

May 27th 2015

Scott Gilbert
A/Regional Director of Ecosystems and Fisheries Management
Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Dear Mr. Gilbert:

Re: Timelines for a Nunavut Wildlife Management Board decision on Foxe Basin walrus

In light of the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board's (NWMB or Board) decision to adjourn its public hearing to consider the establishment of a management unit and total allowable harvest for Foxe Basin walrus, I would like to take the opportunity to provide details regarding the NWMB's procedures and timelines for completion of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement decision-making process. It is my hope that this information, along with effective communication among co-management partners, will ensure efficient and timely decisions on walrus management for the benefit of stakeholders and all Nunavummiut.

Background

At the most recent meeting of the Canada-Nunavut Fisheries and Marine Mammal Cooperation Committee in Iqaluit on April 29th and 30th 2015, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (Department) staff indicated that the results of newly identified scientific information regarding Atlantic walrus in Foxe Basin will become available after review at the Department's annual National Marine Mammal Peer Review Committee meeting, likely in October 2015. The NWMB understands that the Department is seeking a decision on a management unit and total allowable harvest for Foxe Basin walrus in time to demonstrate sustainable management of walrus at the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora in September 2016. With this in mind, the NWMB would like to share information on its decision-making process to inform the Department's plans for consultations and preparations for the Conference of the Parties.

Timelines for an NWMB public hearing

Once the newly identified scientific information has become available, consultations have been completed with affected communities, and the Department's recommendations have been revised if necessary, the NWMB encourages the Department to submit all

newly relevant information, including a summary of relevant consultations and any revisions to the Proposal for Decision, so that the NWMB's public consideration process can proceed. Detailed information on the five necessary components of a Proposal for Decision can be found in Section 4.4 of the *NWMB Governance Manual*. Upon receipt of these documents, the NWMB will make every effort to promptly decide the best course of action. Generally, in dealing with decisions that are of significant economic, social, and/or cultural interest to Inuit harvesters, the NWMB will opt to hold an in-person public hearing; however, the NWMB may hold a written hearing if the proposal for decision is a joint initiative on the part of government and affected Inuit, the decision is of less economic, social, and/or cultural interest to affected Inuit, time is of the essence in addressing the issue, the parties are unable to meet in a timely manner or the cost of holding an in-person hearing is prohibitive.

In the case of Foxe Basin walrus, the NWMB will hold an in-person public hearing on this issue and intends to end the adjournment of this hearing as soon as reasonably possible. Barring any unforeseen obstacles or complications, the NWMB will issue a formal public notice and invitation letter to hearing parties accompanied by the NWMB's hearing rules and the Department's revised Proposal for Decision, once accepted. Organizing a Board decision regarding a hearing and issuing a formal public notice can take up to 1 month or longer from receipt of a Proposal for Decision. As per the NWMB's rules for in-person public hearings¹, notice of the hearing is provided at least sixty (60) days prior to the commencement of the hearing. With the time periods described above, an NWMB in-person public hearing would take place approximately three (3) months after receipt of a Proposal for Decision. Therefore, if the Department were able to deliver a revised Proposal for Decision in time for the Board's December 2015 quarterly meeting, an NWMB public hearing could potentially take place in March 2016. Submissions to the Board's December meeting are typically required by early- to mid-November.

After a public hearing, the NWMB carefully considers the evidence and arguments presented by the hearing parties in their written and oral submissions, which typically takes place during an In Camera decision-making session at the NWMB's next quarterly meeting. If, following the timeline outlined above, an in-person hearing were to take place in March 2016, then the NWMB would likely make an initial decision at its June 2016 quarterly meeting, after which the steps outlined in *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement* Sections 5.3.16 to 5.3.23 would follow.

Conclusion

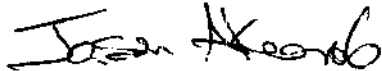
Once again, the NWMB looks forward to working with its co-management partners to ensure an efficient and timely decision on walrus management for all stakeholders and Nunavummiut. Keep in mind that the timelines outlined above are estimates only, and challenges may arise that necessitate a longer process. NWMB staff look forward to

¹ See section 4.6 of the *NWMB Governance Manual* for a complete set of public hearing rules. The NWMB reserves the right to modify the rules for any particular in-person, electronic or written hearing.

collaborating with co-management partners through the Walrus Working Group and are happy to provide support in ensuring thorough consultations on this newly identified scientific information.

If you require more details on the NWMB hearing process please review the *NWMB Governance Manual*. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the contents of this letter please contact the NWMB.

Sincerely,



Jason Akearok
Executive Director
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board

c.c. Honourable Gail Shea, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Government of Canada;
Honourable Johnny Mike, Minister of Environment, Government of Nunavut;
Cathy Towtongie, President of Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated;
James Qillaq, Chairperson, Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board;
Manasie Naullaq, Chairperson, Hall Beach Hunters and Trappers Organization and Co-Chair of the Walrus Working Group;
David Irngaut, Chairperson, Igloodik Hunters and Trappers Organization;
Larry Dow, Director of Northern Operations, Fisheries and Oceans Canada;
Paul Irngaut, Director of Wildlife and Environment, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated;
Janelle Kennedy, A/Director of Fisheries and Sealing, Department of Environment, Government of Nunavut;
Allison McPhee, Co-Chair of the Walrus Working Group;
Chris Lewis, Fisheries Management Biologist, Fisheries and Oceans Canada;
Jason Mikki, Qikiqtaaluk Regional Coordinator, Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board; and
Maha Ghazal, Marine Mammal Advisor, Government of Nunavut Department of Environment.