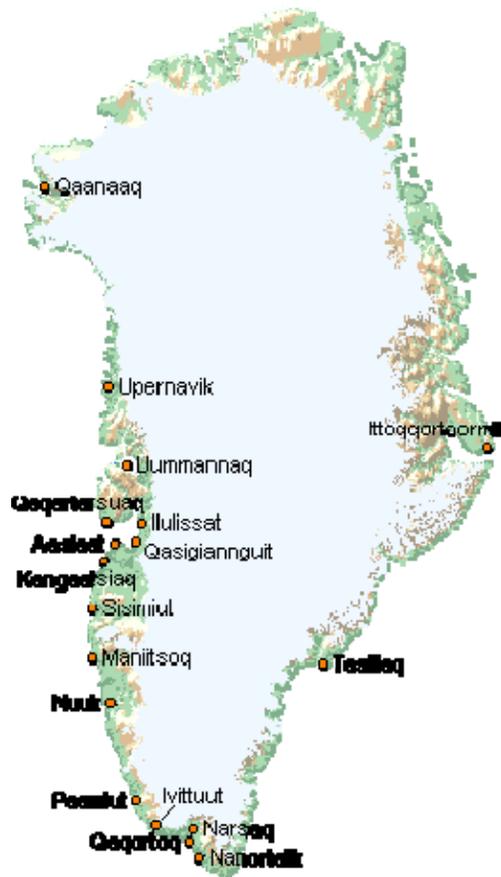


# White Paper on Hunting of Large Whales in Greenland



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**Bowhead whale:** Since 1981, the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources has carried out a series of surveys to estimate the numbers of narwhals and belugas in West Greenland. Bowhead whales are a secondary target of these surveys. The survey carried out in March and April 2006 yielded the largest number of observations of bowhead whales to date. It was estimated that there were 1,299 bowhead whales (95% CI 495-2,939) in the Disko Bay and adjacent waters at this time of the year (Heide-Jørgensen *et al.* 2007b).

Satellite tracking and genetic analyses indicate that bowhead whales from the Eastern Canadian Arctic and Western Greenland form a single population, where whales move extensively and share common ranges in summer as well as in winter (Dueck *et al.* 2006, Postma *et al.* 2006, Heide-Jørgensen and Laidre 2006, 2007).

In 2006, Canada submitted estimates of abundance of bowhead whales in the summer grounds of Eastern Arctic Canada to the IWC Scientific Committee. The Canadian scientists estimated a minimum of 7,310 bowhead whales in the area (95% CI: 3,160-16,900). The Scientific Committee did not accept these estimates and commented several aspects of the analysis (IWC 2006).

Inuit people from Nunavut, Canada, harvest this population moderately. Current quotas are one whale every other year in Fox Basin and one every 13 years in Baffin Bay. The recent abundance estimates are likely to lead to higher quotas in the near future.

The number of observations of bowhead whales in East Greenland has increased since the 1980s (Gilg and Born 2005)