

Report on whaling in the Faroe Islands by Birgith Sloth

Background

A study visit to Faroe Islands was undertaken 4th to 11th July 2009. The **team** consisted of Birgith Sloth, Consultant to Fondation Franz Weber (FFW) and Liselotte Jensen, OceanCare.

The **objective** of the visit was to collect as much information as possible related to pilot whales and pilot whaling in the Faroe Islands, including looking into the context of the whaling in the 21st century and in particular in the toxic risk related to consumption of meat.

The **method** for collecting information:

- 15 out of 23 places where pilot whales used to be landed were visited, and the team documented these as well as other relevant economic activities in that area;
- museums were visited including the Natural History Museum in Torshavn, which has an in depth exhibit about pilot whales and pilot whaling;
- bookshops were visited to collect information of and copies of books etc related to the topic of interest incl. cooking books covering whale meals;
- Information was collected related to legislation;
- speaking to as many local people as possible getting their confidence and then asking questions related to pilot whaling, their knowledge of toxic risks etc. The team did not at any time disclose their objective of visiting.

The team did not see any whaling during the visit.

The consultant after the visit collected further information and based on that, the information in this report has been compiled, analysed and commented.

Biological data related to Long-finned Pilot Whales (*Globicephala melas*)

Males on average grow to 4,94 to 5,19 m and weigh 1.275 kg (maximum seen 2.320 kg or more) while females grow to just around 3,78 m and weigh 600 kg (maximum seen 1.000 kg). Males on average live 46 years and females 59 years.

Males can breed when 14 to 16 years old, while females start at 8.7 years of age. Mating season is April to May and again July to August.

When born the pilot whale is on average 1,78 m long and weigh 75 kg. Pregnancy is 12 months and suckling period is 3,4 year. A female gives birth every 5,1 year. Due to length of pregnancy and the mating season given above it can be concluded that the breeding season is April to May and again July to August.

In the publication “Færøernes Grindfangst” by Dorete Bloch, Færoya Natturugripasavn 2007, it is noted that the dates with the highest number of catches during the period 1584-2007 are 28th July to 26th August where on all the dates 20 to 25 catches took place over this period of the year. Hunting in other words mainly takes place during the breeding and mating season.

In other places of the world it is well known and documented that whales come to shallow and calm waters to breed and mate. Based on the above it is likely that the pilot whales come to the bays in Faroe Islands for exactly that purpose.

Abundance and status

Long-finned Pilot Whales are found in the North Atlantic north of a line from Mediterranean/North West Africa to Cape Hattaras, North Carolina, US in the east. The estimate for the whole North Atlantic is 800.000.

North East Atlantic Long-finned Pilot Whales looks clearly different from those found in the North West Atlantic (along the coast of US, Canada and New Foundland) and an ICES¹ Pilot Whale study group, Cambridge April 1996 (ICES:CM 1996/A:6:p.3) decided to divide the Atlantic population into two distinct subpopulations, where the Irming Sea and the Mid-Atlantic Ridge serves as border line between the two.

The average size of a school of pilot whales during 1584 to 2007 has a peak of 150 individuals in April and May and a new distinct peak of a little more than 150 again in July to August. The peaks coincide with the mating season and the time where females give birth. It is according to the NAMMCO² report on Status of the Long-finned Pilot Whales in the North Atlantic also during this season that the squids, which the pilot whales eat, come near to the coast.

In the report from the NAMMCO Management Committee Meeting for Cetaceans held September 2008 in Sisimiut, Greenland, the chapter on Long-finned Pilot Whales contains interesting information. It is noted that the latest full assessment was undertaken in 1996 and that since then it has not been possible for the Faroe Islands to follow up on all the research recommendations nor implement a full monitoring program. “There has been decreasing abundance estimates since 1987/89 (in 1995 and 2002), although these need qualification as the survey areas have been smaller and not strictly comparable”. The meeting agreed on a monitoring plan, and the Chair of the NAMMCO

¹ International Council for the Exploration of the Seas

² North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission

Scientific Committee emphasizing that the Commission requests in the monitoring plan were a priority. The representatives from the Faroe Islands in reply “pointed out that limited human and financial resources in the Faroe Islands do not allow for such a comprehensive undertaking on the same large scale (as in 1986 and 1987) at regular intervals. A focused 3-year program would, however be given serious consideration.” The report also refers to the pollution problem: “It was also noted that it was important to continue the ongoing monitoring of pollutants in pilot whales, since pilot whales caught in the Faroe Islands are one of very few species or stocks of cetaceans with long history of contaminant sampling, and such a study was supportive of the NAMMCO focus on environmental issues.”

In its Red List of Threatened Species IUCN³ lists the Long-finned Whales with "Data Deficient" status according to its 2008 assessment. In a previous assessment in 1996 the organization listed the species in the "Lower Risk/least concern" category. However, the IUCN also says that with an estimated subpopulation size of 778.000 in the eastern North Atlantic and approximately 100.000 around the Faroe Islands, the Faroese catches of up to 850 per year are probably sustainable.

Animal welfare

19 hunts have been studied from 1995 to 2000. With the old hook (which is supposed to cause pain, as it causes physical damages) the fixing time on average was 27,9 seconds and after that the killing with old knife additional 39,2 seconds.

Then the new hook was introduced, and the use adopted in the Executive Order no. 46 from 8 April 1998. This hook is called the blunt hook or blowhole hook and was tested out from 1993. This hook does not cause physical damages and thereby is considered to not cause any pain. Therefore the Faroe Islands authorities started to consider the killing time to be the time it takes to use the knife and kill the animal, which as mentioned is on average 39,2 seconds.

A new knife called the spinal lance has been introduced but is still only in the testing phase. This tool looks like an arrow and is used to cut the spinal cord. According to Dorete Bloch in her book "The pilot whales and the Faroese pilot whaling" (in Danish) published in 2007 Dorete writes: "with the new knife the time of killing is reduced to 2 to 3 seconds⁴.

The taking of 188 pilot whales at Hvalvik in May 2009 was reported to start at 9 in the morning and finish at noon.

According to Joan Pauli Joensen in the book “Pilot Whaling in the Faroe Islands“ in a recent biological study it is reported that of 40 whales hunts over a two-year period, the shortest kill took place on the sandy beach of Leynar and lasted eight minutes for 136 whales. The longest was one in Vestmanna, when 118 whales were killed in two hours and thirty minutes. The average killing time for the 40 whale hunts was 27.7 minutes.

³ International Union for Conservation of Nature

⁴ Dorete Bloch in the book ”The Pilot Whale and the Faroese Pilot Whaling”

The Faroese view that killing time is only from the time the spinal lance is applied to the animal is dead is challenged. However there is no doubt that the whales are under undue stress from the moment the boats surround the flock and start driving it towards the sandy beach where the killing is to take place.

The fact that the peak season for the hunts coincide with the time of breeding poses yet one more animal welfare problem.

Pilot whaling in the Faroe Islands

Data from the hunts are available from 1584 to this time and is the oldest existing hunting statistics. From 1584 to 2007 a total of 256.912 pilot whales have been taken. The largest number ever taken was in 1941, where 4.480 pilot whales were taken. In Annex 1 to the report numbers of pilot whales and white sided dolphins taken in most recent years are listed. Over time there have been periods where none or almost no pilot whales have been taken. However over recent years there is decline in numbers taken.

Statistics, source: wikipedia

Time	No of schools	No of pilot whales	Skin (see explanation under Historic background below)
1709-1950	1.195	178.259	1.360.160
1951-1960	122	18.772	99.102
1961-1970	130	15.784	79.588
1971-1980	85	11.311	69.026
1981-1990	176	18.806	108.714
1991-2000	101	9.212	66.284
2001	11	918	7.447
2002	10	626	4.263
2003	5	503	3.968
2004	9	1.010	8.276
Total	1.844	255.165	1.806.828

The report from NAMMCO meeting 3-4 September 2008 in relation to the Faroe Islands pilot whaling “noted that there had been no catches or pilot whale drives at all so far in 2008, although there have been several off-shore observations of large schools in the area during the year.”

Since 1832, the Faroe Islands have been divided into several whaling districts though there is reason to believe, that these districts already existed in some form prior to this date. These whaling districts are the basis for the distribution of the meat and blubber of the pilot whales caught. The catch is distributed in such a way that all the residents of the whaling district are given the same amount of the catch, regardless of whether or not they took part in the hunt. The hunt thereby is entirely non-commercial.

Before the enactment of home-rule in 1948, the Danish governor had the highest responsibility of supervising a pilot whale hunt. Today, supervision is the responsibility of the Faroese government. The government is charged with ensuring that the Pilot whaling regulations are respected and otherwise answer for preparations. In practice, this means that it is the local legislative representative, who holds the highest command in a pilot whale hunt. It is his responsibility to both supervise the hunt and to distribute the catch.

Whaling bays

As of now 23 whaling bays with sandy beaches are approved as places where pilot whales can be driven ashore.

These are Svinøy, Hvannasund, Haraldssund, Klaksvig, Fuglafjørður, Gøta (north and south), Nordskali, Oyrarbakka, Tjørnuvik, Hvalvik, Leynar, Vestmanna, Torshavn (at Sandagerdi), Sandvagur, Midvagur, Bøur, Sandur, Husavik, Hvalba, Trongisvagur, Øravik, Famjin and Vagur. Information on those visited by the team is found in annex 3 to this report.

Historic background for measuring the catch of pilot whales⁵

Males are measured as ¼ to 26 skins and females ¼ to 14 skins.

A research 1986-1988 showed that one skin on average weighs 72 kg with 38 kg being meat and 34 kg blubber. An average pilot whale contributes 9.4 skins for a male and 5.4 skins for a female. In 1832 a wooden stick, grindamát, was introduced and used for measuring the whales that had been taken.

⁵ Dorete Bloch in the book ”The Pilot Whale and the Faroese Pilot Whaling” and Heini Madsen in “Pilot Whale and the Pilot Whaling”

Measurement was from eye to anus:

3 alen was estimated as 2 skins

4 alen was estimated as 10 skins

5 alen was estimated as 20 skins

6 alen was estimated as 35 skins

On average 54% of the whale can be eaten as meat and blubber and on the biggest whales this can be up to 60% of the total weight.

Meat and other edible products

The Danish Parliament group on European issues on the 25th February 2009 asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs which socioeconomic role the catching of whales has in the Faroe Island and what the socioeconomic and administrative consequences would be in case IWC was to regulate all whaling undertaken by its member countries.

In a letter dated 26th March 2009 Jónas K. Thomsen on behalf of the Faroese authorities explains:

“The economy of the Faroe Islands is overwhelmingly dependent on the sustainable use of marine resources, with commercial fisheries being the main industry.

Pilot whales and other small whales are utilised for food in the Faroe Islands and represent one of very few local sources of meat. Both the meat and blubber of pilot whales have for centuries been a staple part of the national diet. Whale drives are fully regulated by law and regulations and catches are shared on a community basis among the participants in a whale drive and residents of the local district where the whales are landed. The annual average catch of up to 900 whales⁶ is roughly equivalent to 500 tonnes of meat and blubber, which is some 30% of all meat produced locally in the Faroe Islands.”

The Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs in his reply wrote:

“The Faroese Authorities by providing the answer related to small cetaceans, thereby do not take any position in relation to the IWC⁷ question” (as to whether the small cetaceans should be covered by IWC)

Information has been supplied by the Faroese Home Rule Authority, “that during the five year period (2004-2008) of whaling the following amounts of edible meat has been obtained (the amounts are given with some uncertainty and does not include blubber)“.

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Tonnage of meat	314	83	251	210	0

⁶ This number contains not only pilot whales but also other smaller species of whales

⁷ International Whaling Commission

Legal and illegal imports to Denmark

Under a special exemption clause, import of pilot whale meat and blubber is allowed to Denmark for non-commercial purposes. Private people can import for their own consumption. The Faroese Society in Denmark in addition imports meat and blubber, which is used during celebrations for the members of the society.

These imports in recent years are as follows:

2004: 180 kg (1 transaction)

2005: 60 kg (1 transaction)

2006: 120 kg (1 transaction)

2007: none

2008: 150 kg (2 transactions of 100 kg and 50 kg respectively)

In addition import of tissue for scientific purposes is allowed.

The Danish Customs overlooking arrivals by sea from Faroe Islands to Denmark (Esbjerg) and from Faroe Islands by one route by air to Denmark (Billund) report the below seizures of whale products. These products in 2007- early 2009 arrived without CITES documentation. Spring 2009 the Danish CITES Authority instructed the Danish customs that CITES permits were not anymore required due to changed EU legislation. Note that the seizures as mentioned are from only two border stations towards Faroe Islands and furthermore derives from only a few occasional checks.

Seizures

2007:

08.01 0,53 kg meat

19.06 3,4 kg dried meat and blubber

21.06 0,150 kg blubber

02.07 6,39 kg meat and blubber

04.07 3,9 kg meat and blubber

14.07 0,960 kg dried meat and blubber

13.08 1,88 kg meat

07.10 1,7 kg meat

2008:

30.03 2,87 kg meat and blubber

09.05 1,7 kg blubber

28.06 1 kg meat

14.07	2.87 kg meat and blubber
26.07	1,6 kg salted blubber
31.07	2,28 kg meat
14.08	3 kg dried meat and blubber
06.09	1,7 kg meat

2009

14.03	0,8 kg dried meat
14.03	2,5 kg blubber

The new rules on imports are based on EU Commission Regulation (EF) no. 206/2009 of 5th March 2009 on imports to the Community of shipments of animal products to be used for private consumption and amendment to regulation (EF) no. 13/2004. According to these new EU rules whale products for private consumption can be imported from Faroe Islands to Denmark without restrictions.

Imports of whale meat to Faroe Islands

In the article “Whaling Delivered Millions” in IcelandReview - Reykjavik, Iceland,

http://icelandreview.com/icelandreview/daily_news/?cat_id=29314&ew_0_a_id=319823

The former Fisheries Minister Gudfinnsson on the 12th of February 2009 explains that 900 kilos of minke whale meat had been sold to the Faroe Islands for ISK 700,000 (USD 6,000, EUR 5,000).

In a reply to the Danish Parliament June 2009 the Faroese Authorities, however informs that the meat had not been imported, since Iceland does not have the by the Faroese Authorities and EU required health certification.

According to statistical information from Norway in 2003 a total of 8.345 kg of whale meat was exported to Faroe Island. The export had a value of around US\$ 66-500 or around US\$ 8 /kg. In April 2009 a shipment of 720 kg and a value of US\$ 5.800 was send to Faroe Island from Norway. Statistical information from Faroe Islands confirms that 695 kg was imported.

Before the exports from Norway started the Norwegian and Danish Authorities corresponded to agree that such trade would not be in breach of CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna). The translation of the correspondence is attached as annex 2 to the report.

Faroe Islands and IWC

1) Commercial whaling in Faroe Islands

Faroe Islands has a long history of commercial whaling for large whales. At first people from Faroe Islands worked onboard whaling ships of other nations, primarily Norway. From 1894 however the whaling was undertaken based in Faroe Islands. The most important recorded catch was in 1949 when 50 sperm whales were caught in Nolsoyarfjord, and the best catch year was in 1909 when 773 large whales were taken. In 1901 it is reported that 8 blue whales were taken during June and July and that year also 1 sei whale and 19 fin whales were taken.

The whaling station in vid Áir functioned until the end of the 1960's. In 2007 a plan was launched for developing the former whaling station into a museum.

The commercial whaling of fin whales was continued after the IWC in 1976 had decided on a 0 quota. The population of fin whales in the North Atlantic at that time had been reduced to 10% of its original size.

Faroe Islands caught 1 fin whale in 1977, 7 in 1978 and 11 in 1979. When the IWC urged Faroe Islands/Denmark to stop the whaling, a proposal for a scientific project was submitted to IWC in 1981, but the IWC Scientific Committee did not approve the project proposal. Never the less The Faroe Islands continued the whaling and took an additional 13 fin whales in the period 1981 to 1984.

2) IWC and small cetaceans

Faroese Islands Authorities have taken the position that the Whaling Commission, IWC, should not include questions related to small cetaceans. The Home rule authority has had this position during many years and does not intend to change its position. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Denmark has agreed to this position, and has on behalf of Faroese Islands and Greenland taken it forward at the IWC meetings.

Faroe Islands cooperate with its neighbours in relation to research and management of marine mammals in the North Atlantic. The cooperation takes place in the organisation NAMMCO, which besides Faroese has Norway, Iceland and Greenland as members. More information can be found on www.nammco.no

CITES and the Faroe Islands

Denmark became a Party to CITES in October 1977. When ratifying Denmark informed the CITES Depository government (Switzerland) that CITES would become applicable to Faroe Islands only when relevant legislation had come in place there. Denmark also ensured that this would not cause any practical problem since there was no CITES trade in Faroe Islands.

For many years during the 1980's and 1990's the Danish Ministry of Environment (CITES Management Authority) each year asked Faroe Islands on their progress in putting legislation in place, but no progress was reported.

As time has passed it has become clear that Faroe Islands does not intend to make legislation implementing and enforcing CITES. The Faroese authorities have confirmed the position and add that they do not see that CITES can contribute anything positive for the Faroe Islands.

Further to that it is clear that also the Danish CITES Management Authority has not been able to ensure Faroese implementation and enforcement.

As mentioned earlier in this report, in 2003 Faroese imported from Norway a total of around 9 tons Minke Whale meat from Norway. This species, *Baleanoptera acutorostrata*, has been on CITES Appendix I, from 1986 when it by the Whaling Commission came under the moratorium and all commercial hunting was stopped. Norway continues the hunting in spite of the moratorium and took a reservation against Appendix I listing under CITES. Therefore Norway was able to export the meat to Faroe Islands after issuing a CITES permit according to the rules applying to CITES Appendix II.

Denmark has no reservation and therefore the import of appendix I meat should not be allowed. However since Faroe Islands has still no CITES legislation in place (more than 30 years after Denmark ratified CITES), the Home Rule Authority in Faroe Islands just accepted the Norwegian CITES export permit for the commercial transaction.

The CITES Secretariat has advised that Faroe Islands is part of the Danish ratification and therefore CITES Appendix I rules apply.

It should be noted that Faroe Islands is not part of EU and the EU Regulations on Wildlife trade, which implements and enforce CITES in the EU do not apply to the Faroe Islands.

Local consumption of whale meat

Cooking Books

Though small Faroe Islands publishes books in Faroese language. During the teams visit four such cooking books were found in H.N. Jacobsens Bookshop in Torshavn. In each book a recipe on how to prepare a meal from pilot whale meat was found.

In the book *Okkara kokkur* (by Gudmundur Gudmundsson, Bokadeid Føroya Lærarafelags 2002, ISBN 99918-1-332-2) the recipe covers how to prepare pilot whale steaks in sherry sauce.

Other Cooking books are:

Góðarad, Jonhild Henriksen, 2004

Maturin, Sigríð Dalsgaard

Døgurdavokin, Maria Vilhelm

In some of the books on whaling recipes can also be found. Dorete Bloch in the book “The Pilot Whale and Pilot Whaling” mentions that the meat has high nutritional value with a content of 25% protein, and is rich in iron, A and B vitamins. In addition the fat in the blubber is of high value because of the relatively high amount of poly-unsaturated compared to saturated fat.

Restaurants

Vagar airport hotel

In articles about Faroe Islands it has been mentioned that the hotel restaurant serves specialities including pilot whale meat. The dish was not to be found on the menu but the staff when asked informed that some times the dish has been on the menu, but is getting rare now. The pilot meat has been served either wind dried as starter or boiled with onions and stewed potatoes.

By email dated 13th August 2009 the hotel confirms that pilot meat is not on the menu and that it has not been for long.

Hotel Føroyar

This 4 star hotel has a 4 star restaurant „Glasstovan“, which is known to serve Faroese traditional dishes. During its visit the team found that whale meat was offered as starter on the menu.

By email dated the 13th August 2009 the Managing Director of the hotel confirms that the restaurant offers three small slices of dried pilot whales meat as a starter. He adds that like it in Japan is possible to buy polluted fish meat, their restaurant has chosen to offer this dish to represent something which for long has been a tradition in Faroe Islands. He continues by writing that catching pilot whales still is legal and that the health authorities has recommended that the Faroese people do not eat whale meat because of the high content of mercury in the meat and the organic contamination in the blubber. He adds that the recommendation is not a problem for foreign visitors, as they only rarely eat whale meat. He ends by mentioning that the hotel does not want to negatively damage its own or the Faroe Islands international reputation, but on the contrary the menu offered gives an opportunity to taste the past and present Faroe Islands.

Gjáargardur

In the travel section of the Danish Newspaper „24 timer“ the 6th of August Anne Sophie Teglborg writes about „The nature pearl in the North Atlantic“ and refers to the Faroe Islands as the most unspoiled island group in the world. A headline of one paragraph in the article reads: „Whales and mercury“. Under the headline it is further written: „The yearly pilot whale is coming to an end and the dried meat will soon be a thing of the past. The pollution of the seas of the world has resulted in mercury accumulating in the large animals, and the faroese people are advised not to put their favorite dish on the menu. Locally some people however have not taken note of the recommendation. The traditional dish can therefore still be enjoyed in the small village Gjógv, located 67 km from the capital. This 400 year old village is located at a coast with high cliffs bordering the sea....“

Personal quotes from people the team met during its visit

It is clear to the team that the public is aware of the warning issued by the State Doctor August 2008 whereby he notify that due to contamination pilot whale meat should not anymore be used for human consumption see Annex 5.

Following quotes represents well the view of the public:

“Back when discovering that there are health problems in relation to pregnant women eating whale meat, there was quite a lot of information spread on this issue. However it seems that now no particular information is given, it is just something that is known and whereby pregnant women refrain from eating the whale meat.”

“The Faroese people are not quite in agreement with the research conclusions and there are good reasons for this. When the State Doctor say to a child who is participating in the study, that he should not eat pilot whale meat, because he has high content of mercury, and the mother then replies that he never ate pilot whale as he does not like it, then it is difficult to take the research seriously. I know this mother and the child very well”.

“My wife does not eat pilot meat and therefore I also do not eat it”

“Everyone here knows that the pilot meat is contaminated and young people as well as women do not want to consume this meat”.

Opinion poll in Denmark

To get an impression of how the pilot whaling in Faroe Islands is viewed outside Faroe Islands and in particular in Denmark, an opinion poll was undertaken by the independent company **Nielsen** in August 2009. A poll in Denmark, where people tend to defend Faroe Islands, because all are part of the Danish Kingdom, could be expected to be very forgiving in attitude. From previous polls it is known that only 3% of the Danes support commercial whaling. At times certain government civil servants have expressed that if the question was about the Faroese whaling only 3% would be against. The poll however shows that the number of Danes against the pilot whaling is around 50% (see Annex 4).

Reference list

Helgi Jaconsen, ”Hvalurin er mín” Ritstarv 2007, ISBN 978-99918-816-0-7

Jóan Pauli Joensen, ”Pilot whaling in the Faroe Islands”, froðskapur, Tórshavn 2009, ISBN 978-99918-65-25-6

Heini Madsen, “Grind Færøernes hvalfangst” Skúvanes, Vadum 1992, ISBN 87-983134-4-4

Dorete Bloch, ”Færøernes grindefangst”, Føroya Náttúrugripasavn 2007, Tórshavn

Dorete Bloch, ”Grindehvalen og Færøernes Grindfangst”, H.J.Jacobsens Bókahandil 2007, Tórshavn

ANNEX 1
CETACEANS TAKEN PER YEAR 1978 to 2009

YEAR	PILOT WHALES	WHITESIDED DOLPHINS (Info from 1996 onwards)
1978	1192	
1979	1674	
1980	2775	
1981	2909	
1982	2649	
1983	1685	
1984	1926	
1985	2596	
1986	1676	
1987	1450	
1988	1738	
1989	1260	
1990	917	
1991	722	
1992	1572	
1993	808	
1994	1201	
1995	228	
1996	1524	357
1997	1162	350
1998	815	438
1999	608	0
2000	572	265
2001	918	546
2002	626	773
2003	503	186
2004	1010	333
2005	302	312
2006	856	617
2007	633	0
2008	0	1
2009	310	174

In addition to the mentioned species there is occasional take of some (less than 10) Bottle Nosed Whales, Bottle Nosed Dolphins and Harbour Porpoise.

ANNEX 2

TRANSLATIONS documents related to the export of whale meat from Norway to Faroe Islands

Letter from the Norwegian Embassy in Copenhagen dated 16 January 2003

The Norwegian Embassy has the honour to contact the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in relation to the following matter:

The Norwegian authorities has through the Order on Regulation of export on Minke Whale meat dated 29 June 2001 opened the option for export of Minke whale meat when the country of destination is not obliged to treat Minke Whale according to Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered fauna and flora (CITES).

In relation to the Danish ratification of CITES the 26 July 1977, which was passed to the Parties by the depositary notification of 29 August 1977, a declaration was made to the effect that the Convention should not be implemented in the Faroese until the necessary Faroese legislation had been passed, something which was expected to happen in the nearest future. Any new notification which clarifies the implementation of CITES in relation to the Faroese has not afterwards been noted, and the other Parties therefore are to take into account the original declaration.

Since the Faroese are being considered as a possible export market for Norwegian Minke whale products, a written confirmation is requested, to the effect that the Faroese still are covered by the Danish declaration passed to the Parties in the form of the depositary notification of 29 August 1977 and thereby CITES does not apply for the Faroese.

The Embassy requests a quick answer, thanking in advance the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for its kind assistance.

Verbal Note 13 March 2003 from Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has the honour to accept receiving verbal note 5/03 199900226-373.20 of 16 January 2003 regarding the application of CITES in the Faroese.

In reply to this the Ministry of Foreign Affairs informs that the declaration, which Denmark gave in 1977 when depositing the instrument of ratification, still applies whereby the Convention will be implemented in Faroese only when the Faroese authorities have passed the necessary legislation. It can thereby be confirmed that CITES for the time being is not implemented in the Faroese.

NOTE from Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Norwegian export of Minke whale meat to the Faroese, 13 March 2003

1. The Norwegian Embassy has by Note no. 5/03 of 16 January 2003 requested a confirmation, that the implementation of CITES in the Faroese still is covered by the Danish declaration, which was made through the Depositary Notification in 1977. The Norwegian request is based on Norway having opened up for export of Minke Whale products provided that the country of destination according to CITES is not obliged to treat Minke whale according to the rules that apply to species listed in Appendix I.
2. Denmark ratified in 1977 the Convention on International Trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora- CITES the Washington -Convention. According to Article XXIII of the Convention, general reservation cannot be taken but specific reservations regarding species listed in Appendix I, II or III can be taken.
When depositing the Instrument of Ratification Denmark made a declaration, that the ratification would cover the whole Kingdom of Denmark, but that the convention however will be implemented in the Faroese only when the Faroese authorities has passed the necessary legislation. This has never happened. Enquiries from the Agency for Forestry and Nature (Ministry of Environment) have not even been answered.

Seen in the light of a number of decisions by CITES in the recent years, especially in relation to Fish and Marine Mammals, the Faroese authorities regards CITES with increasing scepticism. Faroese today therefore are unlikely to pass legislation, which would fully allow the implementation of CITES in the Faroese territory. In such case the Faroese would wish to make a reservation in relation to a number of whale species, including Minke whale such as Iceland, Norway and Japan.

3. The question whether the declaration given in 1977 still has the effect, that CITES does not apply to the Faroese has been discussed with the Juridical Service and Friday the 7 March 2003 among Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of State and the Agency for Forestry and Nature. It was agreed that even though the situation according to international law is unclear, the

Danish side should base its position on that the implementation of the Convention in the Faroese requires that the Home Rule Authority passes the necessary legislation. As such clarification cannot be expected at the moment, the Norwegian enquiry should be answered affirmative. This has been done by Verbal note of 13 March 2003. A copy has been informally sent to the Faroese Home Rule Authority.

During the meeting it was agreed, that the expected Norwegian export of Minke whale meat to the Faroese would be likely to meet a negative public opinion. Finally it was agreed that the competent Ministry namely Ministry of Environment again should bring up the question about CITES in relation to Faroe Islands. This can be done during the planned visit to Faroese by the Minister of Environment in April 2003.

ANNEX 3

Whaling bays in Faroe Islands

Number of inhabitants in the text below derives from Tourist Guide Faroe Islands May 2009.

There are by now 23 approved whaling bays, some of which have been in function since the first legislation on pilot whaling came into place in 1832. All below mentioned bays which were visited in July 2009 are authorised for landing pilot whales. The total number of pilot whales taken in each bay refers to catching data from 1584-2007. During this period Midvágur with a catch of 46.788 comes as a clear number one and Klaksvik as number two with 38.134 pilot whales. None of these are anymore fit for landing of pilot whales due to recent developments undertaken there.

Island of Vágar

Place	Bøur
Number of inhabitants	70
Pilot whale bay	Bay with a sandy beach. There is fish farming in the nearby waters. According to records 445 pilot whales were taken there on the 8th June 2004 and 82 on the 22 nd September 2004. The nearby fish farms however now make it less suitable for pilot whaling.
Pilot whales taken	3.324
Miscellaneous	Spectacular view towards the islets and stacks off the coast Tindholmur, Gáshólmur and Drangarnier Church (1865) and charming houses with grass-roofed houses

Place	Midvágur
Number of inhabitants	1.134
Pilot whale bay	This bay is mentioned already in the 1832 legislation. It is a bay with a wide sandy beach. It was the best place for pilot whaling, but the role is according to Dorete Bloch in the book "Pilot Whale and Pilot Whaling" less now due to development taking place. When visiting we noted that a large pier has been build from each side of the narrow fjord, stretching almost across and blocking the entrance to the sandy whale bay, but providing good protection for the harbour. Outside the pier and behind one of them floating fish farms were seen. This place has over the years

been the most important site for catching pilot whales but the recent developments make it unsuited for future whaling activities and there seem to be no records of catches here for the past 6 years.

Pilot whales taken	46.788
Miscellaneous	Kálvalid – the oldest grass-roofed stone house on the Faroe Islands The film „Barbara“ took amongst others place in Kálvalid. Harbour relatively big.

Place	Sandavágur
Number of inhabitants	815
Pilot whale bay	Bay with a sandy beach. There are no records of pilot whales taken there the past 6 years, but on the 12 th August 2005, 12 white sided dolphins were taken.
Pilot whales taken	968
Miscellaneous	Big white church with a rune stone (12 th century)

Island of Streymoy

The largest island. 373,5 square kilometers. Length: 48 kilometers

Tórshavn

Tórshavn is the capital of the Faroe Islands with about 12'404 inhabitants in the town itself.

Number of inhabitants	19.649
Pilot whaling bay	Now only one small sandy bay is available in the rapidly growing capital of the Faroe Islands. This is located in the suburb of Sandagerdi, just below the hospital. According to the records 3 hunts and 265 Pilot Whales were taken here in 2004, 1 hunt with 176 Pilot Whales in 2006 and 2 hunts with 261 whales in 2007.
Pilot whales taken	14.414

The Harbour is huge with ferry terminals and industry. In Torshavn many tourist attractions are found:

National Museum – Føroya Fornminnissavn

Different pilot whale Knives. Selling of the book „Pilot Whaling in the Faroe Islands, Faroe University Press, 2009“.

Museum of Natural History- Føroya Náttúrrugripasavn

Equipment used in the pilot whale hunt, statistics, pictures etc. are shown. Selling of the book „Færøernes grindefangst, Dorete Bloch, 2007.

Museum of Art- Listaskálin

The painting „Grindadrab“ (Whale killing) of Sámal Joensen-Mikines „Grindadráp, 1960“ is currently exposed.

Bookshop

Faroese cookery books with different recipes of pilot whale meat and blubber.

Some books about pilot whaling among others the school book „Grindavísen“, which depict the old traditional song about pilot whaling.

Hotels / Restaurants

Meat of pilot whales is offered in the menu of the Hotel Føroyer. Apart from the Hotel Føroyer the team did not find any other restaurants or hotels offering pilot whale meat (see additional information on page 9).

Supermarkets and other selling points

No selling of pilot whale meat or blubber.

Pilot whaling

In the bay „Sandágerdi“ pilot whaling is taking place. The most recent catch was in 2007. The role of this bay is according to Dorete Bloch in the book “Pilot Whale and Pilot Whaling” larger now due to development that has taken place in other whaling bays rendering them more or less unsuitable for whaling

Already in the 1832 legislation Torshavn was mentioned as a whaling bay, but most likely then the bays more central in the city were used and not as of now a small bay below the hospital at the outskirts of the capital.

Place	Leynar
Number of inhabitants	113
Pilot whale bay	Bay with a sandy beach. The role of this bay is according to Dorete Bloch in the book “Pilot Whale and Pilot Whaling” larger now due to development that has taken place in other whaling bays rendering them more or less unsuitable for whaling. There is a record of 84 pilot whales taken there on the 29 th June 2004.
Pilot whales taken	2.583 and there is a recent record of 85 pilot whales taken 29 th June 2004

Place	Vestmanna
Number of inhabitants	1.240
Pilot whale bay	Two separate bays are approved but the role is according to the team fully coherent with the view expressed by Dorete Bloch in the book “Pilot Whale and Pilot Whaling” that Vestmanna now is less important for whaling due to development taking place Vestmanna was already mentioned in the 1832 legislation as a place suitable for pilot whaling. There are no records of whales being taken there the past 6 years.
Pilot whales taken	19.833
Miscellaneous	Big harbor, fishing industry and Hydropower station Fossá The Vestmanna Tourist Center provides very useful information about excursions - (Bird cliffs and grottoes from the sea, Mykines – the home of thousands of migratory seabirds during the summer months)

Place	Hvalvik
Number of inhabitants	231
Pilot whale bay	The last whaling recorded here is May 23rd 2009 when 188 pilot whales were taken
Pilot whales taken	31.715
Miscellaneous	Oldest church made of wood (1829)

Place	Tjørnuvík
Number of inhabitants	73
Pilot whale bay	Bay with a sandy beach in an open short fjord.
Pilot whales taken	101
Miscellaneous	-

Island of Eysturoy

Bridge from Streymoy to Eysturoy

Slættatindur 822 meters - highest point on the Faroe Islands

Next largest island – 266 kilometers

About 11'000 people

Place	Fuglafjørður
Number of inhabitants	1.536
Pilot whale bay	Bay with a sandy beach
Pilot whales taken	1.865. There is a record of 123 pilot whales taken 2 nd May 2005 and 271 white sided dolphins taken 12 th August 2005
Miscellaneous	<p>The town is located at the head of a deep fjord, and offers an excellent Natural harbor that is accessible under all weather conditions. It has a 1000 meter long quay and plays a significant role in the pelagic fisheries of the North Atlantic.</p> <p>Fishing industry, place for ship repairing and oil depot is found here.</p> <p>The town generates almost 20% of the Faroese export, and is the fourth largest town in the Faroe Islands.</p> <p>It features a modern church from 1984</p>

Place	Gøta (consists of Sydrugøta and Nordagøtu)
Number of inhabitants	419 and 588 respectively in the two towns
Pilot whale bay	Bay with sandy beaches
Pilot whales taken	7.345, and a record of 24 white sided dolphins taken 28th August 2004
Miscellaneous	Fish farms are found at Nordagøtu

Place	Nordskáli
Number of inhabitants	297
Pilot whale bay	Sandy but narrow beach which did not appear especially fit for landing pilot whales
Pilot whales taken	3.514
Miscellaneous	-

Place	Oyrarbakka
Number of inhabitants	97
Pilot whale bay	This is a new approved whaling beach with sandy beach
Miscellaneous	The school Felagsskúlin á Oyrarbakka features a gate made from the lower jaw whale bones

Nordoyar Islands

Bordoy:	95 square kilometers, about 5000 inhabitants
Vidoy:	41 square kilometers, about 600 inhabitants
Kunoy:	35 square kilometers, 60 inhabitants
Sviony	27,4 square kilometers, 55 inhabitants

Place	Klaksvik (Bordoy)
Number of inhabitants	4.637
Pilot whale bay	yes but the role is according to Dorete Bloch in the book “Pilot Whale and Pilot Whaling” less now due to development taking place. The team saw that the bay which was previously used is now reclaimed and according to the local people a shopping centre is to be build there.
Pilot whales taken	38.134 only recent records of takes there is 291 whitesided dolphins Taken 8 th September 2004
Miscellaneous	Second largest town in the Faroe Islands Fishing industry, about 20% of the fishing export comes from Klaksvik Christian’s church, 1963

Place	Hvannasund (Vidoy)
Number of inhabitants	263
Pilot whale bay	A small bay with sandy beach. It was already mentioned in the 1832 legislation as a place suitable for pilot whaling.
Pilot whales taken	8.962, and 88 pilot whales were taken 5 th of January 2009. Whitesided dolphins were taken 18 th September 2004 (dolphins) and 16 th April 2005 (7 dolphins)

	Haraldssund (Kunoy)
Number of inhabitants	75
Pilot whale bay	A small bay with sandy beach
Pilot whales taken	32
Miscellaneous	Near to ghost village of Skard and ruins of Dutch settlement

Other whaling bays

The Following whaling bays were not visited in July 2009. In the listing below the number of pilot whales taken from 1584-2007 is added.

Additional approved whaling bays

The team did not visit Svinoy, Suduroy and Sandoy. Below the number of pilot whales taken there in the period 1584-2007 are given.

Island of Svinoy

Svinoy 4, these 4 were taken 28th August 2005

Island of Suduroy

Vágur 21.149, there is a record of 26 pilot whales taken 28th June 2004

Hvalba 18.082, there is a record of 49 pilot whales taken 16th August 2005 and 20 White Sided Dolphins 16th August 2005

Famjin 7.985, there is a record of 78 pilot whales taken 5th July 2004

Trongisvágur 6.564, there is a record of 30 pilot whales taken 31st July 2004

Øravík 484

Island of Sandoy

Sandur 6.103, there is a record of 54 pilot whales taken 16th June 2005

Húsavík 4.243, there is a record of 56 pilot whales taken 12th July 2005

ANNEX 4

Summary results of POLL in Denmark on Pilot Whaling in Faroe Islands and human consumption of the related products (**translation from Danish**).

The poll was undertaken by **The Nielsen Company** as an online survey from the 12 to 20 August 2009. There were 625 respondents. The interviewed persons were 15 to 65 years old.

Summary

61% have previously heard or read about the pilot whaling in Faroe Islands, but only 19% knew about the meat being polluted. 56% do think that the taking of pilot whales causes pain to the whales and 46% believe that this whaling should be stopped. 54% believe that the pilot whaling damages the international reputation of the Faroe Islands. 55% believe the recommendation from the Faroe Islands State Doctor to stop using pilot whale products for human consumption should be followed.

Questions and results in detail

Q1

Have you this year or previously heard or read about the pilot whaling in the Faroe Islands?

yes 61% no 36% do not know 3%

Q2

Scientists have the recent decades studied the pollution found in the pilot whale meat and the risk, which this poses for human health. The conclusions last year resulted in the State Doctor (Landslægen) recommending that meat from pilot whales should not anymore be used for human consumption.

Have you heard about that?

yes 19% no 78% do not know 3%

Q3

To which extent do you agree or disagree with the below statements about pilot whaling?

Disagree completely, Disagree, Neither nor, agree, agree completely, do not know

(R1) The taking of pilot whales does not cause any pain or suffering for the whales	27%,	29%,	13%,	4%,	1%,	26%
(R2) Faroe Islands should stop taking pilot whales	4%,	11%,	23%,	22%,	23%,	16%
(R3) The pilot whaling does not damage the international reputation of the Faroe Islands	17%,	37%,	17%,	10%,	3%,	16%

Q4 *Imagine a conversation between two Faroese people, who discuss about eating pilot whale meat.*

A says: Landslægen here in the Faroe Islands has recommended, to stop eating meat from pilot whales, because of the increased pollution which has resulted in pilot whales having such high content of pollution, that neither meat nor blubber will meet the limits for what is acceptable. This recommendation I think we should follow, and thereby stop eating meat from pilot whales.

B says: yes I know that Landslægen has recommended to stop eating pilot whale meat, because the meat is polluted, but it is only a recommendation, and I think it should be up to people themselves to decide whether they want to eat the meat or not.

Are you in most agreement with A or B? It is possible that you can go along with both statements, but who are you in most agreement with?

1) Agree most with A, 2) Agree most with B, 3) Do not know

55%

39%

7%

Background reference:

The interviewed persons have been selected to properly represent the population in relation to: Gender, age, job, educational background, geography (where does the person live in Denmark)



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