

Submission to the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board

October 2024

FOR

Information : X

Decision:

Issue: Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) Update – Marine Conservation Area

Background

As part of the Marine Conservation Targets initiative, the Government of Canada committed to advancing progress on effective management of existing marine protected areas (MPAs) and Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs). DFO Arctic Region continues to work with partners to advance the establishment of new sites (Appendix 1) which would contribute to Canada's goal of conserving 25% of Canada's oceans by 2025, and working towards an international goal of conserving 30% by 2030.

Updates

1. Qikiqtait and Sarvarjuaq Study Areas

- Sarvarjuaq (the Canadian portion of the North Water Polynya) and Qikiqtait (the waters surrounding the Belcher Islands area) have been identified in the Qikiqtani Inuit Association's (QIA) 2022 Prospectus to support a regional conservation approach and contribute towards advancing Inuit-led conservation in the Qikiqtani Region.
- DFO, along with Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) and Transport Canada, is leading a whole-of-government negotiation of an Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement (IIBA) with QIA to support Inuit-led marine conservation and management opportunities in both the Sarvarjuaq and Qikiqtait study areas.
- Partners are currently advancing these sites as Ministerial Order Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) under the *Oceans Act*, which would freeze the footprint on ongoing activities in these areas for up to five years.
- The Qikiqtait and Sarvarjuaq Working Group, which has membership from QIA, Government of Canada and the Government of Nunavut, consulted with seven communities in the Qikiqtani region during two community tours held between October 2023 and June 2024. The purpose of these consultations was to share information and seek feedback on the proposed regulatory intent for Ministerial Order MPAs in each area. DFO will be sending a "What We Heard" report back to communities to ensure it has accurately captured the outcome of these consultations, and will be seeking letters of support from the hunters and trappers organizations and hamlet councils in all seven communities.
- On July 4, 2024, letters were distributed to industry and other stakeholders requesting information about their ongoing activities within the proposed boundaries of Qikiqtait and Sarvarjuaq. A second set of letters will be distributed seeking stakeholder feedback on the regulatory intent for each area.

- All Inuit rights under the Nunavut Agreement, including harvesting rights, would be respected in establishment and management of a Ministerial Order MPA under the *Oceans Act*. The NWMB's powers, duties and functions would also continue to be respected.
- Following the consultation period, DFO's regulatory approach for both sites (with all requirements under the Nunavut Agreement met), will be pre-published in the Canada Gazette, Part I.
- DFO anticipates that formal submissions of the Qikiqtait and Sarvarjuaq Ministerial Order proposals will be submitted for NWMB approval at their February 2025 meeting.
- The Working Group would welcome any advice the NWMB may have on our consultation approach or other aspects of the proposed study areas prior to our formal submission.

2. Tuvaijuittuq Marine Protected Area

- In January, 2024, the Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA) formally requested that DFO repeal and replace the existing Ministerial Order marine protected area in Tuvaijuittuq.
- In 2019, the area was designated as a five-year Ministerial Order marine protected area (MPA) under the *Oceans Act* to provide partners time to complete the feasibility assessment and establish a long-term protection measure if recommended.
- Following consultations, DFO received full support from the hunters and trappers associations and hamlet councils of all five associated High Arctic communities (Arctic Bay, Clyde River, Grise Fiord, Pond Inlet, Resolute Bay) in summer 2024.
- In March DFO and QIA co-presented the proposal for a second Ministerial Order MPA to the NWMB for its approval, which was received in April.
- On August 14, 2024, the new Ministerial Order MPA (Order No. 2 Designating the Tuvaijuittuq Marine Protected Area) was published in Canada Gazette, Part II which completes the designation process for this interim MPA.
- This new regulation provides five more years of protection to Tuvaijuittuq while partners work with QIA to consider an Inuit Protected and Conserved Area for the area over the long term.

3. Southampton Island Area of Interest

- DFO is working with the Kivalliq Inuit Association and the Government of Nunavut to advance the Southampton Island Area of Interest for potential designation as a new *Oceans Act* Marine Protected Area.
- The Southampton Island Area of Interest encompasses the nearshore ocean around Southampton Island and Chesterfield Inlet in the Kivalliq Region of Nunavut. The final boundary of a potential future Marine Protected Area will be based on assessments and consultation.
- All Inuit rights under the Nunavut Agreement, including harvesting rights, would be respected in establishment and management of a Marine Protected Area. The NWMB's powers, duties and functions would be respected.
- As briefed to the NWMB at its last meeting, DFO, the Kivalliq Inuit Association and the Government of Nunavut engaged five communities in the vicinity of the Southampton Island Area of Interest (Baker Lake, Chesterfield Inlet, Coral Harbour, Naujaat, and Rankin Inlet) in Winter 2023-2024, to present and seek feedback on a Marine Protected Area Proposal.
- Stakeholders were also engaged on the draft Marine Protected Area Proposal, including from mineral and petroleum, shipping, and tourism industries.

- DFO heard feedback on the area's conservation objectives; proposed boundary of a Marine Protected Area; and proposed measures that may regulate, restrict, allow with conditions, or allow activities, while respecting the Nunavut Agreement. Feedback is currently being compiled into 'What we Heard' Reports and a Questions and Answers document is being developed to be shared with those that participated in the consultations.
- This feedback will inform development of a final Marine Protected Area Proposal and brought to communities during a second community tour, tentatively planned for Winter 2024-2025 to all Kivalliq communities.
- DFO and the Kivalliq Inuit Association are working on a revised set of critical milestones.

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Date: August 8, 2024

Appendix 1. Existing and potential future Arctic protected and conserved areas.

