

Nunavut Wildlife Management Board Policy:

Identifying Wildlife Management Priorities for Nunavut

Introduction:

The Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) is the main instrument of wildlife management in the Nunavut Settlement Area (NSA) and the main regulator of access to wildlife. The NWMB is directed by the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA) states: that "*there is a need for an effective role for Inuit in all aspects of wildlife management, including research;*"(5.1.2); that an effective wildlife management system requires "*an efficient, co-ordinated research effort*" (5.2.37); and that the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) requires "*an informed and effective role in wildlife research and its direction*" (5.2.37). The NLCA also notes that the wildlife management system in Nunavut should "*invite public participation and promote public confidence, particularly amongst Inuit*" (5.1.3 b). Research produces knowledge (both scientific and traditional) of a wildlife population and its uses. This knowledge is essential for the NWMB in making wildlife management decisions. However, the products of research are not the only inputs that the NWMB uses in executing its mandate for wildlife management.

In order to fulfill its mandate, the NWMB needs to identify current wildlife management issues at the local and regional level. The NWMB also needs to look ahead to try to anticipate upcoming issues. In the past, the NWMB identified wildlife research priorities. While this helped guide the Board in allocating research funds, it was not always effective as a means of identifying all the underlying wildlife management concerns.

Wildlife management concerns may require research in order to be addressed, or they may require other actions such as management plans, quota reviews and boundary considerations. In some cases while an issue is a wildlife concern for a community, it may not actually be a matter of wildlife management. However, the issue can still be identified as a concern and the appropriate agencies made aware of the need for action to address it. This policy will allow for that process. Many other agencies use the Research Priority lists for the purposes of awarding funding or setting their own priorities. It is therefore in the interests of the NWMB to include all wildlife issues in the prioritising process. Where issues do not fit within the purview of the NWMB, other agencies can be made aware and asked to address them issues.

The NWMB would like to be pro-active, that is anticipating and preparing for issues, rather than merely reactive, i.e. responding only after a problem occurs. In order to do this, the NWMB requires input from all those involved in wildlife

management: the HTOs and their members, the RWOs, NTI and government departments.

This Policy gives the rationale for wildlife management priorities for the Nunavut Settlement Area, and outlines the procedure that the Board will use to establish them. The Policy will also provide an ongoing repository for these priorities as they are developed and updated. It is hoped that the Policy will assist Government, Inuit Organizations and others in planning their wildlife management programs, including their research activities that underpin them.

Reasons for Identifying Wildlife Management Priorities:

1. It is essential to ration the limited supply of personnel, financial and time resources since it is not possible to address all issues at the same time.
2. It is essential that all of the important issues are ultimately addressed, including those that may pertain to only one community or to a restricted area.
3. It is essential that the wildlife resources of the NSA are managed according to the principles of conservation and for the benefit of Nunavut residents. This requires good and pertinent information.
4. Clear wildlife management priorities will assist the NWMB and other agencies in establishing forward-looking work plans.
5. Clear wildlife management priorities will assist the NWMB in allocating funds for research, management planning, working groups, and other activities.

Items to be Prioritized:

Most wildlife in the NSA is managed on the basis of populations or stocks. A population is a group of animals of one species, the members of which group breed with one another. A population generally occurs in a defined area and is usually hunted only by certain particular communities. Thus while most communities hunt caribou only a few communities hunt the Beverly caribou population, this being the basis for management attention. If the Beverly caribou population became seriously reduced in numbers the problem could not be addressed by, for instance, reducing caribou hunting at Iqaluit.

Any issue or concern of any of the government or Inuit organizations involved in wildlife management should be put forward for consideration. Issues could be of many types and might include such things as:

- the need or desire for a larger quota;
- the desire to begin or expand sport hunting ventures;

- conflicts relating to harvesting overlap and transboundary issues;
- concerns about disease or contaminants in wildlife;
- concern that a population is declining in size;
- desire to change boundaries of hunting areas or zones;
- migration or movement of the population;
- changes in the pattern of distribution of animals;
- concerns about food supply and/or habitat;
- interaction between wildlife species;
- identification of population boundaries and who is harvesting;
- effects of harvesting;
- effects of development, such as mining and tourism.

How to Address Issues Raised:

The method of responding to the issues raised will depend on the particular issue, and on the amount of information that is available about the population or stock. While all issues and concerns pertaining to wildlife will be eligible for identification, not all of the matters identified will be directly related to wildlife management, the mandate of the NWMB. However, the majority likely will be within NWMB jurisdiction.

The approach to matters within the mandate of the NWMB will depend on the specifics of the issue. In some cases it may be possible, in co-operation with the appropriate government department, to review current knowledge and address such matters as concern about a quota, a desire to make provision for sport hunting, a desire to change the boundary of a hunting area, etc., through a review of the issue by the NWMB. In other cases, it may be necessary and appropriate to obtain more community or regional input into the response to an issue. In such cases, a management plan and/or a workshop may be the appropriate method of attack. In many cases it may be found that the information is not adequate to address the issue or concern. In such cases it will be necessary to identify the information shortfalls and prepare to alleviate them in order to address the issue. Since the funding available for research is limited, prioritizing the issues is an important step in allocating funding.

As already noted, some issues will not be directly related to the NWMB mandate. However, given that these are concerns raised by the communities, it should be possible to identify other agencies/organizations that have responsibilities in those areas and make them aware of these concerns. For example, the NWMB has determined that research on contaminants is not part of its mandate unless the particular contaminant(s) impacts directly on the health of wildlife (as opposed to health of humans). However, the Nunavut Contaminants Committee refers to the NWMB priority list when reviewing applications for funding under the Northern Contaminants Program. Likewise the Nunavut Health Department has an interest in anything that may impact on human health.

Uses of Wildlife Management Priorities:

1. To guide the NWMB, government departments and others in developing work plans.
2. To guide the NWMB in soliciting research projects from government departments and others.
3. To guide government departments with respect to the research they should be carrying out in the NSA.
4. To help ensure that NWRT Funds and NWMB Study Funds go to matters of high priority. Priority will be one of the major factors used to determine whether or not a project gets funded¹.
5. To guide the NWMB and government departments in other activities, such as preparation of management plans, establishment of total allowable harvests, and other management measures.
6. To provide a framework for reporting to the RWOs on an annual basis.

Procedure for Establishing Wildlife Management Priorities:

i. Frequency:

Wildlife management issues of concern to communities and/or wildlife management agencies do not change drastically from year to year. However, as top priority issues are addressed, other issues will become more important. Likewise it is possible for new issues to arise each year. However, a full-scale workshop is unlikely to be necessary every year. A full-scale workshop to identify priorities will be held every 3 years. In the intervening 2 years, a mini-workshop will be held to review the previously established regional priority list and make adjustments if required. A progress report on priority issues will be prepared on an annual basis.

ii. Advance Preparation for Workshop:

In order to maximize workshop productivity, it will be important for all participants to consult with their respective organizations prior to attending to enable them to represent the views of their organizations. Each organization sending representation will be asked to submit to the NWMB, at least one month prior to the workshop, a summary of the wildlife management issues of concern to them. This material will need to identify the wildlife management issues, rather than specific proposals for addressing them. A binder of materials will be prepared for each participant, and each will have the opportunity to speak at the workshop and provide more detail regarding the written material.

iii. Wildlife Management Priorities Workshop:

The RWOs usually conduct their AGMs in summer or fall each year. The NWMB will work with each RWO to arrange a workshop concurrent with

¹ See *NWMB Policies: NWRT Research Funding and NWMB Study Funding*

its AGM. Full-scale workshops, held every 3 years, will be up to 2 days duration. The participants will be representatives of each HTO in that region, staff from DSD, DFO, CWS and NTI, and of course the NWMB. The NWMB Director of Wildlife Management will act as facilitator for the workshop. The NWMB will pay honouraria, accommodation and meal costs for the HTO representatives for the days of the workshop, along with costs of translation services and meeting facilities.

The workshop will begin with a presentation of the purpose and process of establishing wildlife management priorities. Each participating HTO and each government agency will be allotted time to present the wildlife management issues of concern to their community/agency. Any additional items that the NWMB may have identified will also be presented for consideration. All material will be summarized on flip charts.

After the presentations there will be a general discussion of all the issues raised. This discussion may also explore ideas on what needs to be done to address the various concerns and an appropriate time frame for the work. Possible areas where the RWO/HTO could undertake research or studies will be identified. Sources of funding for the various prescribed activities will be identified to the extent possible.

The next session will focus on the process of prioritizing the issues. Some of the areas that will be considered include: importance of the population for subsistence harvest; importance for commercial activities; how many communities rely on the population; the status of the population; other threats to the population (such as mining, development); whether the population is used by communities outside Nunavut; and present knowledge about the population. The workshop will look at how these different factors can be used to identify issues of the greatest priority.

The second part to the workshop will focus on reaching consensus on the priority order of the issues raised. This will involve reviewing each of the issues and considering them on the basis of the factors identified in the previous discussion.

The prioritized list of wildlife management issues, and any associated recommendations on how to address them, would be forwarded to the NWMB.

iv. Consideration and Adoption of Wildlife Management Priorities by the NWMB:

The Board will consider the recommendations from the Workshop at its subsequent meeting, and will adopt a set of wildlife management priorities for each Region based on these recommendations along with any other information and advice that is available. The NWMB may also add

priorities that the Board deems important on its own initiative. The Board will then review the lists and identify immediate tasks/requirements and the agency(ies) that will be approached to undertake the tasks. Priority for research funding from the NWRT or from the NWMB Study Fund will go to projects addressing priority issues and especially those identified as immediate requirements by the Board.

v. Notification of Wildlife Management Priorities:

The Board will inform the respective government departments and HTOs/RWOs of the overall wildlife management priorities lists. The Board will actively bring to the attention of the appropriate government agencies the research projects or other tasks that the Board wishes to see undertaken the following year.

vi. Follow-up:

In subsequent years, the NWMB will report annually at the RWO AGMs with respect to progress on the issues identified previously. At these subsequent meetings, there will be a smaller (1 day or less) workshop to allow for a review of what has been done in the year, identify any new matters of concern, and review and revise the priorities if required. The NWMB would then review the priorities again in at its next meeting.

Copies of the Wildlife Management Priorities will be Appended to the following NWMB Policies: Identification of Wildlife Management Priorities, NWRT Research Funding, and NWMB Study Funding.

vii. Workplan For Establishing Wildlife Management Priorities:

- January 2001: notify HTOs, RWOs and government departments of the new policy and new time line for its implementation.
- March 2001: request HTOs and government departments to identify wildlife management issues and concerns by region, and to provide this information to the NWMB by May.
- April 2001: Arrange for workshops as part of each RWO AGM.
- May 2001: Prepare packages / binders of information for RWO AGMs.
- Summer / Fall 2001: Attend RWO AGMs; establish priorities.
- September 2001: Report recommendations from RWO AGMs to NWMB for review and identification of priorities and direction for government departments.
- October 2001: Notify government departments and RWOs and HTOs of priorities for next year
- Winter 2001/02: Follow up on issues with departments as appropriate (e.g. management plans, quota reviews, research funding applications)
- Summer 2002: Follow up and review progress at RWO AGMs.