

Summary Statement

National Marine Conservation Areas are established and managed to protect and conserve representative marine areas for the benefit, education and enjoyment of the people of Canada and the world. They create enjoyable experiences for visitors, promote awareness and understanding among Canadians, and provide benefits for Indigenous peoples and coastal communities.

Tallurutiup Imanga National Marine Conservation Area (NMCA) Interim Management Plan (IMP) establishes the initial framework for the protection and management of one of the most ecologically and culturally significant marine regions in the Canadian Arctic. Located in Nunavut, Tallurutiup Imanga NMCA encompasses approximately 108,000 km² of marine waters stretching from Resolute in the west to Baffin Bay in the east and extending into Canada's Exclusive Economic Zone. The area plays a critical ecological role within the eastern Arctic marine ecosystem, and it has sustained Inuit for generations by providing access to wildlife resources, essential to food sovereignty and Inuit well-being. The interest in protecting international, national, and regional values of Tallurutiup Imanga by community members has been a recurring theme since the late 1970's, largely due to Inuit concerns over the prospect of future oil and gas development at that time.

This IMP provides strategic direction for the management of Tallurutiup Imanga NMCA while a ten-year management plan is developed within five years after the establishment of the NMCA. The interim plan outlines the vision, guiding principles, management objectives and associated targets and a zoning plan that will guide operations and consensus-based decision-making for Tallurutiup Imanga by the Inuit-Canada joint management board, the Aulattiqatigiit Board.

The plan was developed collaboratively by the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, the Government of Nunavut, and the Government of Canada (Parks Canada with support from Transport Canada and Fisheries and Oceans Canada). Extensive consultations were conducted from 2018 to 2025 with the five associated communities—Resolute, Grise Fiord, Arctic Bay, Pond Inlet, and Clyde River - as well as with stakeholders including industry representatives, environmental organizations, researchers, and the Canadian public.

Purpose and Scope

The IMP aims to protect Tallurutiup Imanga NMCA's ecosystems and cultural heritage while supporting sustainable use and respecting Inuit rights. It provides guidance for managing marine ecosystems, regulating activities, and supporting collaborative research, monitoring, and stewardship.

Key priorities include:

- Protecting marine biodiversity and critical habitats
- Supporting ecologically sustainable use of marine resources, in a manner consistent with the *Nunavut Agreement* and the *Canadian National Marine Conservation Areas Act*
- Protecting Inuit rights and harvesting practices
- Integrating Inuit knowledge in management decisions

- Supporting responsible economic activity and tourism while promoting community wellbeing
- Promoting collaborative research and monitoring

Ecological and Cultural Importance

Tallurutiup Imanga NMCA holds deep cultural and historical significance for Inuit communities. Inuit have relied on the region's marine resources for thousands of years. Today, communities adjacent to the NMCA continue to use the area for subsistence harvesting and travel. Access to wildlife resources within the NMCA remains essential to food security, cultural continuity, and community well-being.

Tallurutiup Imanga NMCA is widely recognized as one of the most biologically productive marine ecosystems in the Arctic and serves as an ecological driver for the eastern Canadian Arctic. The region supports a wide range of marine species and provides essential habitat for polar bears, walrus, seals, bowhead whales, beluga whales, narwhal, and migratory seabirds.

Governance and Co-Management

Management of Tallurutiup Imanga NMCA is based on a collaborative governance model established through the Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement (IIBA) signed in 2019 between the Qikiqtani Inuit Association and the Government of Canada. The agreement ensures that Inuit rights, knowledge, and interests are central to the management of the NMCA.

A key component of the co-governance structure is the Aulattiqatigiit Board, a joint Inuit–Canada management board composed of equal representation from the Qikiqtani Inuit Association and the Government of Canada. The Board operates through consensus and is responsible for overseeing the planning, operation, and management of the NMCA.

Management also involves coordination with the Government of Nunavut and among several federal departments, including Parks Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Canadian Coast Guard, Transport Canada, and Environment and Climate Change Canada, each of which retains responsibilities related to fisheries management, marine safety, environmental protection, and wildlife conservation.

Vision, Management Objectives and Zoning

The long-term vision for Tallurutiup Imanga NMCA is a thriving, globally significant ecosystem that sustains and empowers Inuit for generations to come and welcomes visitors to experience, appreciate, and respect its meaning to Inuit, Canada, and the Arctic region. Through collaborative governance, responsible stewardship, and ongoing research and monitoring, the NMCA will continue to support biodiversity, cultural heritage, and sustainable livelihoods for generations to come.

The IMP establishes four management objectives and associated targets to guide activities over the next five years. The objectives focus on the protection of Tallurutiup Imanga's natural and cultural environment; the sustainable use of natural resources while protecting Inuit rights and promoting community well-being; collaborative research and monitoring; and prevention, preparedness and response planning to increase public safety and the protection of the NMCA. In addition, a zoning framework is utilized as a spatial management tool that sets the management intent for different areas of the NMCA by dividing it into specific zones, each with a defined purpose and level of protection, objectives, and categories of allowable uses and activities.

As per the *Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act*, the following activities are prohibited in all zones: use or disposition of public lands without authority; exploration and exploitation of non-renewable resources; and disposal of substances in waters except as authorized by a permit or as required for vessel safety and security.

Inuit rights, as set out in the *Nunavut Agreement*, and traditional use of the NMCA by Inuit are not subject to zone restrictions. The zoning regime for Tallurutiup Imanga NMCA recognizes and protects Inuit rights, particularly where use conflicts exist or are anticipated. In addition, the zoning regime does not restrict activities with respect to national security or sovereignty, safe navigation, defense, law enforcement, innocent passage and resupply of communities.

Guiding Principles

Management of Tallurutiup Imanga NMCA is guided by several key principles identified in the IMP:

- **Integration of Inuit Knowledge:** Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit (Inuit knowledge, values, and experience) informs research, monitoring, and management decisions.
- **Inuit Stewardship:** Inuit are part of the land and sea where healthy ecosystems sustain Inuit physical, mental and spiritual well-being and support cultural practices. Inuit are recognized as long-standing stewards of the region whose cultural practices support ecological sustainability.
- **Adaptive and Collaborative Management:** Management approaches will evolve in response to new scientific information, Inuit knowledge, and environmental change.
- **Precautionary and Ecosystem-Based Approaches:** Decision-making prioritizes ecosystem and human health and applies precaution where uncertainty exists.
- **Whole of Government Approach:** A coordinated approach involving federal and territorial departments to guide the management of Tallurutiup Imanga NMCA and support consistent decision-making, efficient resource use, and streamlined administration.
- **Alignment with Legal Frameworks:** Management is consistent with the Nunavut Agreement, the Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act, and other applicable legislation.

Conclusion

The IMP for Tallurutiup Imanga NMCA is based on currently available Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit, western science, and discussions with local communities, stakeholders, Inuit organizations, and federal and territorial departments. The associated communities played an essential role in the development of the plan, by identifying their vision for the area, the values important to them and the potential threats to these values. The IMP also balances the protection of the environment and the respect of Inuit rights with the interests of stakeholders, where collaboration and adaptive management will be central to the ongoing management of Tallurutiup Imanga. The Aulattiqatigiit Board will work directly with the associated communities for the ongoing implementation the IMP, to ensure that their input inform the collaborative and adaptive management of Tallurutiup Imanga.