

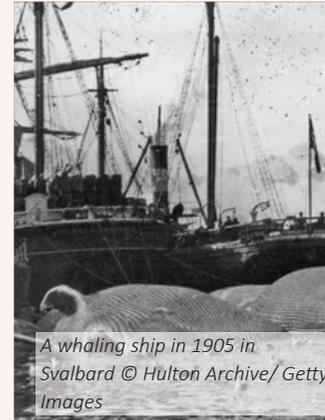


Whaling and sealing continue to be a reality for many Northern coastal communities, simply because marine mammals are present, nearby and abundant, and therefore a logical **resource** in an environment where other **resources** can be scarce. These animals represent an invaluable **resource**, bringing food and money, as well as job opportunities in places where non-marine **resources** are limited and job opportunities few. Marine mammal hunting represents a threat for whale and seal **populations** only when it is not done **sustainably**. In NAMMCO member countries it is heavily regulated but still remains controversial for many inside as well as outside.

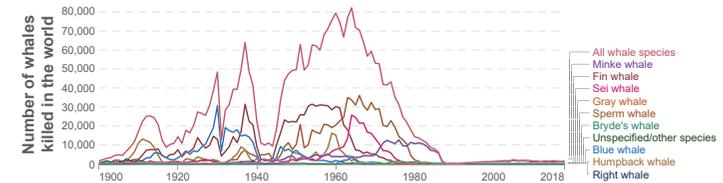
- Marine mammal hunting dates back at least 9,000 years [1]
- Most marine mammal species, both Arctic and sub-Arctic, have been hunted at some point in history and many still are today.
- All in all, the seven seal species, four (out of six) **baleen whale** species, and eight (out of 10) **toothed whale** species that are common residents in the NAMMCO management area are hunted today.
- The most important products from whaling and sealing today is meat (and **blubber**) for human consumption and seal skins.
- Hunting in NAMMCO member countries is quite strictly controlled and the catches are well reported.

Easy to mitigate
Easy to quantify

Difficult to mitigate
Difficult to quantify



In the past, **subsistence** and coastal whaling and sealing were conducted in a largely **sustainable** manner, with hunting efforts and impact limited in scale and geographic extent. Things changed when **commercial whaling** and sealing began around the 11th century. By the 1600s, fleets were organised, and by the 1860s, new technology made it possible to hunt industrially. This led to over-hunting, causing some species to almost go extinct, and others to be heavily depleted. **Industrial whaling** and sealing in the late 19th and 20th centuries became an example of how overuse and poor **management** can harm wildlife.



Since 1980s the scale of whaling across the world has changed a lot
© OurWorldData.org/whaling / Data from IWC & Roccha et al. (2014)

Today's hunt is in many ways very different from the **industrial whaling** and sealing in the past centuries. **Managing** hunting responsibly means using **sustainable** practices and the most effective methods for killing the animals. It implies making rules for using **resources** and implementing reliable monitoring. NAMMCO member countries have set clear rules on which **stocks** can be hunted, how many animals, when, and how. Each country has its own inspection system to monitor these activities. **NAMMCO Observation Scheme** also send observers to check if the hunts follow recommendations and oversees national inspections.



Discuss: Hunting may be the most apparent **anthropogenic** pressure that marine mammals face, but other pressures may be more problematic with respect to **conservation**. What do you think and which ones?

Read more about hunting on the NAMMCO website:

