



June 16, 2023

The Honourable Joyce Murray  
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans, and the Canadian Coast Guard  
15<sup>th</sup> Floor, Centennial Towers  
200 Kent Street  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0E6

Dear Minister Murray:

**Re: NWMB-NMRWB Joint Written Public Hearing to Consider the 2023/24 Total Allowable Catch Levels and Sharing Arrangements for Northern and Striped Shrimp in the Eastern and Western Assessment Zones**

## PROPOSAL FOR DECISION

In April 2023, Fisheries and Oceans Canada requested the following decisions and recommendations from the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) and the Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board (NMRWB; collectively, the Boards) on northern shrimp (*Pandalus borealis*) and striped shrimp (*Pandalus montagui*) for the 2023/24 fishing season:

1. In the Western Assessment Zone:
  - a. **Decision** on harvest levels for both species in the Nunavut-West (within the Nunavut Settlement Area) and Nunavik-West (within the Nunavik Marine Region) management units; and
  - b. **Recommendation** on the overall total allowable catch<sup>1</sup> for both species.

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<sup>1</sup> Total allowable harvest is the term used to define harvest limits in the *Nunavut Agreement*. In the *Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement* harvest limits are defined as total allowable takes. Fisheries and Oceans Canada has consistently used total allowable catch to describe fishery harvesting. For simplicity and efficiency this briefing note adopts total allowable catch to encompass both total allowable harvest and total allowable takes.



2. In the Eastern Assessment Zone:

- a. **Decision** on harvest levels for both species in the Nunavut-East (within the Nunavut Settlement Area) and Nunavik-East (within the Nunavik Marine Region) management units;
- b. **Recommendations** on the overall total allowable catch for both species; and
- c. **Recommendations** on the distributions of the total allowable catch for both species between the Davis Strait management units–Davis Strait-West and Davis Strait-East.

## NWMB AND NMRWB JOINT PUBLIC HEARING

On April 14, 2023, the Boards issued a public notice and invited relevant parties to a joint written public hearing for shrimp total allowable catch levels in the Eastern and Western Assessment Zones for the 2023/24 fishing season. In addition to providing feedback on the Fisheries and Oceans Canada April 2023 request, parties were asked to provide feedback on the continuation of the practice whereby both northern and striped shrimp allocations in Nunavut-East and Nunavik-East may be harvested in either management unit, regardless of land claim boundaries.

One submission was received by the May 5, 2023 deadline: a joint submission from Makivvik Corporation and Nunavut Fisheries Association<sup>2</sup>.

## NWMB AND NMRWB DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

At the NWMB in-camera meeting on June 7, 2023 (NWMB IC002-2023) and the NMRWB in-camera meeting on June 1, 2023 (#59), the Boards reviewed all relevant written arguments and evidence provided through the written public hearing<sup>3</sup>. The Boards individually made decisions and recommendations. Having passed complimentary resolutions, the NWMB and NMRWB are providing this joint letter. The Board's decisions and recommendations are set out immediately below and more details are presented in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

### Decisions and Recommendations at the Assessment Zone Level

RESOLVED that, pursuant to Sections 5.2.3 and 5.4 of the Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement and Section 15.3.4 of the Nunavut Agreement, the NMRWB and NWMB recommend that the total allowable catch in the Western Assessment Zone for the 2023/2024 fishing season be as follows:

<sup>2</sup> Nunavut Fisheries Association includes, Qikiqtaaluk Corporation, Baffin Fisheries Coalition, Arctic Fishery Alliance, Cumberland Sound Fisheries Ltd/Pangnirtung Fisheries Ltd.

<sup>3</sup> All the relevant documents and written submissions received on time and considered by the Boards are publicly available for download from the NWMB's website, [www.nwmb.com](http://www.nwmb.com).



1. For northern shrimp (*Pandalus borealis*):
  - a. A total allowable catch of 4,788 tonnes in Western Assessment Zone; and
2. For striped shrimp (*Pandalus montagui*):
  - a. A total allowable catch of 17,282 tonnes in the Western Assessment Zone

RESOLVED that, pursuant to Sections 15.3.4 and 15.3.7 of the Nunavut Agreement and Section 5.4.4 of the Nunavut Inuit Land Claims Agreement, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board and the Nunavut Marine Region Wildlife Board recommend the following total allowable catch levels in the Eastern Assessment Zone for the 2023/2024 fishing season:

1. For northern shrimp (*Pandalus borealis*):
  - a. A total allowable catch of 7,383 tonnes in Eastern Assessment Zone; and
2. For striped shrimp (*Pandalus montagui*):
  - a. A total allowable catch of 1,610 tonnes in the Eastern Assessment Zone

### **Decisions and Recommendations at the Management Unit Level**

RESOLVED that, pursuant to Section 5.6.4 of the Nunavut Agreement, the NWMB approve the following total allowable catch for shrimp in the Nunavut-West Management Unit for the 2023/2024 fishing season:

1. For northern shrimp (*Pandalus borealis*):
  - a. A total allowable catch of 2,394 tonnes in the Nunavut-West Management Unit within the Nunavut Settlement Area; and
2. For striped shrimp (*Pandalus montagui*):
  - a. A total allowable catch of 8,641 tonnes in the Nunavut-West Management Unit within the Nunavut Settlement Area; and

RESOLVED that, pursuant to Section 5.2.3 of the Nunavut Inuit Land Claims Agreement, the NMRWB approve the following total allowable catch for shrimp in the Nunavut-West Management Unit for the 2023/2024 fishing season:

1. For northern shrimp (*Pandalus borealis*):
  - a. A total allowable catch of 2,394 tonnes in the Nunavut-West Management Unit within the Nunavut Marine Region
2. For striped shrimp (*Pandalus montagui*):
  - a. A total allowable catch of 8,641 tonnes in the Nunavut-West Management Unit within the Nunavut Marine Region; and

RESOLVED that, pursuant to Section 5.6.4 of the Nunavut Agreement, the NWMB approve the following total allowable catch for in the Nunavut-East Management Units for the 2023/2024 fishing season:

1. For northern shrimp (*Pandalus borealis*):
  - a. A total allowable catch of 456 tonnes in the Nunavut-East Management Unit within the Nunavut Settlement Area; and
2. For striped shrimp (*Pandalus montagui*):



- a. A total allowable catch of 820 tonnes in the Nunavut-East Management Unit within the Nunavut Settlement Area; and

RESOLVED that, pursuant to Section 5.2.3 of the Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement, the NMRWB approve the following total allowable catch for shrimp in the Nunavik-East Management Unit for the 2023/2024 fishing season:

1. For northern shrimp (*Pandalus borealis*):
  - a. A total allowable catch of 114 tonnes in the Nunavik-East Management Unit within the Nunavik Marine Region
2. For striped shrimp (*Pandalus montagui*):
  - a. A total allowable catch of 360 tonnes in the Nunavik-East Management Unit within the Nunavik Marine Region; and

RESOLVED that, pursuant to Section 15.3.4 and 15.3.7 of the *Nunavut Agreement* and Section 5.4.4 of the Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement, the NWMB and the NMRWB recommend the following distribution of the total allowable catch in the Davis Strait-West and Davis Strait-East Management Units for the 2023/2024 fishing season:

1. For northern shrimp (*Pandalus borealis*):
  - a. A total allowable catch of 1,805 tonnes in the Davis Strait-East Management Unit that is further subdivided as follows:
    - i. A total allowable catch of 694 tonnes for the offshore; and
    - ii. A total allowable catch of 1,112 tonnes for Nunavut; and
2. For northern shrimp (*Pandalus borealis*):
  - a. A total allowable catch of 5,007 tonnes in the Davis Strait-West Management Unit that is further subdivided as follows:
    - i. A total allowable catch of 3,360 tonnes for the offshore; and
    - ii. A total allowable catch of 1,483 tonnes for Nunavut; and
    - iii. A total allowable catch of 165 tonnes for Nunavik; and
3. For striped shrimp (*Pandalus montagui*):
  - a. A total allowable catch of 430 tonnes for the offshore in the Davis Strait-East and Davis-Strait West Management Units.

### **Management Measures**

RESOLVED that, the NWMB and the NMRWB approve that the practice whereby northern (*P. borealis*) and striped (*P. montagui*) shrimp allocations in Nunavut-East and Nunavik-East may be harvested in either Management Unit, regardless of land claim boundaries be continued, until the Boards change this agreement.

### **Sharing Total Allowable Catch Increases or Decreases among Nunavut Sub-Allocation Holders**

WHEREAS according to sections 12.2 and 12.3 of the Nunavut Wildlife Management



Boards 2019 Allocation Policy for Commercial Marine Fisheries, for increases and decreases equal to or greater than 15% to the sub-allocations in intra-allocation years, the NWMB invited a submission from the Nunavut Fisheries Association on the proposed increase or decrease to each sub-allocation holder. One submission from three of the four sub-allocation holders on the proposed increase or decrease from Nunavut Fisheries Association was received.

AND WHEREAS the Fisheries Advisory Committee Chair informed the NWMB Chair that the Fisheries Advisory Committee will not be able to meet with a quorum to review and provide advice to the NWMB for the total allowable catch sub-allocations.

RESOLVED that the NWMB determine any increases or decreases of sub-allocation equal to or greater than 15% for the 2023/2024 fishing season be divided proportionally amongst the current Nunavut fishing enterprises according to their existing sub-allocation within each management unit in the Eastern and Western Assessment Zones.

## **REASONS FOR THE BOARDS' DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The decisions and recommendations made by the Boards are meant to ensure a sustainable harvest of northern and striped shrimp in the Eastern and Western Assessment Zones. The Boards have also considered the most recent scientific information on the stocks, including that provided by Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and input from industry stakeholders.

### **Decisions and Recommendations at the Assessment Zone Level**

Northern shrimp is a bycatch species in the Western Assessment Zone. The most recent survey indicates that both the fishable and spawning stock biomass have increased. The stock remains in the practiced<sup>4</sup> Healthy Zone. The target exploitation rate for fisheries in the Healthy Zone is 20%. The Boards acknowledge that Fisheries and Oceans Canada recommends that changes in total allowable catch do not exceed 15% from the previous year. However, the Boards also acknowledge that changes to total allowable catch have exceeded this amount in the past. Thus, considering that northern shrimp are well above the proposed upper stock reference, placing them firmly in the Healthy Zone, and are above the long-term biomass averages, the Boards recommend maintaining the exploitation rate of 20%.

Striped shrimp is the directed fishery in the Western Assessment Zone. The most recent survey indicates that both the fishable and spawning stock biomass have increased. The stock remains in the aforementioned practiced Healthy Zone. Considering that striped shrimp are well above the proposed upper stock reference, placing them firmly

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<sup>4</sup> A Precautionary Approach Framework does not exist for either stock in the Western Assessment Zone; however, general harvest decision rules and bio-reference points are practiced.



in the Healthy Zone, and are above the long-term biomass averages, the Boards recommend an exploitation rate of 16.5%.

Northern shrimp is a directed fishery in the Eastern Assessment Zone. The most recent survey indicates that both the fishable and spawning stock biomass have decreased, setting the stock slightly above the mid-way point of the Cautious Zone. The last time northern shrimp were in the Cautious Zone, the recovery exploitation rate was 20% which follows the harvest decision rules of the Precautionary Approach Framework<sup>5</sup>. Furthermore, the northern shrimp fishery in Davis Strait-East is considered a “paper fishery,” meaning that although the total allowable catch exists, the fishery is currently not viably harvested, and thus the quota is rarely taken in this Management Unit. In recent years, the actual exploitation rate for northern shrimp in the Eastern Assessment Zone has been about 6% lower than the set exploitation rate, with the proportion of the total allowable catch taken fluctuating between 61% and 67%. Given these considerations, the Boards recommend that the total allowable catch for northern shrimp in the Eastern Assessment Zone for the 2023/24 fishing season remains at an exploitation rate of 20%.

Striped shrimp is a bycatch species in the Eastern Assessment Zone. The most recent survey indicates that both the fishable and spawning stock biomass have decreased; however, the stock remains in the Healthy Zone. The total allowable catch has gradually increased in the past two years but is still conservative when compared to the 1,110% increase in the Spawning Stock Biomass since the science survey time series started 13 years ago. Industry remains concerned that the relatively conservative total allowable catch will interfere with their ability to fully harvest the directed northern shrimp quota. Given these considerations, the Boards recommend that the total allowable catch for striped shrimp in the Eastern Assessment Zone for the 2023/24 fishing season be increased by 15%, setting the exploitation rate at 11.2%.

Furthermore, industry suggested again this year that the striped shrimp total allowable catch in the Eastern Assessment Zone be split into two components: a bycatch fishery allowance for the offshore Management Units (Davis Strait-East and West), and a directed fishery allowance within the inshore settlement areas (Nunavut- and Nunavik-East). The Boards recognize the challenges associated with striped shrimp in the Eastern Assessment Zone. However, as mentioned last year, the issue of a bycatch versus directed fishery will require more fulsome considerations. Therefore, the Boards cannot approve fishery designation change requests at this time and encourage industry members and Fisheries and Oceans Canada to collaborate further on this issue, before coming to the Boards with a proposal.

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<sup>5</sup> The harvest decision rules indicate that “if spawning stock biomass is in the upper half of the Cautious Zone, the exploitation rate should not [...] be significantly above 15% of exploitable biomass.” Fisheries and Oceans staff suggested that “significantly above” can be interpreted as “above 20%”.





## Decisions and Recommendations at the Management Unit Level

For the distribution of the total allowable catch of shrimp in the Western and Eastern Assessment Zones, the Boards considered the joint feedback provided by Nunavut Fisheries Association and Makivvik Corporation, who are the primary harvesters of the stocks in question. The Boards have accepted and applied most of industry's distribution suggestions in their decisions and recommendations to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Although the Boards cannot approve of industry's request for a change in striped shrimp fishery designation in the Eastern Assessment Zone at this time, the sharing proportions presented in the joint submission were used to determine the distribution of the total allowable catch for that species (Appendix 2).

### Management Measures

The Boards considered the historical context and industry recommendations in recommending the continuation of the management measures whereby shrimp allocations within Nunavut-East and Nunavik East may be harvested in either management unit regardless of land claim boundary. Harvests are to continue being reported according to where the harvest began.

#### Sharing Total Allowable Catch Increases or Decreases among Nunavut Sub-Allocation Holders

As per NWMB's 2019 Allocation Policy for Commercial Marine Fisheries (the Policy), in the event of an increase or decrease in quota equal to or greater than 15%, "Nunavut allocation holders will work together under the Nunavut Fisheries Association to determine proposed increases [or decreases] to each allocation holder, and bring this advice to the Fisheries Advisory Committee and the NWMB". A joint letter from three of the enterprises was received on June 2, 2023 (Appendix 3); however, unanimous advice from the Nunavut Fisheries Association was not received. Thus, as per the Policy, "the Fisheries Advisory Committee will convene to review the issue and provide advice to the NWMB". The Fisheries Advisory Committee was unable to reach a quorum to discuss the issue. Therefore, considering the past advice from the Nunavut Fisheries Association that increases or decreases be shared proportionally, and the letter from three of the four enterprises, the NWMB hereby recommend that any increases or decreases be divided proportionally amongst the current Nunavut fishing enterprises according to their existing sub-allocation within each management unit in the Eastern and Western Assessment Zones.

### CONCLUSION

The Boards hereby forward their decisions and recommendations to you for your consideration pursuant to the relevant terms of the *Nunavut Agreement* and the *Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement*. Please be assured that the NWMB and the NMRWB will



continue to work collaboratively with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada and other co-management partners in ensuring that the management of shrimp in the Nunavut Settlement Area and the Nunavik Marine Region fully aligns with the terms of the *Nunavut Agreement* Article 5 and *Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement* Article 5.

If you or your officials have any questions with respect to the content of this letter, please do not hesitate to contact the NWMB and the NMRWB at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Daniel Shewchuk  
Chairperson  
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board

Iola Metuq  
Chairperson  
Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board

cc. Courtney D'Aoust, Fisheries and Oceans Canada;  
Christi Friesen, Fisheries and Oceans Canada.





## Appendix 1

Summary of the Boards decisions and recommendations of harvest levels and overall total allowable catches for both species of shrimp in the Western and Eastern Assessment Zones.

Assessment Zone	Species	Scenario	Total Allowable Catch (tonnes)	Exploitation Rate	% Change of Total Allowable Catch
<b>WAZ</b>	P. borealis	Maintain ER	4,788	20.0%	21.0%
	P. montagui	Industry option	17,282	16.5%	42.9%
<b>EAZ</b>	P. borealis	Maintain ER	7,382	20.0%	-31.2%
	P. montagui	15% TAC Increase	1,610	11.20%	15.0%



## Appendix 2

The table below presents the recommended distribution of total allowable catch levels for the Western and Eastern Assessment Zones.

Shrimp Fishing Area	Shrimp Species	Management Unit	Fleet	% Allocation of total TAC
<b>Western Assessment Zone</b>	Northern	Nu-W	Nunavut	50%
		Nk-W	Nunavik	50%
	Striped	Nu-W	Nunavut	50%
		Nk-W	Nunavik	50%
<b>Eastern Assessment Zone</b>	Northern	DS-W	Offshore	45.51%
			Nunavut	20.08%
			Nunavik	2.23%
		DS-E	Offshore	9.40%
			Nunavut	15.06%
		Nu-E	Nunavut	6.18%
		Nk-E	Nunavik	1.55%
	Striped	DS-W/E	Offshore	26.70%
		Nu-E	Nunavut	50.93%
		Nk-E	Nunavik	22.37%



### Appendix 3

The following is a letter from three of the four Nunavut sub-allocation holders regarding the sharing proportions if there were to be an increase or decrease in total allowable catch equal to or greater than 15%.



August 16, 2023

Mr. Daniel Shewchuk  
Chairperson  
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board  
tsataa@nwmb.com

Mr. Iola Metuq  
Chairperson  
Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board  
tpalliser@nmrwb.ca

Dear Mr. Shewchuk and Mr. Metuq,

I am writing in response to your correspondence of June 16, 2023, regarding the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board's (NWMB) and Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board's (NMRWB; the Boards) decisions and recommendations on *Pandalus borealis* and *P. montagui* in the Eastern Assessment Zone (EAZ) and Western Assessment Zone (WAZ). I have addressed each of the decisions and recommendations separately by assessment zone herein, for the 2023-24 fishing season.

### **Western Assessment Zone**

I agree with the Boards' recommendation for the WAZ to establish an aggregate total allowable catch (TAC) for *P. borealis* of 4,788t resulting in an increase of 21.0 percent (20 per cent potential Exploitation Rate [ER]) and an aggregate TAC for *P. montagui* of 17,282t resulting in an increase of 42.9 per cent (16.5 per cent potential ER). These TAC levels are appropriate and do not pose a conservation concern.

Consistent with that approach, in the Nunavut West management unit, within the Nunavut Settlement Area, I accept the NWMB's decision to set the total allowable harvest (TAH) levels for *P. borealis* at 2,394t and *P. montagui* at 8,641t; and in the Nunavik West management unit, within the Nunavik Marine Region, and I accept the NMRWB's decision to set the total allowable take (TAT) levels for *P. borealis* at 2,394t and *P. montagui* at 8,641t.

I wish to clarify that *P. borealis* and *P. montagui* are both directed species in the WAZ.

### **Eastern Assessment Zone**

I agree with the Boards' recommendation for the EAZ to establish an aggregate TAC for *P. borealis* of 7,383t resulting in a decrease of 31.2 per cent (20 per cent potential ER).

Consistent with that approach, in the Nunavut East management unit, within the Nunavut Settlement Area, I accept the NWMB's decision to set the TAH level for *P. borealis* at 456t; and in the Nunavik East management unit, within the Nunavik Marine Region, I accept the NMRWB's decision to set the TAT level for *P. borealis* at 114t.

I carefully considered the Boards' recommendation for the EAZ to establish an aggregate TAC for *P. montagui* of 1,610t. While I am able to support the Boards' harvest level decisions within the Nunavut Settlement Area and the Nunavik Marine Region, I am unable to support the recommended allocation of 430t in the Davis Strait East/West management unit. As a bycatch limit, I considered that this allocation could have the potential to impede the offshore fleet's prosecution of the directed *P. borealis* fishery in this area. I have decided to modify this recommendation such that an allocation of 920t be available to ensure the proper management and control of the fishery.

I have established an aggregate TAC for *P. montagui* of 2,100t resulting in an increase of 50.0 per cent (14.7 per cent potential ER). Consistent with that approach, I accept the NWMB's decision in the Nunavut West management unit, within the Nunavut Settlement Area, to set the TAH level for *P. montagui* at 820t; and in the Nunavik East management unit, within the Nunavik Marine Region, I accept the NMRWB's decision to set the TAT level for *P. montagui* at 360t. I wish to clarify that *P. montagui* is a directed species in the Nunavut East and Nunavik East management units.

An appended table illustrates the overall quotas for each management unit based on my decisions herein (Appendix 1).

### **Management Measures**

Lastly, I accept the Boards' decision to allow harvesting of *P. borealis* and *P. montagui* allocations in either Nunavut East or Nunavik East, regardless of land claim boundaries, until such time as the Boards change this agreement.

I would encourage the Boards to continue to engage with Departmental officials to discuss the ongoing management and administration of the shrimp resource in the EAZ and the WAZ.

I appreciate the Boards' collaboration and cooperation in the sustainable management of the shared shrimp resource in the north.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Diane Lebouthillier', with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

The Honourable Diane Lebouthillier, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard

Attachment: 1

c.c.: Mark Basterfield, Director of Wildlife Management, Nunavik Marine Region  
Wildlife Board  
Denis Ndeloh, Director of Wildlife Management, Nunavut Wildlife Management  
Board  
Leigh Edgar, Manager, Resource Management Operations, Fisheries and Oceans  
Canada  
Courtney D'Aoust, Fisheries Management Officer, Fisheries and Oceans Canada



## Appendix 1

### Western Assessment Zone – Total Allowable Catch

Management Unit	<i>P. borealis</i> (tonnes)	<i>P. montagui</i> (tonnes)
Nunavut West	2,394	8,641
Nunavik East	2,394	8,641
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,788</b>	<b>17,282</b>

### Eastern Assessment Zone – Total Allowable Catch

Management Unit	<i>P. borealis</i> (tonnes)	<i>P. montagui</i> (tonnes)
Davis Strait West -Offshore	3,360	-
Davis Strait East – Offshore	693	-
Davis Strait West - Nunavik	165	-
Davis Strait West - Nunavut	1,483	-
Davis Strait East – Nunavut	1,112	-
Davis Strait East and West - Offshore Bycatch	-	920
Nunavut East	456	820
Nunavik East	114	360
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,383</b>	<b>2,100</b>