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October 5, 2022

Honourable Joyce Murray Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada 15th Floor, Centennial Towers 200 Kent Street Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0E6

Dear Joyce Murray:

Re: NWMB Decision on total allowable catch and 100-tonne inshore quota for Greenland halibut in Subarea 0 for 2023 and 2024 Seasons

NWMB Decision

At the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board's (NWMB or Board) Regular Meeting on September 8, 2022 (RM003-2022), Fisheries and Oceans Canada requested the NWMB provide recommendations on the total allowable catch for Greenland halibut (*Reinhardtius hippoglossoides*) in Subarea 0 for the 2023 and 2024 fishing seasons, the distribution of the total allowable catch, and the allocation of the 100-tonnes of Greenland halibut in Division 0A inside the Nunavut Settlement Area.

At the NWMB's In-Camera Meeting on September 9, 2022 (IC003-2022), the Board considered Fisheries and Oceans Canada's submission, along with the recommendation from the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) Scientific Council, and input from Nunavut fishing enterprises and the Government of Nunavut through a joint written submission.

The Board made the following recommendations:

RESOLVED that, pursuant to section 15.3.4 of the *Nunavut Agreement*, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board advises that the total allowable catch for Greenland halibut in Subarea 0 be rolled over from 2021-2022 at 36,370 tonnes for the 2023 and 2024 seasons.

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RESOLVED that, pursuant to section 15.3.4 of the *Nunavut Agreement* the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board advices that the distribution of total allowable catch for Greenland halibut in Subarea 0 be rolled over from 2021-2022 such that:

- The distribution of the total allowable catch between NAFO Divisions 0A and 0B remains the same at 9,592.5 tonnes in Division 0A, and 8,592.5 tonnes in Division 0B; and
- Nunavut's share of Division 0A should remain 100% of the total allowable catch, and its direct share of Division 0B total allowable catch should remain approximately 50%, or 4,283.25 tonnes, plus participation with licences in the 900-tonne competitive fishery.

RESOLVED that, pursuant to section 15.3.4 of the *Nunavut Agreement* the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board advises that 100 tonnes from the overall total allowable catch in Division 0A be allocated towards inshore fishery development in the Nunavut Settlement Area.

Reasons for NWMB Decision

The NWMB's mandate in the marine offshore is governed by Article 15 of the Nunavut Agreement. Article 15 directs Fisheries and Oceans Canada to "seek the advice of the NWMB with respect to any wildlife management decisions in Zones I and II which would affect the substance and value of Inuit harvesting rights and opportunities within the marine areas of the Nunavut Settlement Area." The NWMB routinely reviews applications and provides advice to Fisheries and Oceans Canada on the total allowable catch for Greenland halibut in NAFO Subarea 0. The NWMB is accustomed to having, as part of its review, the perspective from Fisheries and Oceans Canada with an analysis of NAFO science advice and its recommendation for the total allowable catch. This year, however, Fisheries and Oceans Canada did not provide this analysis or recommendation to the Board for consideration. Additionally, Fisheries and Oceans Canada's consultation period with fishery stakeholders is ongoing. In the absence of a Fisheries and Oceans analysis of NAFO advice, recommendations, and a consultation report, the Board decided that it will, nevertheless, provide advice to the extent possible. based on the limited information before it.

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Total Allowable Catch for Greenland halibut in Subarea 0

The NWMB's advice is that Fisheries and Oceans Canada should rollover the total allowable catch for Greenland halibut in Subarea 0 from 2021-2022 at 36,370 tonnes for the 2023 and 2024 seasons. In reaching this advice the Board considered NAFO's recommendation and input from Nunavut fishery stakeholders.

The Board is aware that there remains a significant gap in the Greenland halibut time series data. Bio-indices have not been updated since 2017 due to lack of surveys. Consequently, NAFO's science advice is based on a qualitative analysis of available data. Of the data available, one of the key indices NAFO considered was fishery-dependent data which is likely subject to catch effort biases. Despite the lack of recent bio-index data and considering the general stability of the stock throughout the 1999-2017 time series, NAFO does not expect that the stock status has changed drastically since the last stock assessment which was determined to be healthy.

The Board understands that NAFO's advice is precautionary in nature given the uncertainty in bio-indices. However, the Board could not ignore the fact that the magnitude of the NAFO recommended decrease of 18.5% is significant. As the submission from the Nunavut fishing enterprises and the Government of Nunavut outlines, concerns about scientific methodology, data reliability, and the justification for a significant decrease in the total allowable catch are not sufficient to justify potential economic impacts (in terms of jobs, social development, and community benefits from fishing enterprises). These concerns do not affect Inuit harvesting rights, but they affect Inuit economic opportunities from commercial fishing.

Distribution of the total allowable catch

In reaching its advice to rollover the distribution of the total allowable catch, the NWMB considered past NAFO advice and recent feedback it received from the Nunavut fishery stakeholders. Unlike previous years, neither Fisheries and Oceans Canada nor NAFO have offered advice on how the total allowable catch should be distributed between Divisions 0A and 0B. There is no scientific basis to indicate the stock is localized in either Division. In previous years, NAFO has advised that consideration be given to the distribution of effort in each area to avoid local depletion. Furthermore, the Board also sought feedback from Nunavut fishery stakeholders to inform its recommendation on the distribution of the total allowable catch. The Nunavut sub-allocation holders and the Government of Nunavut maintained support for the current distribution.

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Given these considerations, the Board did not have any justifiable reason to make any changes to the current distribution and therefore recommends that the distribution of total allowable catch for Greenland halibut in Subarea 0 be rolled over from 2021-2022.

100-tonne inshore fishery allocation

In reaching its advice to rollover the distribution of the total allowable catch, the NWMB considered past practices. In 2006, the NWMB allocated 100 tonnes of Division 0A quota for inside the Nunavut Settlement Area. The NWMB stated the reason for this allocation was to encourage inshore fisheries development. The Minister accepted this advice. The inshore allocation has been rolled over without modification since 2006. The 100-tonne inshore allocation is also contained in the *NWMB's 2019 Allocation Policy for Commercial Marine Fisheries*. Although the Board supports inshore exploratory fishing in Division 0A, it is worth noting that sixteen years has passed since the first allocation was made.

Conclusion

Minister, the Board hereby forwards its advice to rollover the 2021-2022 total allowable catch and distributions for Greenland halibut in Subarea 0, and allocate 100-tonnes of Division 0A total allowable catch to inshore fishery development inside the Nunavut Settlement Area to you.

The NWMB looks forward to your reply and completion of the *Nunavut Agreement* process. If you have any questions regarding this letter, do not hesitate to contact the NWMB.

Sincerely,

Daniel Shewchuk Chairperson

Dovid Sculrul

Nunavut Wildlife Management Board

cc: Aimee Finley, Fisheries and Oceans Canada.



Pêches et Océans Canada

Fisheries and Oceans Canada Inukshuk Building, 18-4 Sivulliq Avenue Rankin Inlet, Nunavut

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January 27, 2023

Mr. Daniel Shewchuk Chairperson Nunavut Wildlife Management Board PO Box 1379 Iqaluit, NU X0A 0H0

Via email: receptionist@nwmb.com, tsataa@nwmb.com

Dear Mr. Shewchuk,

<u>Greenland Halibut Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for Northwest Atlantic Fisheries</u> <u>Organization (NAFO) in Divisions 0A and 0B</u>

The Canadian TACs for NAFO Divisions 0A and 0B have been set for 2023.

The Minister has decided to reduce the 2023 TAC in NAFO Divisions 0A and 0B by 9.25%, at 8,704.99 t and 7,797.51 t respectively. The quota to be allocated to Nunavut enterprises is now 8,704.99 t in Division 0A and 3,840.59 t in Division 0B (Annex I). 100 t from the 0A TAC remains dedicated for inshore fisheries development, inside the Nunavut Settlement Area. The Division 0B fixed gear competitive fishery remains at 900 t.

Recommendations from the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) (the Board), stakeholder views, science advice, economic impacts, international relations and other relevant factors were taken into consideration in making these decisions.

Sub-allocations to Nunavut enterprises remain consistent with the Minister's January 17, 2022 decision.

We thank the Board for their recommendations. We look forward to future collaboration on the management of this important resource.

Sincerely,



cc:

Jennifer Buie, A/Director General, Fisheries Resource Management, National Capital Region; Jason Simms, A/Regional Director, Fisheries Management, Arctic Region