

SUBMISSION TO THE
NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD
FOR

Information:

Decision: X

Recommendation:

Issue: Carry-forward protocol and gear amendments for the Greenland halibut fishery in the Cumberland Sound Turbot Management Area (CSTMA)



Figure 1. Greenland halibut (*Reinhardtius hippoglossoides*).

Background

The Cumberland Sound Greenland halibut (turbot) fishery was established in 1986 and is located in the Pangnirtung Fjord, identified by the interim boundary (extending to the limit of the Nunavut Settlement Area) of the Cumberland Sound Turbot Management Area (CSTMA; Appendix 1). It is typically fished in the winter using long-lines set through holes in the land-fast sea ice, although some open-water summer fishing occasionally occurs.

The total allowable catch (TAC) was set at 500 tonnes (t) in 1994, that was subsequently established as a 500 t Total Allowable Harvest (TAH) of 500 t by the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) in 2005. This TAH is established separately from the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) Subarea 0 offshore turbot fishery.

The fishery currently has one single, commercial licensee: the Pangnirtung Hunters and Trappers Association (PHTA) with multiple individual harvesters included on the licence.

This submission is seeking a request from the NWMB on two items:

1. Implementation of a standing carry-forward protocol for turbot in the CSTMA
2. Modification of an existing Non-Quota Limitation (NQL) to allow for the use of J-hooks in the CSTMA fishery.

Implementation of a standing carry-forward protocol in the CSTMA:

Turbot harvesting in the CSTMA is heavily dependent on sea-ice conditions and the capacity of the local fish plant to process and store fish. In years where conditions are favorable to harvesting, requests have been made by the PHTA to carry-forward a percentage of the previous season's unharvested TAH to the current fishing season. Carry-forward amounts in the past have been applied as per DFO's *Quota Carry-forward Guidelines for Atlantic Canada (the Guidelines; Appendix 2)* which state that the maximum percentage to be considered for carry-forward in any Atlantic fishery is 15 per cent of the TAC (or TAH), when the stock is considered to be in a healthy state. Carry-forwards in the CSTMA were approved on an individual basis in 2018, 2020, 2023, and 2026.

To reduce the timelines and paperwork required to approve carry-forwards, DFO, with support from the PHTA, is proposing the development of a standing carry-forward protocol for the CSTMA. This protocol, if approved, would allow for the immediate and automatic carry-forward of up to 15 per cent of unharvested CSTMA TAH from one fishing season to the next; with the current 500 t TAH the maximum carry-forward would be 75 t.

A standing carry-forward protocol, permitting up to 15 per cent of net allocation to be carried-forward from a previous season for the NAFO Subarea 0 offshore turbot fishery (applying the same principles as being proposed for the CSTMA) was recently approved via the Board – Minister decision making process in January 2026.

Science Information

DFO Science supports carry-forward amounts of up to 15 per cent when the stock is considered to be in a healthy state, in line with *the Guidelines*. While the CSTMA stock status is currently undefined under the DFO Precautionary Approach Framework, there are currently no concerns or indications that the stock is in an unhealthy state.

Modification of an existing Non-Quota Limitation (NQL) to allow for the use of J-hooks in the CSTMA fishery:

In 2011, a NQL for the use of #11-16 circle hooks on longlines was set in the CSTMA, with the primary objective of limiting incidental by-catch levels. Representatives from Pangnirtung Fisheries Ltd. have contacted DFO to indicate an interest in expanding to include the use of J-hooks in the CSTMA to provide greater flexibility in gear-type for both the on-ice and open water fishery. This includes the ability to use experimental, artificially baited hooks and providing enhanced ability to use Capelin as a local bait source.

There are no restrictions on hook type (i.e. circle hook vs. J-hook) in the NAFO Subarea 0 offshore turbot fishery.

Science Information

DFO Science has not identified any conservation concerns with the use of J-hooks when fishing longlines for turbot in the CSTMA and considers the risk of increasing the amount of incidental bycatch with the introduction of this gear type in the fishery to be negligible.

Consultation:

On March 3, 2026 DFO sent a letter (Appendix 3) to the PHTA requesting support for developing a carry-forward protocol and implementing the use of J-hooks into the CSTMA fishery. DFO indicated in the letter that with PHTA's support, the Department would seek a decision from the NWMB on the two items. In an email to the Department on March 11, 2026, the PHTA manager indicated that their Board is supportive of this initiative.

Recommendation:

DFO is requesting the following decisions from the NWMB:

1. Implementation of a standing carry-forward protocol for the turbot fishery in the CSTMA.

The standing carry-forward protocol would allow for the automatic transfer of up to 15 per cent of unharvested CSTMA TAH to the following fishing season, in years where the stock is assumed to be in a healthy state.

2. Modification of an existing NQL to allow for the use of size #11-16 J-hooks, in addition to size #11-16 circle hooks in the CSTMA fishery.

Current NQLs for fishing gear in the CSTMA require that longline harvesters use size #11-16 circle hooks. Approval of the addition of size #11-16 J-hooks would provide additional flexibility to harvesters during the on-ice and open water fishery.

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Prepared: May 12, 2026

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Map of the Cumberland Sound Turbot Management Area

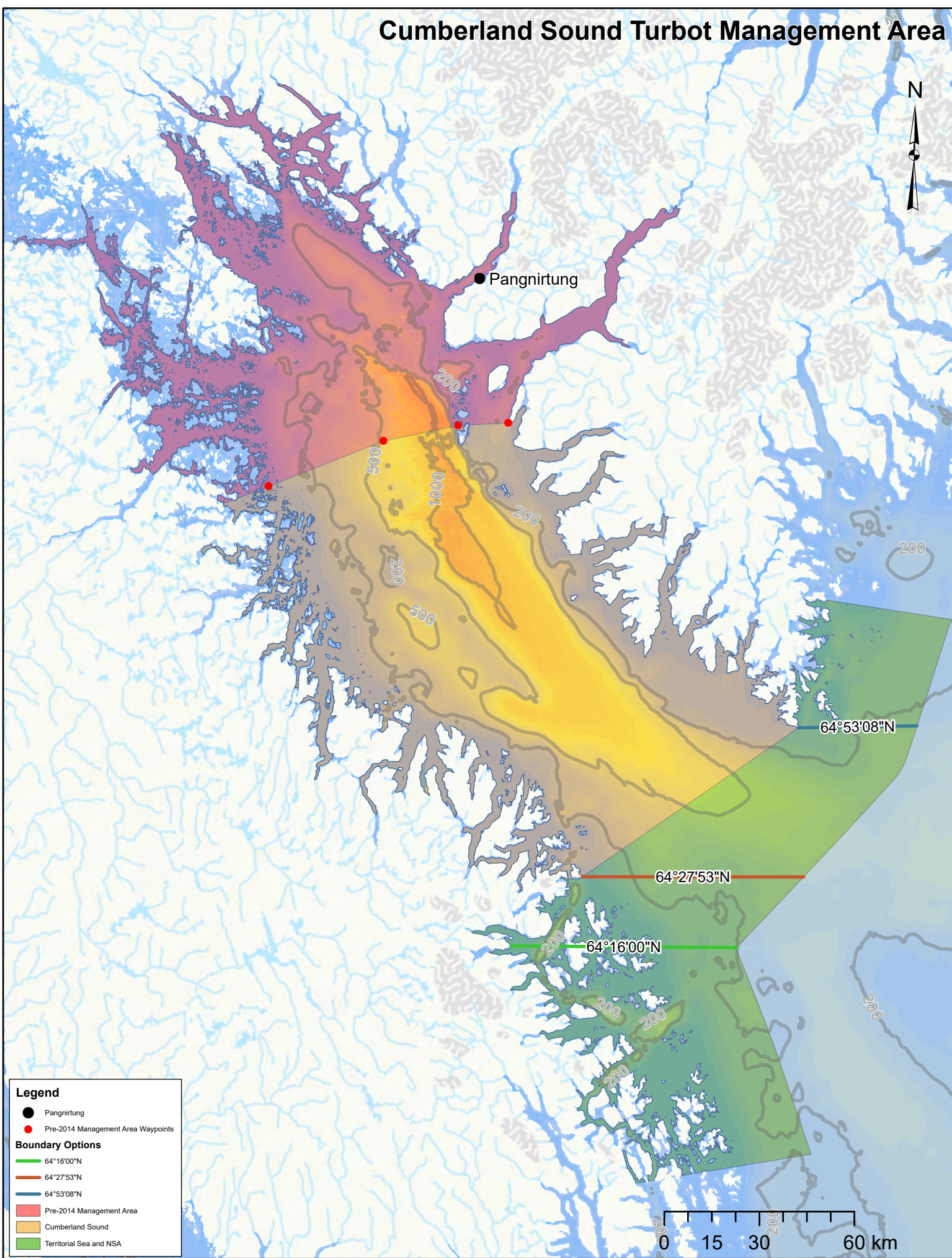
Appendix 2 – DFO's *Quota Carry-forward Guidelines for Atlantic Canada*

Appendix 3 – Request letter to the Pangnirtung Hunters and Trappers Association

Cumberland Sound Turbot Management Area



● Pangnirtung



Legend

- Pangnirtung
- Pre-2014 Management Area Waypoints

Boundary Options

- 64°16'00"N
- 64°27'53"N
- 64°53'08"N
- Pre-2014 Management Area
- Cumberland Sound
- Territorial Sea and NSA



Quota Carry-Forward Guidelines for Atlantic Canada

Effective February 15, 2016

The ability to carry forward quota in Atlantic fisheries will provide participants with increased flexibility to manage quota from one fishing year to the next. It will allow them to adjust to resource and market fluctuations and remove the incentive to overharvest for fear of losing quota at year end. However, carry forward can place added pressure on stocks which must be evaluated regularly. The approach outlined in these Guidelines is based on a consistent and transparent process and subject to factors such as the status and trajectory of the stocks in question, to ensure that sustainability of the resource is not compromised.

Carry forward guidelines are applicable for domestically managed quota based fisheries in Atlantic Canadian waters including northern waters. The guidelines will reflect biological factors identified in the appropriate Science Advisory Reports and other relevant factors and must be based on acceptable precautionary approach principles.

The carry forward of quotas is not applicable to fisheries taking place exclusively in International waters, or for straddling or highly migratory stocks which are shared with other nations unless prescribed in agreements with relevant nations or Regional Fisheries Management Organizations.

Objectives

Provide for the sustainable use of fishery resources by an economically viable and diverse industry through:

- a) maximizing opportunities for licence holders to carry out their harvesting activities in the most efficient manner;
- b) aligning resource harvest with economic factors; and
- c) facilitating self-management of allocations to fishing industry.

Additionally, limitations may be imposed on quota carry forward provisions in order to limit the administrative burden for DFO.

Application

1. This policy applies to domestically managed quota-based fisheries in Atlantic Canada including Community Management Board quotas in the Maritimes, Aboriginal communal commercial quotas, competitive quotas, Individual Transferable Quotas (ITQs) and Enterprise Allocations (EAs) managed under annual or multi-year management cycles.
2. For fisheries under a multi-year management cycle, carry forward provisions are to be considered at the start of a new management cycle and be developed in consultation with stakeholders based on the most recent science advice for the new management cycle.

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3. The percentage of quota that may be carried forward from year to year will be determined in consultation with stakeholders and will reflect scientific advice and conservation objectives. The maximum percentage that will be considered for any fishery to be carried forward is 15%; however special arrangements (e.g. higher levels of carry forward) could be considered for fleets that receive very small relative allocations (e.g. less than 5% of the TAC) in the fishery to facilitate optimal harvest planning.
4. The carry forward provision at the individual or other quota holder level will be applied following the 60-day quota reconciliation period. Any quota remaining from the previous fishing year (up to the maximum) will be automatically carried forward for the following year. Inclusion of in-season transferred quotas as eligible for carry forward will be considered with stakeholders in the development of carry forward provisions.
5. Quota carry forward will be considered when stocks are in the Healthy Zone. When stocks are in the Cautious Zone, quota carry forward will be considered if the stock is/has been on a positive trend and the TAC is increasing. Quota carry forward for stocks in the Critical Zone and declining stocks in the Cautious Zone should only be considered for exceptional circumstances. In the absence of a DFO Precautionary Approach Framework, a decision on the implementation of carry forward will be guided by latest science advice and the history of the stock. If the latest science advice does not cover the scenario of a specific carry forward, new scientific advice could be requested.
6. In cases where an audit of DFO records reveals reporting or other errors that resulted in a carry forward of quota that had already been fished, any quota carried forward in error will be reconciled from current or future holdings.
7. Where applicable, licence fees will be based on the initial quota allocated each year. Carry forward will be added to initial quotas without fees as they would have been paid for in the previous year.
8. Any quota that is carried forward on a licence is attached to the licence and will remain even if that licence is permanently transferred (re-issued).
9. Where applicable, permanent quota concentration limits will not be affected by any amount carried forward. However, these amounts may contribute to any temporary quota concentration limits, and this will be considered on a fishery by fishery basis.

Governance

1. The establishment of new/revised carry forward limits must be done in consultation with stakeholder advisory committees as well as relevant co-management boards and take into consideration the most recent scientific advice for each stock.
2. Approval of carry forward provisions will be at the Regional Director General or Regional Director level (as appropriate) responsible for the management of the fishery with concurrence from other DFO regions involved.
3. Approved Carry Forward provisions will be incorporated into the relevant Integrated Fishery Management Plan and/or Conservation Harvesting Plans (CHPs).



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Appendix 3

Regional Director General
Arctic Region

Directeur général régional
Région de l'Arctique

March 3, 2026

Mr. Simeonie Keenainak
Chairperson
Pangnirtung Hunters and Trappers Association

Carry forward provisions and gear amendments for Greenland Halibut in the Cumberland Sound Turbot Management Area (CSTMA)

Dear Mr. Keenainak:

I am writing to determine the Pangnirtung Hunters and Trappers Association's (PHTA's) interest and support for the following two items:

1. Implementation of a standing carry forward protocol for Greenland Halibut (Turbot) in the CSTMA.

As you are aware, carry forwards were previously approved for the CSTMA commercial fishery in 2018, 2020, and 2023 to allow up to 15% of the uncaught Total Allowable Harvest (TAH) of turbot to be fished in the following season. Recently, representatives from Pangnirtung Fisheries Ltd. have reached out to the department to express interest in the carrying forward of unharvested quota from 2025 into the 2026 fishing season.

To reduce the timelines and paperwork required to approve carry forwards, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is proposing the development of a standing carry forward protocol for the CSTMA. This protocol, once approved, would allow for the immediate and automatic carry forward of a portion of unharvested CSTMA TAH.

DFO's *Quota Carry-Forward Guidelines for Atlantic Canada* (attached for your reference) state that the maximum percentage to be considered for carry forward in any Atlantic fishery is 15% of the TAH. Further, carry forwards should also take into consideration stock health.

As such, the department is seeking support from the PHTA to develop a standing carry forward protocol for the automatic transfer of up to 15% of unharvested CSTMA TAH to the following fishing season, in years where the stock is assumed to be in a healthy state. Applying this to the CSTMA's 500 tonnes (t) TAH would allow a maximum of 75 t of unharvested quota to be available for automatic carry forward, each fishing season. Should you agree, the department will seek a decision from the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board for implementation of this protocol at their regular meeting in June 2026.

Additionally, DFO seeks confirmation of the PHTA's support to carry forward up to 15% of the unharvested 2025 TAH into 2026.

2. Modification of an existing Non-Quota Limitation (NQL) to allow for the use of J-hooks in the CSTMA fishery.

Current NQLs for fishing gear in the CSTMA require that longline harvesters use size #11-16 circle hooks.

Representatives from Pagnirtung Fisheries Ltd. have contacted DFO to indicate an interest in including the use of J-hooks in the CSTMA to provide greater flexibility in gear-type for both the on-ice and open water fishery. As such, and as DFO considers the risk of increasing incidental bycatch with the introduction of J-hooks in this fishery to be negligible, DFO is requesting PHTA support to modify the hook NQL to include size #11-16 J-Hooks. If you approve, the department will seek a decision from the NWMB at their June 2026 meeting.

DFO appreciates the PHTAs collaboration in the sustainable management of the CSTMA fishery. For more information, contact the following Regional Fishery Manager:

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Arctic Region, Fisheries and Oceans Canada
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Yours sincerely,

Christi Friesen
Regional Manager, Fisheries Management Programs, Arctic Region
Fisheries and Oceans Canada

c.c.: Leigh Gustafson, NWMB
Jon Johannsson, Pagnirtung Fisheries Ltd.