www.nwmb.com

ᓄᓇᕗᑦᒥ ᐆᒪᔪᓕᕆᔩᑦ ᑲᑎᒪᔩᖏᑦ
Nunavunmi Anngutighatigut Aulapkaijitkut Katimajiat
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board

ᐱᓗᐊᑦᑕᐃᓕᓂᖅ ᐆᒪᔪᓂᒃ ᐊᖅᑯᑎᒋᓗᒍ ᐊᑐᕐᑎᑕᐅᓂᖏᑦ ᐃᓄᐃᑦ ᖃᐅᔨᒪᓂᕆᔭᖏᑦ ᐊᒻᒪᓗ ᖃᐅᔨᓴᕐᑎᒻᒪᕆᑦ ᖃᐅᔨᒪᓂᖏᑦ
Tammaqtailinahuarniriit anngutighat atuqhugit Inuit qaujimajatuqangillu ilihimaniillu ilitquhiannin
Conserving wildlife through the application of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and scientific knowledge

October 9th, 2014

Honourable Leona Aglukkaq
Minister of Environment
Environment Canada

Honourable Johnny Mike
Minister of Environment
Government of Nunavut

Cathy Towtongie
President of Nunavut
Tunngavik Inc

Ross Tatty
Chairperson of the
Kivalliq Wildlife Board

Alex Ishalook
Chairperson of the Arviat
Hunters and Trappers
Organization

Hugh Ikoe
Chairperson of the Baker
Lake Hunters and Trappers
Organization

Barney Aggark
Chairperson of the Aqigiq
Hunters and Trappers
Organization

Paul Kanayok
Chairperson of the Kangiqliniq
Hunters and Trappers
Organization

Stanley Adjuk
Chairperson of the Issatik
Hunters and Trappers
Organization

Dag Vongraven
Chairperson of the IUCN
Polar Bear Specialist Group

David Miller
President and CEO
World Wildlife Fund Canada

Drikus Gissing
Chairperson of the Polar Bear
Administrative Committee

Dear Colleagues:

Re: Follow-up of the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board pre-hearing teleconference concerning the total allowable harvest for the Western Hudson Bay polar bear subpopulation

On October 2nd 2014, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB or Board) held a pre-hearing teleconference concerning the total allowable harvest for the Western Hudson Bay polar bear subpopulation. Representatives from the Arviat, Baker Lake, Chesterfield Inlet, Rankin Inlet and Whale Cove Hunters and Trappers Organizations, the Kivalliq Regional Wildlife Organization, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, Government of Nunavut, and Environment Canada joined the NWMB in discussing several issues pertaining to the upcoming hearing regarding the total allowable harvest for the Western Hudson Bay polar bear subpopulation (see Agenda, Appendix 1).

The majority of the discussion was in regards to the inclusion of the updated Environment Canada population status report and how this report would be used during the hearing process. Although the distribution of this report was initially limited, the NWMB has received written permission to make full use of the report, including making it available on the NWMB's hearing registry. Several representatives voiced concerns that community consultation had not yet been conducted by Environment Canada to communicate the findings of the report. To satisfy the communities desire to be provided consultation on the population status report and an adequate amount of time for review, prior to the start of the hearing, the following timeline was agreed upon by all participants of the teleconference:

ᑎᑎᖅᑲᒃᑯᕝᕕᒃ 1379
ᐃᖃᓗᐃᑦ, ᓄᓇᕗᑦ X0A 0H0
(867) 975-7300
(888) 421-9832

Titiqqap Turaarvia 1379
Iqaluit, NU X0A 0H0
(867) 975-7300
(888) 421-9832

Box 1379
Iqaluit, NU X0A 0H0
(867) 975-7300
(888) 421-9832

1. Distribute the Environment Canada population status report as soon as reasonably possible, including a summary translated into Inuktitut (see Appendix 2 for the summary, the full report will be distributed as a separate document).
2. It has been requested of Environment Canada to present the findings of the population status report during the Kivalliq Wildlife Board's annual general meeting held in Rankin Inlet from October 21st – 23rd (Environment Canada has confirmed their representation at the meeting).
3. Hearing parties and the public will have until November 12th, 2014 to provide the NWMB with written submission to the in-person public hearing concerning the total allowable harvest of the Western Hudson Bay polar bear subpopulation.
4. The in-person public hearing will be held in Rankin Inlet from December 2nd – 3rd.

The NWMB would like to thank all representatives for participating in the pre-hearing teleconference and will be looking forward to the upcoming public hearing.

If you require further information, or feel that this letter does not accurately describe your understanding of the outcome of the pre-hearing teleconference conducted on October 2nd, 2014, please do not hesitate to contact the NWMB.

Sincerely,

Peter Kydd
Director of Wildlife Management
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board

c.c. Drikus Gissing, Director of Wildlife, Government of Nunavut, Department of Environment;
Bert Dean, A/Director of Wildlife, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated;
Lisa Pirie, A/Head of Eastern Arctic, Canadian Wildlife Service, Environment Canada;
Peter Hale, Senior Advisor, Arctic Wildlife Management, Canadian Wildlife Service, Environment Canada;
Leah Muckpah, Kivalliq Liaison Officer, Nunavut Inuit Wildlife Secretariat; and
Paul Crowley, Director of World Wildlife Fund - Canada's Arctic Program

Appendix 1: Agenda for the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board pre-hearing teleconference regarding the Total Allowable Harvest level for the Western Hudson Bay polar bear subpopulation

TIME (Iqaluit time)	AGENDA ITEM	PROPOSED TIME
3:00 – 3:10 PM	Introductions, review and approval of the Agenda	10 minutes
3:10 – 3:35 PM	Development and issuance of a Proposal for Decision compliant with NWMB policy (see the NWMB Governance Manual, section 4.4)	25 minutes
3:35 – 4:00 PM	Peer review and consultation requirements for the updated federal population status report and how this report can be used during the hearing proceedings	25 minutes
4:00 – 4:15 PM	Discussion on the existence/availability of other new information (if any)	15 minutes
4:15 – 4:30 PM	Discussion on the appropriate type and extent of the hearing given the circumstances	15 minutes
4:30 – 4:45 PM	Discussion on the timing/scheduling considerations of the NWMB and parties (e.g. submission deadline; potential location of an in-person hearing) for the public hearing	15 minutes
4:45 – 4:50 PM	Adjournment	5 minutes

Appendix 2:

Environment Canada Research Report

Demography and Population Assessment of Polar Bears in Western Hudson Bay, Canada
November 26th 2013

Authors: Nicholas J. Lunn, Eric V. Regehr, Sabrina Servanty, Sarah Converse, Evan Richardson, Ian Stirling

SUMMARY

- We evaluated the population status and demography of the Western Hudson Bay polar bear subpopulation for the period 1984-2011, using live-recapture data from research studies and management actions, and dead-recovery data from the subsistence harvest in Nunavut.

- We used a Bayesian implementation of multistate capture-recapture models, coupled with a matrix-based demographic projection model, to integrate several types of data and to incorporate variation across the polar bear life cycle. This approach allowed the estimation a suite of vital rates, including both survival and reproduction, in a unified framework linked directly to estimating current and projecting future population trends.

- Survival of female polar bears of all age classes was correlated with sea ice conditions, with lower survival in years of early sea ice break-up. While this supports previous findings linking body condition, productivity, and status of Western Hudson Bay polar bears to environmental changes associated with climatic warming, other productivity parameters were not linked to changes in the environmental variables that we examined.

- Survival of male polar bears of all age classes was not correlated with sea ice conditions, perhaps due to the over-riding effect of mortality from the male-biased subsistence harvest of polar bears in Nunavut.

- The 2011 population estimate for Western Hudson Bay subpopulation based on capture-recapture analysis is 806 bears with 95% confidence intervals of 653-984. This is broadly consistent with the abundance estimate of 1,000 (95% CI = 715-1398) resulting from the 2011 aerial survey. The capture-recapture study point estimate is somewhat lower than the aerial survey estimate, likely due to differences in the size of the effective study population considered by each approach.

- The overall declining trend in size of the Western Hudson Bay subpopulation over the period 1987-2004 was similar to the previous demographic evaluation (Regehr *et al.* 2007), suggesting consistency between the two analyses. However, point estimates differed slightly, with somewhat lower absolute values estimated using the updated statistical approach.

- This updated population assessment suggests that polar bear numbers in Western Hudson Bay have been relatively stable over approximately the past decade. Female

survival is the most important determinant of Western Hudson Bay population growth, and the growth rate of the female segment of the population was estimated to be stable during 1991-2011 (Lambda =1.02; 95%CI = 0.98-1.06).

- As the estimate of female growth rate was derived from survival and reproductive rates, which are more robust than point estimates of population size, this value likely represents a reliable indicator of recent population trend.