

## Contemporary Whaling in the Faroe Islands, its History and Challenges

Russell Fielding (University of the South, USA)

In the Faroe Islands, a semi-autonomous Danish archipelago in the North Atlantic, people hunt small cetaceans to produce food for human consumption. This presentation begins with an up-to-date description of whaling methods and culture in the Faroe Islands, explores the history of Faroese whaling, and introduces the idea of “culturally embedded conservation strategies.” These strategies are largely unwritten customary rules that develop gradually through processes of cultural adaptation to a local natural environment and serve a conservationist function, sustaining Faroese whaling for hundreds of years. Two recently emerged threats, however, may surpass the ability of these conservation strategies and could even lead to the end of Faroese whaling. This presentation concludes by investigating ways in which the trajectories of anti-whaling environmentalism and the study of pollution in the marine environment have converged. Specifically, it considers the use of findings from contaminant research by anti-whaling activists as further evidence that whaling should cease, and their uncritical rejection of these findings as evidence of an ecological crisis in its own right.