















July 13, 2022

Hon. Steven Guilbeault  
 Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada  
 Government of Canada

Dear Steven Guilbeault:

**Re: NWMB Decision on Environment and Climate Change Canada’s request for approval of the proposed change in status of Dolphin and Union Caribou from Special Concern to Endangered under the federal *Species at Risk Act***

**NWMB Decision**

At the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board’s (NWMB or Board) Regular Meeting (RM002-2022) on June 15, 2022, Environment and Climate Change Canada presented a proposal requesting that the Board approve a change in the status of Dolphin and Union caribou from Special Concern to Endangered under the federal *Species at Risk Act*.

At the NWMB’s June 17, 2022, In-Camera Meeting (IC002-2022), the Board made the following decision:

*RESOLVED that, pursuant to Section 5.2.34(f) of the Nunavut Agreement, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board approves Environment and Climate Change Canada’s proposal to change the status of Dolphin and Union caribou from Special Concern to Endangered under the federal Species at Risk Act; conditional on the assurance that the listing will not adversely impact Inuit harvesting rights.*

**Reasons for NWMB Decision**

In reaching its decision, the Board considered your department’s submission and presentation at the Regular Meeting. The Board also considered oral submissions from co-management partners at the Regular Meeting and written submissions from the Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board and the Kitikmeot Inuit Association.







harassment and parasites, and wolf predation). The Board also assessed that while some protection is offered to Dolphin and Union’s migratory route in the *Draft Nunavut Land Use Plan*, designation of critical habitat could provide more protection beyond what is currently available.

The Board is aware that Cambridge Bay and Kugluktuk have been extremely proactive in implementing local conservation measures and partnering with other organizations to research and monitor the herd. The Board expects that the uplisting of Dolphin and Union caribou will provide access to funding for ongoing community-led conservation initiatives through federal funding programs such as the Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk and Habitat Stewardship Program.

### Consultation

The Board considered the engagement efforts of Environment and Climate Change Canada through in-person consultation meetings with Bathurst Inlet, Bay Chimo, Cambridge Bay, and Kugluktuk Hunters and Trappers Organizations in 2019 and further consultations held virtually in 2021 and 2022. The Board also noted that Environment and Climate Change Canada engaged with the Kitikmeot Region Wildlife Board, Kitikmeot Inuit Association, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., and the Government of Nunavut during the consultation period. During these consultations, affected communities and Inuit Organizations shared that traditional knowledge needs to be used more effectively, and communities engaged more actively during the COSEWIC assessment process, on which these listings are based. The Board is aware that Environment and Climate Change Canada staff are working with affected communities and organizations across the range of Dolphin and Union caribou to develop an addendum to the 2017 COSEWIC assessment report that summarizes traditional knowledge and Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit.

During the NWMB Regular Meeting, the Cambridge Bay Hunters and Trappers Organization expressed strong support for listing Dolphin and Union caribou and continuing to manage and monitor the herd. The Cambridge Bay and Kugluktuk Hunters and Trappers Organizations indicated that it was vital that they have the opportunity to provide Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and traditional knowledge that would be included in the addendum to the 2017 COSEWIC assessment. The Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board indicated that they are working collaboratively to develop an addendum to the COSEWIC assessment for Dolphin and Union caribou. They expressed the hope that the addendum will provide guidance that could result in greater involvement of Inuit and appropriate use of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit during future COSEWIC assessment



processes.

The Board strongly agreed with the sentiments expressed by Kitikmeot Inuit organizations stressing the need for greater inclusion of Inuit and Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit in the COSEWIC assessment process. Such inclusion would ensure complete and accurate status assessments that would more appropriately recognize the role of Inuit in caribou conservation and management.

### Conclusion

The Board looks forward to continued collaboration between Inuit and government to support the recovery of Dolphin and Union caribou. The Board also looks forward to an ongoing discussion on how to increase the involvement of Inuit and Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit in the COSEWIC assessment process to improve future status assessments, which could contribute to a more successful implementation of the federal *Species at Risk Act* process.

The NWMB looks forward to your reply and completion of the *Nunavut Agreement* Article 5 decision-making process. If you have questions regarding this letter, do not hesitate to contact the NWMB.

Sincerely,

Joshua T. Arreak  
Acting Chairperson  
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board

cc: Michael Svoboda, Environment and Climate Change Canada



**SEP 07 2022**

Mr. Joshua T. Arreak  
Acting Chairperson  
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board  
P.O. Box 1379  
Iqaluit NU X0A 0H0

Dear Mr. Arreak:

Thank you for your letter of July 13, 2022, in which you present the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board's decision on the proposed up-listing of the Dolphin and Union population of caribou from special concern to endangered under the *Species at Risk Act*.

As Minister of Environment and Climate Change, I recognize the importance of the conservation for Dolphin and Union caribou. I am particularly encouraged by the work of the Government of Nunavut, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, as well as the Ekaluktutiak, Kugluktuk, Bay Chimo and Bathurst Inlet hunters and trappers organizations. Additionally, I take note of the shared efforts in developing a proactive vessel management agreement to reduce the impacts of icebreaking, and implementing a difficult Total Allowable Harvest regime to conserve the species. The efforts of so many partners makes me hopeful for the future of this species.

Environment and Climate Change Canada's investments have supported a number of initiatives. These include the 2020 abundance survey conducted by the Government of Nunavut, the Inuit/Inuvialuit User-to-User Working Group, and the Joint Caribou Health Monitoring Project. Collaborative initiatives to collect Inuit Qaujimaqatuqangit will provide further insight into how we can best conserve the Dolphin and Union caribou.

I accept the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board's decision to list the Dolphin and Union population of caribou as endangered. This completes the decision-making process under Article 5 of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. Over the coming months, I will take steps under the *Species at Risk Act* to implement the proposed status change of the Dolphin and Union population of caribou by recommending the decision to the Governor in Council.

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The work ahead to complete the recovery strategy will benefit greatly from a continued collaborative approach with Nunavut and the Northwest Territories and relevant Indigenous partners. In Nunavut, Environment and Climate Change Canada will continue to work collaboratively with Inuit to integrate applicable Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit into the next phase of recovery planning.

Please accept my best regards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Steven Guilbeault', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, P.C., M.P. (il/lui/he/him)