

**Nunavut Wildlife Management Board**  
**Regular Meeting (RM 002-2021) Highlights**  
**Zoom Meeting**

**Regular Meeting (RM 002-2021)**

On June 09, 2021, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB or Board) held its Regular Meeting (RM 002-2021) through the Zoom video conferencing platform.

The Board received submissions from Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO).

For a complete account of the submissions please go to our website at:

<https://www.nwmb.com/en/public-hearings-a-meetings/meetings/regular-meetings/2021/rm-002-2021-june-9-2021>

Below is a summary of the submissions for the RM 002-2021 meeting:

**Fisheries and Oceans Canada**

Fisheries and Oceans Canada provided one submission for the Board's decision and/or advice. Four items were submitted for information.

**Decision and/or Advice Items:**

1. **Precautionary Approach Framework for Northern Shrimp and Striped Shrimp in the Western and Eastern Assessment Zones (WAZ and EAZ)**

Fisheries and Oceans Canada presented a proposal seeking a decision on the Upper Stock Reference (USR) for Northern (*Pandalus borealis*) and Striped shrimp (*P. montagui*) in the Eastern (EAZ) and Western Assessment Zones (WAZ) as a requirement of the Precautionary Approach (PA) Framework for the 2021-2022 fishing season. DFO requested decisions on the USR from the NWMB and the Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board (NMRWB) for the Western and Eastern Assessment Zone in the Nunavut Settlement Area and the Nunavik Marine Region. DFO had informed the NWMB of the Precautionary Approach Framework for Northern and Striped Shrimp in December 2020 and March 2021. The PA Framework has been developed by the Northern Precautionary Approach Working Group (NPAWG) and is intended to serve as a guide for the sustainable management of shrimp in the EAZ and WAZ. DFO informed the Board of the primary components of the PA framework that include establishing Limit Reference Points (LRP) and an Upper Stock Reference, defining stock status zones (Healthy, Cautious and Critical Zones) and Harvest Decision Rules (HDR) for the WAZ and the EAZ. DFO Science has established the LRP for stocks in the WAZ and updated pre-existing LRPs for stocks in the EAZ. DFO was seeking the Board's decision and recommendations, as appropriate, to establish USRs that could be implemented in the 2021-22 fishery in partial fulfillment of the PA Framework, while work on HDRs is

ongoing.

### Information Items:

#### 2. Bowhead Carcass Report, Kitikmeot Region Updates

In the Gulf of Boothia, the Kugaaruk Hunters and Trappers Organization reported 11 bowhead carcasses recorded between October 2020 and April 2021. Hunter observations indicate relatively small size (young) of whales, missing tongues and scars. Samples from eight out of the 11 carcasses have been collected and sent for lab analysis at the Freshwater Institute, Winnipeg. Possible causes of these bowhead mortalities include contaminants, starvation (poor body condition), algae poisoning, disease, and killer whale predation. Veterinarian reports indicate no apparent underlying health concerns or evidence of starvation as a cause of death. Hunter's observations suggest killer whale predation. DFO informed co-management partners and is still gathering additional information using the community-based sample collection funding and satellite images of the area.

#### 3. Updates on the Status of Northern Fisheries under the US Marine Mammal Protection Act Import Provisions

The United States (U.S.) is implementing the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) Import Provisions. This Act states that the U.S. will only accept imports of fish and fish products originating from foreign countries that have enacted management measures to reduce marine mammal bycatch and prohibits the intentional mortality or injury of marine mammals during commercial fishing operations.

The MMPA process is administered by the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). NOAA published on October 7, 2020, the Final List of Foreign Fisheries (LOFF) for 2020, which includes all fisheries for each harvesting nation that exports to the U.S. The LOFF categorizes each of these fisheries as either "exempt" or "export".

Canada is required to submit one Comparability Finding (CF) Application to be reviewed by NOAA for each fishery listed on the LOFF. DFO has begun the CF Application Process and aims to complete it by November 30, 2021. DFO has drafted fishery profiles and solicited input from co-management partners and stakeholders. Thirteen Canadian fisheries on the LOFF are listed as exempt, including three Arctic Char fisheries in Nunavut. Canada proposed the reclassification of these fisheries and participated in technical consultation with NOAA, on January 14, 2021. Moreover, Canada prohibited the lethal removal of nuisance seals during commercial fishing and aquaculture operations.

#### 4. Fisheries Management Operational Updates

##### **Marine mammals**

- Narwhal

DFO is coordinating with Hunters and Trappers Organizations/Associations (HTOs/HTAs) for the 2020/21 narwhal tag returns and summarizing the harvest statistics. Narwhal tags and information packages for the 2021/22 harvest season are currently being prepared. Once the Regional Wildlife Organizations (RWOs) confirm the allocation decisions, the 2021/22 tags will be distributed to communities.

The Nunavut Narwhal Working Group aims to discuss the recently published Science advice on Admiralty Inlet and Eclipse Sound narwhal stocks in 2021. The working group also aims to develop a plan for the review of the Integrated Fisheries Management Plan for Narwhal in the Nunavut Settlement Area.

- Walrus

DFO approved a total of 21 walrus sport hunts for 2021 (Coral Harbour 17 and Arviat 4). An additional six sport hunts for 2021 in Coral Harbour are in the process of being approved. DFO is coordinating with the sport hunt outfitters and distributing sport hunt packages, which include the hunt report form, sampling kit, and licences.

- Cumberland Sound Beluga

The Cumberland Sound Beluga Working Group continues to hold video conference meetings. In 2021, teleconference meetings were held in January, February, and March.

- Harvest Data

DFO is finalizing the harvest data for beluga, walrus, bowhead, and narwhal for the 2020/21 harvest season. Reports of total marine mammal hunting mortality (landed and lost) are essential to develop reliable advice on sustainable harvests.

##### **Greenland Halibut (Turbot)**

The 2021 on-ice turbot fishery in Cumberland Sound started in early February and has now come to an earlier close than anticipated. The final landing report received on April 20, 2021, indicated that there were 82 active fishermen participating in the winter fishery this year. There have been 436.8 tonnes harvested out of the 500 tonnes Total Allowable Harvest. This leaves 63.2 tonnes for open water fishing in the summer.

Active fishing historically started in June/July for the Division 0A turbot management unit. Fishing started in early May for Division 0B. June 22 is the opening date for the Division 0B competitive fixed gear fishery in 2021 with a Total Allowable Catch (TAC) set at 900 tonnes.

### **Northern and Striped Shrimp**

On January 1, 2021 the Northern shrimp fishery in Shrimp Fishing Area 1 opened. Active fishing is expected to begin early June 2021.

The 2021/22 Northern and Striped shrimp fisheries in the Eastern Assessment Zone and Western Assessment Zone opened April 1, 2021.

### 5. Ghost Gear Efforts Updates

Fisheries and Oceans Canada informed the NWMB on plans and potential areas of collaboration under the framework of the Government of Canada's Sustainable Fisheries Solutions and Retrieval Support Contribution Program (commonly referred to as "the Ghost Gear Fund"). The Ghost Gear Fund (8.3 million dollars for 2 years from 2020) is part of Canada's national and international commitment to address marine litter as a signatory to the Global Ghost Gear Initiative in 2018. Fisheries and Ocean Canada emphasized the detrimental impacts of ghost gear on aquatic ecosystems and highlighted some of the challenges facing Ghost Gear Fund projects implementation in the Arctic so far, a current priority in the department's mandate.

### **Regular Meeting 003-2021**

The Board's third quarterly Regular Meeting in 2021 (RM 003-2021) is scheduled for Wednesday, September 8, 2021, in Iqaluit, Nunavut at the Aqsarniit Hotel. Submission deadline (English and Inuktitut) for the RM 003-2021 meeting is **August 6, 2021**. To find more information about the Regular Meetings or about the NWMB, please go to our website: [www.NWMB.com](http://www.NWMB.com).

***For further information please contact***

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