

Additional background and considerations related to Nattivak (Qikiqtarjuaq) Hunters and Trappers Organization's proposal to fish outside the Nunavut Settlement Area using the 100 tonne Qikiqtaaluk regional exploratory turbot (Greenland halibut) sub-allocation



June 26th 2013

Background

In August 2012, the NWMB, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and the Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board received a proposal from Nattivak (Qikiqtarjuaq) Hunters and Trappers Organization (HTO) to fish the Qikiqtaaluk regional exploratory turbot (Greenland halibut) sub-allocation outside Nunavut Settlement Area waters, but close to the community.

The 100 tonne Qikiqtaaluk regional exploratory allocation is sub-allocated by the NWMB to the Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board, which then sub-allocates it to Baffin communities on an annual basis. The NWMB's *Allocation Policy for Commercial Marine Fisheries* (Allocation Policy) indicates that this allocation "...must be fished within the Nunavut Settlement Area portion of Division 0A and is not transferable to the offshore." The aim is to encourage fisheries development inside the Nunavut Settlement Area that benefits Nunavut communities.

The NWMB considered the Nattivak Hunters and Trappers Organization's 2012 proposal at its September 2012 meeting, and made the following resolution:

"RESOLVED that (i) the NWMB decline to make a 2012 recommendation to Fisheries and Oceans Canada regarding the Nattivak Hunters and Trappers Organization request to transfer its 2012 100 tonne Nunavut Settlement Area allocation to the offshore; and (ii) the NWMB work with Nattivak Hunters and Trappers Organization and its relevant co-management partners during the coming year to facilitate the Nattivak Hunters and Trappers Organizations intention to develop a viable turbot fishery in the near marine waters adjacent to Qikiqtarjuaq."

In May 2013, Nattivak HTO and Arctic Fishery Alliance submitted a similar proposal to fish the 100 tonne Qikiqtaaluk regional exploratory allocation outside of the Nunavut Settlement Area near Qikiqtarjuaq in 2013. Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board has awarded the 100 tonne Qikiqtaaluk regional exploratory sub-allocation to Nattivak Hunters and Trappers Organization for 2013. The NWMB considered the Nattivak HTO proposal at its June 2013 meeting in Rankin Inlet, and decided to hold a written hearing on the matter.

Additional Considerations

Both the NWMB and Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board sub-allocation decisions for 2013 stipulate that the 100 tonne allocation must be harvested within the Nunavut Settlement Area and is not transferable outside the Nunavut Settlement Area.

Prior to the NWMB's June 2013 Regular Meeting, Nattivak HTO's proposal was circulated to DFO, Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board, Government of Nunavut Fisheries and Sealing Division, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., and the Nunavut Offshore Allocation Holders Association for comment. The proposal was also made publicly available on the NWMB's website. The Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board Executive Committee did not provide a letter of support for the Nattivak HTO proposal. The Baffin Fisheries Coalition provided the NWMB with a letter indicating that they did not support the proposal and indicated that the letter could be circulated and made part of the hearing record.

The NWMB has previously received requests to transfer the 100 tonne Qikiqtaaluk regional exploratory allocation from inside to outside the Nunavut Settlement Area. Baffin Fisheries Coalition wrote to the NWMB in 2006, 2009 and 2011 to request the transfer of the unused 100 tonne Qikiqtaaluk regional exploratory allocation from inside to outside to the Nunavut Settlement Area at the end of the fishing season. In 2006, the NWMB approved moving the 100 tonnes outside the Nunavut Settlement Area and DFO applied it to 0A licence holders who had exceeded their allocations. In 2009 and 2011, transfers of the 100 tonnes from inside to outside the Nunavut Settlement Area were not granted based on decisions by the DFO Minister and the NWMB from 2007 onwards which indicated that the 100 tonne allocation should be used only for inshore fisheries development, and should not be transferred outside the Nunavut Settlement Area.

The 100 tonne Qikiqtaaluk regional exploratory allocation is subtracted from the overall Division 0A allocation of 6500 tonnes. Any other fishing, such as winter fishing through the ice for turbot near Qikiqtarjuaq, would also be subtracted from the 100 tonne Qikiqtaaluk regional exploratory allocation.

The area falls within the DFO multi-species survey area, and has been sampled every second year since 1999. The survey takes place in the offshore between the 400 metre depth contour on the shelf to depths of 1500 metres, but one year depths as shallow as 100 metres were sampled. DFO staff have indicated that between 1999-2012, there were 12 survey sets in the area total. Depths between 187 – 1419 metres were sampled. Catch varied between 0-757 fish, and 0 – 256 kilograms.