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Nunavut Wildlife Management Board
P.O Box 1379
Iqaluit, NU X0A 0H0

August 2, 2013

Re: Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board's (QWB) submission to Nunavut Wildlife Management Board's (NWMB) Foxe Basin Subpopulation Total Allowable Harvest Hearing.

Earlier this spring, QWB submitted a request to the NWMB for a review of the Foxe Basin subpopulation total allowable harvest (TAH). QWB submitted this request in response to letters it received from the Hall Beach HTA and Igloodik HTO. During the 2012-2013 season, Hall Beach and Igloodik completed a high number of defense kills due to safety concerns and property damages. In response to these defense kills, the GN, at a meeting in February 2013, informed the communities that a 3-year polar bear moratorium was likely as per the terms of the sex ratio management of the current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed in 2003.

As NWMB is aware, under this MOU, Qikiqtaaluk and Kivalliq communities of the Foxe Basin population are managed via targeted #'s and a flexible quota system.

In June/July 2012, a Foxe Basin subpopulation consultation occurred. These consultations were conducted after the aerial survey was completed on the population. The survey suggested a population estimate of 2500 bears, which is higher than the agreed upon MOU target of 2300 bears. The findings of this survey, along with community observations, suggests that the Foxe Basin polar bear population is stable, and perhaps, increasing.

Trends in current TAH and harvested information do not tell the whole story. Figures from the last ten years suggest that the annual TAH has been reached, exceed or not met. This is the case because communities and its members go above and beyond to protect their community allocations. Actual kill numbers would be higher if communities did not actively and collaboratively work together to deter the bears that caused property damages, encountered hunters while seal hunting or bears roaming into the community. Because communities actively work to do this, it limits administrative responsibility and investigations.

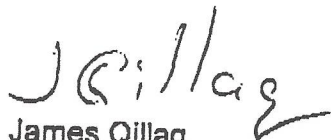
QWB understands that under 5.6.16 of the NLCA, NWMB has the sole authority to establish, modify or removing levels of total allowable harvest. With the recent completion of the survey and the formulation of these new estimates, which Inuit observation is confirmed, QWB supports an increased TAH for the communities.

Simulations results from *RISKMAN* indicate that a harvest increase of 44 tags under the current management regime would support the current target # of 2300 with the latest population estimate.

QWB anticipates that the GN's Department of Environment, in suggesting a new TAH, will make note of external, and international, pressures around Polar Bear Management. While QWB understands this concern, QWB would encourage the NWMB to focus on the needs and requirements of the Inuit and community HTOs of the Foxe Basin subpopulation. This is why QWB is seeking a substantial increase in the TAH of the Foxe Basin subpopulation.

At the moment, the HTOs are compliant with the signed 2003 MOU, and HTOs are working and communicating with the GN in polar bear management. QWB is aware that the GN is working to develop a new polar bear management plan in response to the listing of the polar Bear as special concern under the *Federal Species at Risk Act*. Yet, until the new management plan is implemented, we're under the assumption we're still using the signed MOU.

In closing, I would like thank the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board for providing this opportunity for our members' to be heard of what's being observed in the communities and scientifically backed information.



James Qillaq
Chairman
Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board

Appendix A / ᐃᐃᐃᐃ ᐃ



Figure 1 - Harvest recommendations and Harvest for Foxe Basin subpopulation from 2000-2011.

