

Preface

The North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission is proud to present *Minke whales, Harp and Hooded Seals: Major Predators in the North Atlantic Ecosystem*, the second volume in the series NAMMCO Scientific Publications. This volume is edited by Gísli A. Víkingsson, Senior Scientist at the Marine Research Institute, Reykjavik, Iceland, and current Chairman of the NAMMCO Scientific Committee, and Finn O. Kapel, former Deputy Director of the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources, now retired.

The NAMMCO Scientific Publications series was established to make available in published, peer-reviewed form, scientific papers which have contributed to the work carried out by the NAMMCO Scientific Committee. The NAMMCO Scientific Committee provides scientific advice on marine mammal species and stocks in the North Atlantic in response to requests forwarded to it by the Council of NAMMCO. Each volume therefore has a theme, reflecting the nature of the original request for advice. The first volume, entitled *Ringed Seals in the North Atlantic*, was published in 1998.

In 1996, the NAMMCO Council requested the Scientific Committee "to focus its attention on the food consumption of three predators in the North Atlantic: the minke whale, the harp seal and the hooded seal, with a particular emphasis on the study of the potential implications for

commercially important fish stocks." In response, the Scientific Committee formed a Working Group on the Role of Minke Whales, Harp Seals and Hooded Seals in North Atlantic Ecosystems, which met in Tromsø, Norway in March 1997. The Working Group included members of the Scientific Committee and invited experts from Canada, Iceland, Norway and Denmark. The working papers developed for this meeting formed the basis of this volume, but other contributions relevant to the focus of the volume are included as well.

The Scientific Committee of NAMMCO believes that this volume represents a valuable contribution to the evolving literature on predation and multi-species interactions in marine environments. The committee also hopes that it will encourage further research on the ecological role of marine mammals in the North Atlantic ecosystem.

Further information on this and other volumes in the NAMMCO Scientific Publications series is available from the NAMMCO Secretariat.

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Daniel G. Pike (Series Editor),
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