



Mr Willem Wijnstekers
Secretary General
CITES Secretariat
International Environment House
Chemin des Anémones
CH-1219 Châtelaine
Geneva, Switzerland

Tromsø, 23 August 2004
Our ref.: R2.03.08.05

Dear Mr Wijnstekers ,

In reference to your letter of 13 May 2004, please find enclosed NAMMCO's comments to CITES the proposal submitted by Japan to transfer the Okhotsk Sea – West Pacific Stock, the Northeast Atlantic Stock and the North Atlantic Stock of Common Minke Whales (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*) from Appendix I to Appendix II. The enclosed comments pertain to the Northeast and North Atlantic Central stock of minke whales only. This letter and enclosed comments were forwarded electronically on 23 August.

I trust the comments reach you in time for inclusion in the appropriate document.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Broda', is positioned below the text 'Yours sincerely,'.

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General Secretary

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Comments by NAMMCO on the Proposal to CITES

Transfer of the Okhotsk Sea – West Pacific Stock, the Northeast Atlantic Stock and the North Atlantic Central Stock of Common Minke Whales, *Balaenoptera acutorostrata*, from Appendix I to Appendix II.

p.1 par. 5. The most recent estimate for the North Atlantic Central stock is from the North Atlantic Sightings survey conducted in 2001. The estimate is 63,500 (cv 0.16) based on Icelandic aerial and ship surveys (NAMMCO 2004a).

p.4 **Northeast Atlantic Stock**

The authors have used the estimates from the entire Norwegian survey area which covers parts of the North Atlantic Central stock as well as the Northeast Atlantic stock. The estimates for the Northeast Atlantic stock alone are 112,125 (cv 0.104) for 1995 (Schweder *et al.* 1997) and 80,487 (cv 0.15) for the period 1996-2001 (Skaug *et al.* 2003).

p.4 **North Atlantic Central Stock**

The most recent estimate for the North Atlantic Central stock is from the North Atlantic Sightings survey conducted in 2001. The estimate is 63,500 (cv 0.16) based on Icelandic aerial and ship surveys (NAMMCO 2004a). It is likely negatively biased because the ship survey estimate is not corrected for whales missed by observers or diving whales.

p.5 par. 4

The Scientific Committee of the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission conducted an assessment of the North Atlantic Central Stock of minke whales in 2003 (NAMMCO 2004b). The results indicated that the stock has not been appreciably impacted by past whaling, having a current abundance of mature females that is at least 85% of the corresponding pre-exploitation level. This result holds across a wide range of assumptions concerning stock structure, past catches, MSYR values and abundance estimates.

REFERENCES

- [NAMMCO] North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission. 2004a. Report of the Eleventh Meeting of the Scientific Committee. Annex 3. NAMMCO Scientific Committee Working Group on Abundance Estimates. In: *NAMMCO Annual Report 2003*, NAMMCO, Tromsø, pp. 251-270.
- [NAMMCO] North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission. 2004b. Report of the Eleventh Meeting of the Scientific Committee. Annex 3. NAMMCO Scientific Committee Working Group on Minke and Fin Whales. In: *NAMMCO Annual Report 2003*, NAMMCO, Tromsø, pp. 197-230.
- Schweder, T., Skaug, H.J., Dimakos, X., Langaas, M. and Øien, N. 1997. Abundance estimates for Northeastern Atlantic minke whales. Estimates for 1989 and 1995. *Rep. int. Whal. Commn* 47:453-484.
- Skaug, H.J., Øien, N., Schweder, T. and Bøthun, G. 2003. Current abundance of minke whales in the northeastern Atlantic; variability in time and space. SC/55/NAM1 for the IWC Scientific Committee.