

# NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD

## MINUTES: CONFERENCE CALL No. 55

MONDAY, 12 FEBRUARY 2001

### Participants:

Ben Kovic	Chairperson
Meeka Mike	Member (participated first hour only)
Makabe Nartok	Member (participated first 1½ hrs only)
Kevin McCormick	Member
Gordon Koshinsky	Member
Moses Koonoo	Member
David Alagalak	Member
Joan Scottie	Member
Okalik Egeesiak	Member (participated last 2 hours only)
Jim Noble	Executive Director
Michelle Wheatley	Director of Wildlife Management
Gordon Tomlinson	Director of Finance and Administration
Michael d'Eça	NWMB Legal Advisor (first hour only)

### 1. Opening of Conference Call

Ben Kovic opened the Conference Call at 13:05 p.m. Iqaluit time.

### 2. Agenda for Conference Call

The Board approved (**Resolution 2001- 006**) the Agenda for the Conference Call as put forward by the Executive Director.

### 3. Pre-Hearing Consultations regarding Community-Based Management

Michael d'Eça referred to the earlier (Special Meeting 9) decision by the Board to undertake pre-hearing community consultations with respect to the community-based management system for narwhal and (probably) beluga. He reminded the Members that the Board had also asked him to draft an approach to resolving the current problems with community-based management, this for possible use in the course of the consultations.

Michael advised that he had drafted such a document and had circulated it for comment to DFO and NTI officials as well as to NWMB staff. No response had yet been received from NTI. There was a response from DFO officials, mainly to indicate that the Department had no resources available locally to underpin any

commitments that had implications for funding. In view of the response from DFO, he (Michael) was suggesting (in the draft document) that the NWMB go beyond identifying its own particular role in ensuring the survival of community-based management, but also adopt a pivotal stance by pledging to encourage the co-management partners (including DFO) to fulfill their roles as well. Michael also drew particular attention to the roles and responsibilities of the HTOs and RWOs, as envisaged, namely in matters pertaining to:

- Collecting information on numbers of whales struck, lost and landed;
- Limiting the whale harvests to ensure sustainability;
- Training hunters so as to reduce the number of whales struck and lost;
- (Possibly) limiting the number of whales available to individual hunters;
- Co-ordinating (by the RWOs) whale harvests in circumstances where hunting areas and/or whale populations overlap between or among communities.

Michael pointed out that he took the liberty (in the draft document) of suggesting the form and to some extent the actual content of HTO rule changes and RWO by-law changes that could accommodate the exercise of these responsibilities. Michael also explained that he had incorporated the proposal brought forward earlier (Conference Call 53, by the Director of Wildlife Management) for a flexible revolving quota system as a key ingredient of his draft proposal.

Discussion ensued on a number of matters:

- Ben Kovic stated that to the best of his knowledge tags were not being used as a means of controlling beluga harvests, and asked if/how any of the proposed remedies that involved the use of tags would have application for community-based management for this species. Michael noted that the rules for beluga hunting at Kimmirut do in fact specify the use of tags, and in any event if the harvest is going to be limited there needs to be some way of administering this control. Ben also suggested, and Michael agreed, that a training program for prospective hunters might require a special allocation of tags.

- Kevin McCormick wondered if it would in fact be appropriate or most effective to go forward to the communities with an NWMB proposal that was so prescriptive, or if it might be better to seek input in a more open format. Michael acknowledged that this was a legitimate concern. However he suggested that the nature of the response from DFO and NTI (or lack of such) was at least an implicit indication of concurrence with the general approach from those key co-management partners. Michael also deemed it to be defensible for the NWMB to propose a solution, if for no other purpose than to catalyse discussion.

- Kevin also expressed concern about the pledges being attributed to the NWMB in the draft document. He interpreted this to be taking too much pressure off the co-management partners. Michael suggested that by clearly identifying the overall workload and clearly committing to undertake its own specific part of that workload, the NWMB might in fact increase the pressure on the co-management partners to participate in a manner that would produce results.

- David Alagalak expressed concern about the capacity of the HTOs to administer community-based management in the manner envisaged in the draft proposal. He noted that NTI is aiming to hire people who could help bolster HTO administration in the new fiscal year, but he doubted that this would suffice.

- Gordon Koshinsky expressed the view that community-based management was the most important initiative undertaken by the NWMB to date, and that the initiative had very far-reaching implications. The new system was introduced amid expressions of confidence that the communities could accommodate it or could be brought to a position of being able to do so. If this view were now to be abandoned, then there would be little to stand in the way of returning to and further entrenching the annual-quota-based management system. This would seriously compromise the possibilities for fundamentally reforming wildlife management to better conform to the ideals of the NLCA. Michael agreed that community-based management was at a serious crossroads. He recognized that additional resources might need to be identified and put in place to ensure its continuation and success. He suggested that successful pre-hearing consultations could provide crucial justification for such additional resources and ancillary programming. These considerations would pertain also to the NWMB when going forward with proposals for the next 10-year contract period, especially in respect to funding for the HTOs and RWOs.

- Ben Kovic suggested that a primary object should be to determine from the communities whether or not they remained seriously committed to the concept of community-based wildlife management in its full dimensions, and then go on from there. Michael reminded the Board that community-based management faces an immediate problem for which at least an interim solution must be found, even while resource-identification and capacity-building proceed. The bottom line is that, to adhere to the principles of conservation, wildlife harvests must remain within sustainable levels. If ways can be found for the participating HTOs to control their harvests in the short term, then it should be possible to keep the road to community-based management open before us.

The Board concluded that the draft paper did demonstrate the utility of a background document. However the Members agreed that it would be appropriate for the Legal Advisor to re-draft the document in the form of a general discussion paper (rather than as a concrete proposal) and to focus on:

- Identifying the operational issues;
- Setting out the obligations of the individual co-management partners;
- Acknowledging inadequate capacity on the part of the HTOs / RWOs;
- Identifying the likely need for the dedication of incremental resources;
- Inviting input from all interested parties;
- Proposing no specific long-term solutions; but
- Laying out a short-term strategy for an interim solution.

With respect to the Communication Plan as currently set out, Ben Kovic noted that he had made a statement on radio last week about this initiative. Kevin McCormick asked if the consultation summary would be generated by the NWMB

and if it would include recommendations. Michael replied that this was his perception. On the matter of logistics, Jim Noble advised that the communities have already been contacted about local arrangements. Travel plans are nearing completion, with tentative provision to accommodate media personnel.

The Board decided (**Resolution 2001- 007**) to approve the general framework and (subject to the revisions identified) the content of the draft document prepared by the NWMB Legal Advisor, this to serve as background to and input for the forthcoming pre-hearing community consultations pertaining to community-based management for narwhal and beluga, and further:

- That the Legal Advisor re-write the document in the form of a discussion paper rather than as a proactive proposal; and
- That preparations for the community consultations proceed according to the Communication Plan as presented.

#### **4. Strategic Plan and Work Plan for next 10-Year Contract**

Gordon Tomlinson advised that the consultants had submitted a draft of the Strategic Plan. The document was circulated within the office and to the Legal Advisor as well as to Board Members who were readily accessible. Comments were forwarded to the consultants but nothing further has yet materialised. The consultants also have a short time line for drafting the Work Plan.

Discussion ensued on the likelihood of the consultants completing their part of the exercise in time for the forthcoming meeting of the Board in March. Gordon Koshinsky suggested that the Board consider alerting the Implementation Panel to the effect that finalization of the NWMB submission might require some reiterations beyond the initial April 1 deadline. Gordon referred to the letter of 30 January from the Panel, which acknowledged that production of these planning products was going to be an onerous undertaking. As always, of course, the NWMB should do its utmost to make its submissions on time.

The Board decided to take no further action on this matter until there was opportunity to review the complete body of outputs from the consultants.

#### **5. Operating Budget and Work Plan for 2001/02**

Jim Noble reminded the Members that the annual deadline for submitting the NWMB operating budget for the forthcoming fiscal year is the end of February.

Jim gave a brief synopsis of the NWMB operating budget over the first 10-year contract period. The NWMB became operational in January 1994 and, due to the late start, registered a significant budgetary surplus that first year. This and subsequent budgetary surpluses were carried forward and have been gradually expended in recent years. The Board is now in the position of needing to re-

examine all aspects of its operations with the aim of conserving and ensuring a reasonable level of funding for the remainder of the contract period.

Gordon Tomlinson referred the Members to the “working-draft” NWMB operating budget for 2001/02 included in the briefing material distributed for this Conference Call. Gordon explained that the basic amount provided to the NWMB via the Implementation Contract for 2001/02 is about \$3.7 million. Adding the FIDDIPI adjustment of \$370,000 and including all of the \$1.1 million still available via carry-forwards, indicates approximately \$5.2 million theoretically available for 2001/02 NWMB operations, including the Harvest Study. The “first draft” budget was prepared on that basis.

However if the Board were to expend all of its remaining carry-forward funds in 2001/02, programming in the last full year (2002/03) of the current contract period would be very seriously impacted. With this in mind, Jim and Gordon suggested that it would be appropriate to trim about \$400,000 from the “first draft” operating budget. Doing so would still not include provision for the additional \$200,000 that would be needed to bring the overall Harvest Study budget into line with the total amount of \$7.36 million that was originally approved by the Board. Important questions about continuation of the Harvest Study beyond its scheduled time frame and, more particularly, about attempting to fill in missing data from three of the communities, also remain unresolved.

Gordon Tomlinson led the Board through an examination of possible reductions to the “working-draft” operating budget that would produce an overall reduction of about \$400,000:

- Acquisition capital assets: Reduce by \$52,000 (several items)
- Contracted services: Reduce by \$30,000 (update P&P manual)
- Board meetings: Reduce by \$75,000 (delete one meeting)
- Other meetings: Reduce by \$25,000 (rationalize)
- Office rent: Reduce by \$76,000 (maintain existing)
- Professional fees: Reduce by \$30,000 (sharing NTI legal)
- Website development: Reduce by \$20,000 (defer completely)
- Conservation education: Reduce by \$20,000 (book on mammals)
- Wildlife Studies Fund: Reduce by \$50,000 (more selectivity)

Gordon suggested that it might be possible to achieve some additional minor reductions with respect to Publications (by producing a less costly annual report), with respect to Training (which is already very minimal), and in regard to Group Benefits (such as by perhaps reducing performance bonuses).

Discussion ensued on most of the proposed reductions. Gordon pointed out that any under-expenditure realized in the current fiscal year could and would be deployed to lessening the impacts of scarcer funding in 2001/02. Ear-marking funds for public hearings remains a continuing dilemma; if not required, these funds could be used for other purposes. It was noted that the funding

arrangements under which the NWMB now operates permit revisions to the work plan and re-profiling of funds to meet legitimate needs as the year progresses.

Gordon Koshinsky noted that the NWMB since its inception has tended to set aside slightly more funds (in aggregate) at the outset of any particular budgetary period than ended up actually being used in that period. If past experience is any guide, this would suggest that the Board is probably once again erring on the side of being a bit more conservative than is actually necessary in assessing its fiscal future. Gordon was satisfied that the NWMB is reasonably positioned to remain viable to the end of the current contract period.

The Board decided (**Resolution 2001- 008**) to approve the operating budget for 2001/02 in the general form set out in the “working draft”, but incorporating revisions as discussed in order to achieve an overall budget (including provision of about \$800,000 for the Harvest Study) in the total amount of approximately \$5,000,000. The Board also requested that the final draft budget be circulated to Members for final consideration prior to submission to DIAND by month-end.

## **6. Development of a Fish and Wildlife Stock Database for the NSA**

Michelle Wheatley noted that development of a comprehensive database with separate entries for each of the fish and wildlife stocks in the NSA has been on the NWMB list of “Outstanding Tasks” since prior to her arrival. This was envisaged as a joint venture with participation from the three government agencies having wildlife management responsibilities along with the NWMB. Other priorities have invariably precluded any progress on this item. If the Board deems this to be a genuine continuing priority, it might be reasonable to consider contracting that portion of the work that would otherwise require dedicated effort by NWMB staff.

Kevin McCormick advised that a proposal is under consideration in his Department, in the context of the Ecological Monitoring and Assessment Network (EMAN), for development of one-window Internet access to this type of information. It is also envisaged that this product will be derived through the co-operative effort of some sort of consortium. There would seem to be a possibility that this initiative, if brought to fruition, could meet the NWMB requirement. It may be an initiative to which the NWMB could profitably contribute.

Michelle recalled that work of this nature was also being done by the Beverly-Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board. She undertook to follow up on these leads, in the first instance by contacting Leslie Wakelyn.

## **7. Office Space for the NWMB**

Jim Noble reminded the Board that the current lease for office space expires at the end of March. Jim mentioned the available options: renew the existing lease

(for whatever period), seek to expand the existing lease (to obtain more space), seek to lease space in the new building being constructed by Qikiqtaaluk Corporation, or construct our own facility.

Ben Kovic noted that QC had not yet responded to the NWMB request for more information to permit evaluation of the option to lease space in their new building. Ben stressed that the present office space configuration is fully utilized, with no room to accommodate any additional programs, staff, trainees, or whatever. The uncertain future of the Harvest Study is an important compounding factor.

The Board decided to defer consideration of this matter pending more progress on work planning for the next 10-year period, along with receipt of more information from Qikiqtaaluk Corporation about opportunities to lease space in their new building.

#### **8. Staffing of Vacant Position: Wildlife Management Assistant**

Michelle Wheatley referred the Members to the draft job description along with her briefing note pertaining to this matter. This staffing opportunity stems from the departure of Rebecca Mike, now working for the NWMB on a contractual basis and in a different capacity. Jim Noble reminded the Members that the matter was briefly discussed at the last Board meeting. Michelle noted that the job description incorporates a substantial conservation education component, an approach which is seen in part as an economizing measure.

The Board decided (**Resolution 2001- 010**) to proceed with a staffing action to recruit a Wildlife Management Assistant according to the job description as written, and to advertise with the aim of attracting responses from candidates with a range of pertinent qualifications.

#### **9. USFWS Decision regarding M'Clintock Channel Polar Bear Trophies**

Michelle Wheatley advised that the USFWS representative at the recent meeting of the Polar Bear Technical Committee invited responses to the recent USFWS decision to prohibit the importation of polar bear sport-hunting trophies from the M'Clintock Channel population. They especially want to hear from the NWMB.

Michelle referred to her briefing note in which she set out the elements of a possible response. Kevin McCormick suggested that it would not be appropriate or at least not productive for the NWMB to challenge the USFWS decision. Gordon Koshinsky agreed, but argued that there were other points that the NWMB could and should make, especially from its position as “the main instrument of wildlife management” in the NSA. He suggested stressing that there might have been other factors besides hunting that led to the decline in the M'Clintock Channel population, that what happened there should not be taken to be in any way indicative of the status of other populations, and that the NWMB

looked forward to the time when the USFWS could see its way to re-instating the importation of trophies from the M'Clintock Channel population.

The Board agreed that it would be appropriate for Michelle to prepare a response to the USFWS on this matter, incorporating the elements from her briefing note as modified by the Board's discussion. Michelle was asked to check with David Brackett of CWS regarding appropriate protocols for transmitting the response.

## **10. Proposals for Live-Capture of Marine Mammals**

Jim Noble referred to the expressions of interest from Anheuser-Busch (SeaWorld) and from International Zoological Distributors (Interzoo) to obtain marine mammals from the Canadian Arctic for deployment to various zoological institutions around the world. Anjeuser-Busch is particularly interested in obtaining narwhals, whereas Interzoo mentions walrus, ringed and hooded seals. Removal of animals from NSA waters would constitute harvests, and as such would come under the purview of the NWMB.

The Board decided to defer consideration of this item to a future date.

## **11. Request for Civil Leave to Pursue Dive Training: Chairperson**

Ben Kovic requested the Board to consider his personal request for leave with pay over the period April 7 through May 1 for the purpose of obtaining an unrestricted diving certificate. Ben stated his intention to use this certificate to underpin his participation in specialized Arctic search-and-rescue operations. He emphasized that the training would take place locally, and he would be available for NWMB consultations as might be required during evenings and weekends.

The Board decided **(Resolution 2001- 009)** to approve paid leave for the NWMB Chairperson over the period 07 April though 01 May to enable his participation in diver training in order to enhance his qualifications for search-and-rescue.

## **12. Adjournment**

Ben Kovic closed the Conference Call at 16:05 p.m. Iqaluit time.

**Minutes Approved by:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson Date



## **RESOLUTIONS: CONFERENCE CALL 55**

**Resolution 2001- 006:** Resolved that the NWMB adopt the agenda for Conference Call No. 55, as presented.

Moved by Gordon Koshinsky  
Carried

Seconded by David Alagalak  
Date: 12 February 2001

**Resolution 2001- 007:** Resolved that the NWMB approve the framework and, pursuant to revisions as identified, the content of the draft document prepared by the NWMB Legal Advisor as background to and input for the forthcoming pre-hearing community consultations pertaining to community-based management for narwhal and beluga, and further:

- That the Legal Advisor re-write the document in the context of an internal discussion paper; and
- That preparations for these community consultations proceed according to the Communication Plan as presented.

Moved by Gordon Koshinsky  
Carried

Seconded by Joan Scottie  
Date: 12 February 2001

**Resolution 2001- 008:** Resolved that the NWMB approve the operating budget for 2001/02 in the form presented, but incorporating revisions as discussed in order to achieve a total budget (including provision for the Harvest Study) of approximately \$5,000,000.

Moved by Kevin McCormick  
Carried  
Abstained: David Alagalak

Seconded by Moses Koonoo  
Date: 12 February 2001

**Resolution 2001- 009:** Resolved that the NWMB approve paid leave for the NWMB Chairperson over the period 07 April though 01 May to enable his participation in diver training pertaining to search-and-rescue.

Moved by Gordon Koshinsky  
Carried  
Abstained: Okalik Eegeesiak

Seconded by Kevin McCormick  
Date: 12 February 2001

**Resolution 2001- 010:** Resolved that the NWMB proceed with a staffing action to recruit a Wildlife Management Assistant according to the job description as written, and to advertise with the aim of attracting responses from candidates with a range of pertinent qualifications.

Moved by Gordon Koshinsky  
Carried

Seconded by David Alagalak  
Date: 12 February 2001

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