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2017 - 2018 Annual Report

2017 - 2018 ᐱᕐᑦᑕᕐᑕ ᐅᓂᑲᑦ



NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD'S
COMMUNITY-BASED MONITORING NETWORK: 2017-2018 ANNUAL REPORT
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This report was prepared by NovaSila Wildlife Consulting Inc. for the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board. June 2018.

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Introduction to the Community-based Monitoring Network

The Community-based Monitoring Network is an initiative of the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB or Board) that relies upon skilled and accomplished Nunavummiut harvesters to record data on wildlife harvests and observations. Participating harvesters are trained to use rugged hand-held computers with custom-designed software to record wildlife sightings, harvests, and other environmental observations while on the land. When harvesters return from the land, Data Clerks in the community transfer the information into a database of knowledge.

The Community-based Monitoring Network was launched in Arviat, Cambridge Bay, and Sanikiluaq in 2011 and ran for three years. The project then moved to Clyde River and Kugaaruk in the fall of 2015, and is still active in these communities. Data collection in Clyde River is slated to end in September 2018, while Kugaarumiut will continue participating until Spring 2019. A new community that has expressed interest in participating will be selected to join the project each year. Baker Lake is the most recent addition, with the first data added to the database in April 2018.

[illegible][illegible][illegible]



Benefits to Communities

We hope that communities will see the benefits to becoming partners in the Community-based Monitoring Network. The effort of participating communities and harvesters contributes valuable information to improve wildlife management practices in Nunavut. Communities have full access to their own data, which they can use to manage local wildlife issues. The project creates local employment and training opportunities for harvesters, and one part-time Data Clerk position in each of the communities. The project also seeks to improve communication between communities, regions, government, and other wildlife management agencies, while promoting stewardship and cooperative management.

Short-term benefits for participants include monthly draws for Visa gift cards (worth up to \$1,000), and semi-annual draws for larger prizes. Harvesters that collect harvest and observation data for the project regularly also receive recognition awards for their contribution.

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"I am thankful for the monthly draws, when my name gets drawn I am able to provide food and purchase gas to go hunting."

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- *Participating Harvester*

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Clyde River

Clyde River is a community of roughly 1,000 residents located four degrees north of the Arctic Circle on the east coast of Baffin Island. According to the Nunavut Wildlife Harvest Study (carried out between 1996 and 2001) Clyde River's most commonly harvested marine species were ringed seal and Arctic char. The community also depended heavily on narwhal, cod, clams, and sculpins. Caribou were the most commonly harvested land mammals at the time of the study (1996-2001), while Arctic hares, foxes, and waterfowl also frequently provided residents with food and furs.

Engagement in the Community-based Monitoring Network in Clyde River is high overall, as is evidenced by the consistently large amounts of data being collected for the project.

- Between April 2017 and March 2018, Clyde River harvesters recorded travel data from a combined total of 511 trips. The furthest trip documented was over 1,400 km.
 - Data were collected for 476 harvesting events, representing catches of >1,500 animals (multiple birds and fish can be entered under a single record).
 - Harvests were comprised mainly of ringed seals, Arctic char, ptarmigan and waterfowl. Harvest data were also collected on narwhal, walrus, polar bear, Arctic fox, hares, as well as bearded, harbour and harp seals.
 - About half of the harvests were for personal use, with the other half for use by the community.
 - The observation records often documented catches made by other members of a hunting party, or were records of wildlife sightings.
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Clyde River Highlights

- The community Data Clerk enabled communication between the Project Team and participating harvesters, and continually ensured that high quality data were collected and uploaded regularly.
- Nearly all of the harvesters that entered data in 2016-2017 are still actively collecting data, and new harvesters were trained and began participating in 2017-2018.
- A harvester recorded a harvest of a salmon caught in a net west of the community. Staff at Fisheries and Oceans Canada identified the fish as a pink salmon. He has volunteered to work with Fisheries and Oceans staff to spread information on how to report incidental salmon catches to assist in tracking the species in Arctic waters.
- Two Clyde River harvesters attended the Qaujigiartiit Health Research Monitoring Meetings in February in Iqaluit as representatives of the Community-based Monitoring Network.
- There was a substantial increase in the amount of data collected over last year, with no decrease in the quality of the data being collected.
- Nearly every record in the Clyde River database has an audio file with it that speaks to the traditional place name, the health, age, or size of the animal caught, the harvest method, or notes about the trip.
- Recognition awards were earned by nine participating Clyde River harvesters to acknowledge their ongoing contributions to the project. Qualifying harvesters chose gas, gun straps, knives, tents, tools, stoves, and lanterns.
- Two long-term participants were the October winners of the semi-annual grand prize draws of a snowmobile or ATV. The winner of the Spring 2018 draw was a harvester who had only recently begun collecting data for the project.
- During the December 2017 meetings, participants demonstrated their engagement in the Community-based Monitoring Network and contributed valuable information with respect to interpretation of the community's data. It was a highly successful and positively received first ever review of the data by the contributors.
- The Community-based Monitoring Network will be wrapping up in Clyde River in 2018-2019.

“All of the info that are recorded I find important to all of Nunavummiut and others that may need the information.”

- *Clyde River Harvester*

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The Project Team has maintained a dialogue with the manager of the Hunters and Trappers Association. There are plans to return to Baker Lake in the summer of 2018 for additional recruitment and training, and to meet with the Board of the Hunters and Trappers Organization.

