



May 5, 2017

Daniel Shewchuk
A/Chairperson
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board
P.O. Box 1379
Iqaluit, NU
X0A 0H0

Josepi Padlayat
Chairperson
Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board
P.O. Box 433
Inukjuak, QC
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Dear Messrs. Shewchuk and Padlayat:

Re: NWMB-NMRWB joint written public hearing to consider the 2017/18 and 2018/19 total allowable catch (TAC) levels for Northern and Striped shrimp

The following letter and attachments provide the joint written submission from the quota holders for Northern and Striped shrimp from Nunavut and Nunavik. These quota holders are limiting their submission to the issue of total allowable catch levels for Northern and Striped shrimp in the Eastern and Western Assessment Zones. The issue of sharing arrangements for shrimp between management units in the Nunavut Settlement Area and the Nunavik Marine Region is a matter for consultation between the relevant land claims organizations; although the quota holders do feel that the current arrangements on sharing and access are reasonable.

In its Proposal for Decision to the Boards, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) has recommended a rollover of existing TAC levels in the Eastern Assessment Zone (EAZ), while outlining the following options for TAC levels in the Western Assessment Zone (WAZ):

Option 1: Maintain both TACs at current levels, resulting in an ER of 15.9% for borealis and 19.3% for montagui. Should precipitous declines continue next year, reductions could then be considered.

Option 2: Recommended: Reduce ERs to 15%, which would result in a TAC of 1,967t for borealis and 4,758t for montagui. Should precipitous declines reoccur next year, additional reductions could then be considered.

The quota holders, as well as other industry members and stakeholders in the northern fishery, were both surprised and concerned by DFO's preferred option on TAC levels for the WAZ. This recommendation is not consistent with the messages provided by DFO Science at the Shrimp assessment meetings (ZRP) in mid-February, or the science and risk factors outlined at this meeting and the resultant CSAS document, or at the subsequent Northern Shrimp Advisory Committee (NSAC) meeting in March. As a result, industry members have followed up with the primary shrimp research scientists at DFO Central and Arctic who confirmed that discussions with industry did not discuss TAC reductions and that they were not aware of the recommendations that had been provided to the Boards in this respect.

As a result, the quota holders from Nunavut and Nunavik are respectfully requesting that the Boards recommend Option 1 for the WAZ, as follows: Maintain both TACs at current levels, resulting in an ER of 15.9% for borealis and 19.3% for montagui. Should precipitous declines continue next year, reductions could then be considered. This would result in a rollover of TACs for 2017 for both the EAZ and WAZ, consistent with DFO Science and the discussions at the ZRP. Industry agrees that if declines continue in the WAZ through 2017, a further examination would be required which could lead to reductions.

The attached CSAS document and highlighted sections outlines the several sources of uncertainty in the 2016 survey results that support a rollover of TACs for this coming year. These results were identified as being uncertain due to movement in the shrimp biomass which is seen to naturally occur between the WAZ and EAZ due to factors that include high tidal flows in the area and a tendency of the shrimp to follow temperature gradients which did show a year over year change in the WAZ. Under Sources of Uncertainty, the CSAS report states the following:

Hudson Strait is a highly dynamic system with strong tidal currents and mixing. Shrimp could be transported great distances in a relatively short period of time in and out of the WAZ, EAZ, and SFA 4 to the south. This is the most likely cause in the wide fluctuations in biomass seen in these areas. Assessing only a subset of a larger population is a source of uncertainty in determining the true status of a resource.

Experimental work done by DFO in 2007 in the Resolution Island area suggests that survey results may be affected by the tidal cycle. Surveys from 2006–2008 were all conducted at the height of the spring tide, while the 2009–2014 surveys were conducted at neap tides to minimize the tidal effect. Regardless, the survey is conducted over a 24-hour period so strong tidal currents would still be present and may result in either an over- or underestimate of biomass.

On the issue of temperature, the document states:

In 2016, the near-bottom average water temperature (-0.4 °C) in the WAZ was the lowest in the survey time series.

Large confidence intervals most likely resulted from the patchy distribution of the resource in the area. The patchiness in resource distribution may have been influenced by the exceptionally cold water in the area.

To address these areas of uncertainty, DFO C&A recently announced at a Science meeting in Ottawa sponsored by the Government of Nunavut that it would be undertaking research in both the EAZ and WAZ in 2017 to evaluate changes in shrimp distribution within a season in relation to physical and biological oceanographic conditions.

In addition, the scientists clearly outlined that it will take at least another two years of survey results before a trend can be determined for this shrimp area. The CSAS document states:

It will require at least an additional two years of data in this time series to assess the status of the whole population for the purpose of the PA framework.

Due to the reasons outlined above, a consensus was reached at the ZRP and NSAC meetings that a rollover of TACs was reasonable for 2017. The fact that DFO will be undertaking research in 2017 to address the aforementioned areas of uncertainty would also support maintaining the status quo until these results are known.

Based on the inconsistency between the recommendation provided by DFO Ecosystems and Fisheries Management and DFO Science, quota holders are requesting that the Boards move forward with a recommendation of a rollover in TACs for the EAZ and WAZ for 2017, with a further review based on the results of the 2017 scientific survey.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request.

Regards,

Jacpie Maniapik
President and Chairperson
Baffin Fisheries

Olayuk Akesuk
Chairperson
Qikiqtaaluk Corporation

Jobie Tukkiapik
President
Makivik Corporation

Attacment

cc: Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Government of Canada
Honourable Joe Savikataaq, Minister of Environment, Government of Nunavut
Ms. Aluki Kotierk, President, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated
Mr. James Qillaq, Chairperson, Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board
Honourable Darryl Shiwak, Minister of Lands and Natural Resources, Nunatsiavut Government
Mr. John Mercer, Chairperson, Torngat Joint Fisheries Board
Mr. Paulusi Novalinga, President, Regional Nunavimmi Umajulirjiit Katujiqatigininga
Mr. Lootie Toomasie, Chairperson, Arctic Fishery Alliance
Mr. Joopa Sowdloopik, Chairperson, Cumberland Sound Fisheries/Pangnirtung Fisheries

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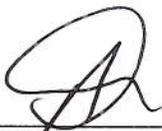
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SUMMARY (p. 2)

- In the Western Assessment Zone (WAZ), the 2014 survey began a new time series, not directly comparable with previous surveys because no trawl standardization between the DFO/Cosmos and Northern Shrimp Research Foundation (NSRF)-DFO/Campelen surveys has taken place. Because the time series is so short, trends cannot be inferred.
- In the WAZ, the resource is currently not assessed with an Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP) Precautionary Approach (PA) framework. At least two additional surveys are needed prior to establishing the PA framework.
- In 2016, the near-bottom average water temperature (-0.4 °C) in the WAZ was the lowest in the survey time series.

ASSESSMENT (p. 4)

The WAZ (Figure 2) was surveyed biennially by DFO from 2007–2013. Because the WAZ was surveyed by a different ship, gear and time of year, it could not be combined with the survey results of the EAZ. This prevented a comprehensive evaluation of the distributions of shrimp and a more practical look at broader stock implications. In 2014, the NSRF was commissioned to take over the survey of the WAZ so that it is sampled in conjunction with the EAZ as a means to address these issues. This action started a new time series for the WAZ. In 2016, the WAZ was surveyed for the third year in the new time series. It will require at least an additional two years of data in this time series to assess the status of the whole population for the purpose of the PA framework.

Exploitation (p. 19)

The reported exploitation rate index for 2016/17 was 19.1% with 99% of the TAC taken (Figure 16a). Based on the 2016/17 TAC of 6,138 t, the potential exploitation rate index was 19.3% (Figure 16b). The decrease in biomass in 2016 combined with the TAC from 2015/16 maintained in 2016/17 resulted in a large increase in the exploitation rate. Large confidence intervals most likely resulted from the patchy distribution of the resource in the area. The patchiness in resource distribution may have been influenced by the exceptionally cold water in the area.

Current Outlook (p. 20)

The current outlook for the resource remains unknown. In the WAZ, the resource is currently not assessed under a PA framework. At least two additional surveys are needed prior to establishing the PA framework for *P. montagui* in this area.

Sources of Uncertainty (p.20)

Hudson Strait is a highly dynamic system with strong tidal currents and mixing. Shrimp could be transported great distances in a relatively short period of time in and out of the WAZ, EAZ, and SFA 4 to the south. This is the most likely cause in the wide fluctuations in biomass seen in these areas. Assessing only a subset of a larger population is a source of uncertainty in determining the true status of a resource.

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tidal currents would still be present and may result in either an over- or underestimate of biomass.

The survey in the WAZ represents a new data series beginning in 2014 and is now an annual survey. The WAZ is now being surveyed with the same ship and trawl, conducted at the same time of year as the survey of the EAZ thus removing issues identified previously about comparing populations in the two assessment zones.

