

**SUBMISSION TO THE
NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD (NWMB)**

Regular Meeting No. RM 002-2020

FOR

Information: ☐

Decision: ☒

Issue: ***Amendment of Narwhal Summer-Stock Harvest Management for Baffin Island, 2020***

Background:

DFO's 2013 Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP) for Narwhal in Nunavut stated that the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) would review "the narwhal management system based on summering stocks ... (following the 2017 harvesting season)".

In November 2019 at its AGM, the QWB passed a resolution stating that "the Ikajutit HTO should be allowed to have annual, not seasonal narwhal tags, and the Ikajutit and Mittimatalik HTOs should be allowed to harvest narwhal in both Admiralty Inlet and Eclipse Sound". Then, in January 2020 at a DFO narwhal survey workshop in Winnipeg, the Chairperson of the Mittimatalik HTO stated that "there are no summer stocks" in Admiralty Inlet, Eclipse Sound and eastern Baffin Island waters. All six HTOs agree that the current summer-stock management system is not supported by Inuit Qaujimaqatunqanqit, and unduly restricts harvesting by Inuit.

Since 2013, DFO has imposed summer-stock harvest management on the communities without adequate scientific evidence to justify it. Inuit know that narwhal move throughout the summer within and between these areas. At various times during summer, large numbers of narwhal gather and then disperse in multiple directions within hours or days. IQ knows of the many and highly variable movements of narwhal in this huge area in spring, summer and fall, and from year to year.

Inuit have observed dramatic changes in narwhal movements and distributions within and between all these areas for generations. With recent shipping traffic and the abundance of killer whales, changes in narwhal distributions appear to have increased in recent years.

In January 2020, DFO could not provide the needed evidence showing multi-year fidelity of narwhal to any one of these areas. DFO offered no clear methods or plans to obtain the required information (C. Watt, DFO, Winnipeg, pers. com.). On the other hand, DFO has collected telemetry data that verifies that some narwhal may move between these areas during a given summer.

In the opinion of the QWB, the current "summer-stock" narwhal management is not evidence based, and contradicts generations of IQ.

Further, the QWB and affected HTOs conclude that the current "summer-stock" management of narwhal in the Eastern Baffin Island, Eclipse Sound and Admiralty Inlet areas may violate

several clauses of the Nunavut Agreement , including but not limited to the following: 5.1.2 (e) and (h), 5.1.3 (a)(v) and (b) (iii) and (v), 5.3.3 (a), 5.6.50 and 5.7.6.

DFO has been asked to examine most of these issues for the past few years.

Recommendations:

The QWB makes the following recommendations in order to promptly replace the current summer-stock harvest management of narwhal in the waters adjacent to northern and eastern Baffin Island:

- 1) Eliminate summer-stock management of narwhal for the communities of Arctic Bay, Pond Inlet, Clyde River, Qikiqtarjuaq, Pangnirtung and Iqaluit,
- 2) Amalgamate the current seasonal TAH allocations of the six communities into a single annual TAH to include both summering and migratory Baffin Bay narwhal that utilize these waters,
- 3) Enable the QWB to allocate the amalgamated TAH, and any future changes in the TAH, among the six communities, based on IQ and other information, as per clauses 5.1.2(e) and (h), and 5.7.6. of the Nunavut Agreement.
- 4) Establish a biennial forum for DFO to offer information and advice to the QWB for tag allocations and NQLs.
- 5) Continue to carry-forward unused allocated tags from one year to the next for each community.
- 6) Enable each HTO to temporarily transfer carry-forward or annual tags with any of the other six communities, with prior written QWB approval.
- 7) Allow individual hunters, using tags from their home community, to harvest narwhal in the areas of the other six communities, with prior written consent from the nearest HTO Board.

Prepared by: Michael Ferguson, Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board

Date prepared: May 4, 2020