anonymous, 1996).

11.1 Recommendations of WWF Denmark

WWF Denmark recommends that Greenland follows the recommendation of JNCB as soon as possible. Otherwise the Greenlandic participation in the committee seems superfluous.

12. World Conservation Union, IUCN

The international nature conservation organisation, World Conservation Union, was established in 1948.

Denmark and the over-sea territories of Greenland as well as the Faeroe Islands participate together with numerous other governments and authorities. The official Danish representative is the National Forest and Nature Agency.

Greenlandic authorities have participated since 1988 in the IUCN congresses and sub-committees.

Greenland has no separate membership of IUCN.

Main problems with Greenland's participation in IUCN

- The common IUCN objectives concerning, e.g., sustainable use and management of the living resources seem not to be respected by the Greenlandic government.
- The categories and standards defined by IUCN, e.g., the red list categories, are ignored by the Greenlandic government.
- Greenland seems to participate in the IUCN for the sake of appearances while simultaneously neglecting the issue of national implementation of IUCN objectives.

IUCN is an organisation with a large number of members which fall into very different categories: countries, government agencies, international and national NGOs, research institutions, etc. In March 2000, 76 states, 111 government organisations, 36 international NGOs and 720 national NGOs were members. In addition to those numbers, more than 10,000 scientists take part in the extensive network of working groups and committees, etc.

The objective of IUCN is to promote the sustainable use of nature and the conservation of threatened species. IUCN is an international organisation which holds nature conservation as its primary objective.

IUCN functions as an independent organisation wherein decisions are made by the general assembly. The recommendations, standards and strategies issued by the organisation are not legally binding for its members.

Over the years IUCN has been highly involved in the creation of several major ecologically focussed international agreements and conventions, e.g., CITES and the Ramsar Convention. IUCN has also been the driving force behind the principle of sustainability in nature conservation, e.g., in the "World Conservation Strategy" from 1980 which resulted in a number of strategies regarding conservation and use of natural resources. In 1992 this was supplemented by, e.g., two very important strategies: "Caring for the Earth" and "The Global Biodiversity Strategy". All three strategies evolved through close cooperation between IUCN, WWF and United Nation's Environmental Programme, UNEP.

IUCN has established a number of sub-committees that focus on certain species, species groups, habitats, and geographic or climatic regions.

Greenland is represented in[19] Commission on Environmental Strategy and Planning (CESP) and the Species Survival Commission (SSC). Greenland is also represented in a number of the IUCN working groups. The recently established Tack Force on Indigenous People of IUCN is expected to accept Greenland as a member.

In 2001 an external consultant conducted an analysis on behalf of the Homerule Ministry of Environment and Nature which investigated Greenland's membership of IUCN, including how its work on IUCN initiatives had progressed, how they had been implemented in Greenland up to present day, and to what extent Greenland had benefited from membership of the organisation. WWF Denmark was granted access to this analysis as part of the preparation of the present report after referring to the Greenlandic Act of Transparency.

The report shows that Greenland has invested a lot of resources in the effort to get IUCN to include the need of aboriginals and the use of biological resources in strategies and programmes, yet Greenland has almost completely avoided incorporating any IUCN strategy or classification intoit's own nature management. The report says, e.g.:

> *"Apparently it seems like Greenland until now has "forgotten" to use the standards that are set by the organisation"*.
>
> Extract from the report "IUCN and Greenland" (Christensen, 2001)

It is not clear in the report which "standards" are being referred to specifically, but WWF assumes that one example could be the IUCN red list categories that are normally used in national red lists for endangered species (see also *chapter 4*).

The external consultant hired by the Homerule was given access to internal files, summaries and reports, and concludes from these in his report that Greenland's primary purpose of membership within the IUCN has been to gain the acceptance of Greenlandic conditions and suggestions from other members of the organisation:

> *"The debriefing reports and notes submitted to the cabinet from [officials who participated in IUCN's] general assemblies only account for the results reached at the meetings. Not in any case is it discussed how Greenland may/should work internally to implement these or any other of the [IUCN] standards. This is a paradox when it is recalled that Greenland's effort clearly reflects the expectation that other member states implement the standards and recommendations that Greenland had supported"*.
>
> Extract from the report "IUCN and Greenland" (Christensen, 2001)

[19] Christensen, 2001

This clear-cut internal report continues:

> *"It is strongly recommended (…) that:*
>
> *- Greenland as soon as possible begins to implement IUCN standard internally. This is considered to be a condition to maintain to be trustworthy in the eyes of the international community,*
> *- Greenland in the future uses the Convention of Biological Diversity as a source of inspiration to the same extent as IUCN."*
>
> Extract from the report "IUCN and Greenland" (Christensen, 2001)

12.1 Recommendations of WWF Denmark

WWF Denmark also recommends that Greenland begins to implement the standards of IUCN as well as initiate work to meet IUCN's objectives in the national management of nature and wildlife.

Such changes in the management of Greenlandic nature and wildlife will bring it much closer to sustainability than the level today. Preparation of management plans for species and habitats will be some of the work, which at minimum requires a red list in accordance with IUCN classifications.

13. UNESCO World Heritage Convention (1979)

Denmark entered UNESCO World Heritage Convention in 1979.

Covers Greenland and the Faroe Islands.

Denmark has appointed three world heritage sites that have received the recognition of UNESCO. Accordance with the convention demands strict protection of the sites.

Greenland has not yet had any world heritage site appointed, but in February 2003 it submitted an application nominating the Ilulissat Ice Fjord for inclusion on the list of world heritage sites. Ilulissat Ice Fiord is located in Disco Bay and includes the most active glacier in the northern hemisphere.

If UNESCO approves the ice fjord as a world heritage site at a meeting in 2004, the unique natural occurrence must receive special protection against various threats, including pollution and destruction of ecosystem.

Apparently Greenland stands a very good chance in succeeding with appointment of the fiord to UNESCO's list. A UNESCO official has already inspected the area, according to a press release from the Danish Ministry of Culture:

> *"…then a few weeks ago a representative from IUCN who handles inspections on behalf of UNESCO arrived. It was the Canadian biologist Jim Thorsell who is considered to be one of the most critical experts. He has evaluated more than 107 world heritage sites and looked though more than 1000 nomination documents. But he did not have much critical to say about the Greenlandic project. Jim Thorsell found on the contrary that the Greenlandic documents were among the best he had ever seen. Jim Thorsell concluded his inspection with the words: You have a very strong case."*
>
> Extracts from the homepage of the Ministry of Culture, http://www.kuas.dk

If Ilulissat Ice Fiord is appointed a world heritage site it will probably be of major significance to tourism for the area.

With economic support from the Danish Cooperation for Environment in the Arctic, DANCEA, Greenland has prepared and submitted an application (Mikkelsen & Ingerslev, 2002) for having the site appointed. An appendix to the application is a management plan for the area. This management plan describes how, e.g., tourist and hunting cabins will be constructed and operated. In connection with the tourist cabins, the travel agents will be instructed to remove all garbage and litter.

13.1 Recommendations of WWF Denmark

WWF Denmark does not have any specific remarks or recommendation to the convention since it has not yet been implemented in Greenland due to the current

absence of a world heritage site. It is therefore too early to comment on the implementation.

However it will be important to plan and operate human activities for the site carefully in order to avoid conflict with the objectives of the convention. The placement of the tourist and hunting cabins should receive special attention.

Increased human activity resulting from the construction of new cabins for tourism and hunting may disturb wildlife and vegetation, along with increased risk of littering and pollution of the area.

14. References

Anonymous (1996): Report from the political subcommittee on conservation and environment of the Homerule Parliament, 27th October 1996, EM1996/65.

Christensen, T. (2001): IUCN og Grønland: En analyse med henblik på den grønlandske deltagelse. Intern rapport. Grønlands Hjemmestyre, Direktoratet for Miljø og Natur. 15. marts 2001.

Egevang, C. og D. Boertmann (2001): The Greenland Ramsar sites. A status report. NERI Technical Report no. 346. Danmarks Miljøundersøgelser, Roskilde.

Grønlands Naturinstitut (2000): Status 2000 – en biologisk oversigt over de vigtigste ressourcer i Grønland.

Mikkelsen, N. og T. Ingerslev (ed.)(2002): Nominations of Ilulissat Icefiord for inclusion in the World Heritage List. Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland, GEUS. 136 sider. København.

Nordisk ministerråd (1999): Nordisk handlingsplan for natur- og kulturmindebeskyttelse i Arktis – Grønland, Island og Svalbard. Nord 1999:25. 103 sider. København.

Nordisk ministerråd (2001): Det nordiske miljøhandlingsprogram, 2001-2004. TemaNord 2001: 504. 185 sider. København.

Rydahl, K. og M.P. Heide-Jørgensen (2001): Hvidbog om hvidhvaler – rapport til fangerne i Grønland om den videnskabelige viden om hvidhvaler. Teknisk rapport nr. 35. Grønlands Naturinstitut, Nuuk.

Sandell, H.T, B. Sandell, E.W. Born, R. Dietz and C. Sonne-Hansen (2001): Isbjørne i Østgrønland. En interviewundersøgelse om forekomst og fangst, 1999. Teknisk Rapport no. 40. Pinngortitaleriffik, Grønlands Naturinstitut. Nuuk.

WCMC (1996): Assessing biodiversity. Status and Sustainability. WCMC Biodiversity Series, no 5.