

Hunting



Modern whaling ship © Scanfishfoto.com

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.

Easy to mitigate
Easy to quantify

Difficult to mitigate
Difficult to quantify



Did you know that...

- Marine mammal hunting dates back at least 8,000 years [1]
- Most marine mammal species have been hunted at some point in history and many still are today. In the **NAMMCO management area**, 19 **species** are hunted.
- The most important products from whaling and sealing today are meat and **blubber** for human consumption and seal skins.
- In **NAMMCO** countries, hunting marine mammals is legal when following the national **regulations**. Hunting is strictly controlled and catches are well reported, so they can be accounted for in the **management** processes.
- Illegal hunting is impossible to quantify as catches are not reported and therefore not taken into account in **management**.

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A whaling ship in 1905 in Svalbard © Hulton Archive/ Getty Images

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 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
© OurWorldinData.org/biodiversity [2]

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:

