

SUBMISSION TO THE
NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD
FOR

Information:

Decision: X

Issue: Approval of the Integrated Fisheries Management Plan for Atlantic Walrus in the Nunavut Settlement Area and establishment of measures to give effect to the walrus management regime outlined in the Management Plan

Background:

In response to growing national and international attention on how the walrus fishery in Canada is being managed and to further harmonize walrus management with the provisions of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA), in 2007 Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) started the collaborative process of developing an Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP or Management Plan) for Atlantic walrus for the Nunavut Settlement Area (NSA).

An IFMP for any stock or group of stocks provides information that is important for the management of a fishery. It describes the scientific and local knowledge available for the fishery as well as gaps in knowledge. It summarizes the most important management objectives and management measures that are needed or that have been agreed to. The intention of putting the information about a fishery in this one document is to have a common understanding of the “basic rules” for the sustainable management of a particular fishery. However, this document is meant to be a living document, able to be adapted as understanding of management issues changes.

Development of the Management Plan and Consultations:

Two Walrus Working Groups (High Arctic and Foxe Basin) were established to initiate the development of a Management Plan for Atlantic walrus. Each Working Group was made up of members of local Hunters and Trappers Organizations (HTOs) (Arctic Bay, Grise Fiord, Hall Beach, Igloolik, Pond Inlet, and Resolute Bay), Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board (QWB), Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI), Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) and DFO.

Between 2007 and 2015, nine walrus working group meetings were held to develop the Management Plan (see TAB 1 for a history of the Walrus Working Groups), and community consultations with Arctic Bay, Grise Fiord, Hall Beach, Igloolik, Pond Inlet and Resolute Bay in 2011. The purpose of the meetings and consultations was to share research results, determine community support for the development of a walrus Management Plan, and determine the most important walrus management issues. These meetings determined the development of the Management Plan, the format, the

important management measures and objectives to be included, and the important research goals. As a result of the Walrus Working Group meetings and community consultations, a draft Management Plan was developed in November 2013. A consultation process was designed by the working group and undertaken to obtain the views of Inuit, co-management organizations, interested stakeholders and the general public on the draft Management Plan:

- An in-person consultation process was used for communities in Nunavut that harvest from walrus stocks where there will be information to recommend additional changes to the management regime for walrus (e.g. Total Allowable Harvests (TAHs)). These consultations were held May 28-June 4, 2014 in Igloolik, Hall Beach and Pond Inlet, and October 21-23, 2014 in Arctic Bay, Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay.
- A written consultation process was used for communities in Nunavut that harvest from the South and East Hudson Bay, and the Hudson Bay-Davis Strait stocks where there is currently not enough information to recommend any further changes to the management regime for walrus (e.g. TAH).
- Copies of the draft IFMP and consultation workbooks were sent to the three Regional Wildlife Organizations (RWOs) and all Nunavut HTOs in June 2014; a consultation web site was established to solicit comments and feedback.
- Presentations were made at the QWB, Kivalliq Wildlife Board (KWB), and Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board (KRWB) Annual General Meetings in the fall of 2014 and 2015 on the walrus management plan.

Consultations focused on the following main areas:

- The need to improve walrus management;
- The draft Integrated Fisheries Management Plan;
- The proposed walrus Management Units;
- The proposed changes to walrus management where there is science advice, in particular, the establishment of Total Allowable Harvest (TAH) levels and operational procedures to implement the proposed changes such as harvest allocation, reporting and post-harvest walrus tags;
- Seek the views and comments from Inuit harvesters and community members on walrus management;
- Relationship-building and continued engagement between DFO and Inuit communities.

The IFMP enables co-management organizations to demonstrate, in one document, the sustainable management regime for Atlantic walrus in the NSA.

Consultation Results:

Overall, support for having a walrus management plan in place was expressed. However, Inuit co-management organizations recommended that the walrus management plan be in place prior to the inclusion of TAHs. Therefore, the IFMP that is being submitted to the NWMB outlines the walrus management framework that is currently in place through provisions of the *NLCA*, the *Fisheries Act* and regulations made pursuant to it, including the *Fishery (General) Regulations* and the *Marine Mammal Regulations (MMR)*, as well as defines the structure for a walrus management system under a TAH regime.

In addition, concerns were raised with the IFMP applying to the entire NSA without in-person consultations occurring in all communities (written consultations took place). DFO is committed to conducting in-person consultations with communities that harvest from the South and East Hudson Bay or the Hudson Bay-Davis Strait stock prior to a request for TAH being submitted to the NWMB for either of those stocks/management units.

After incorporating revisions based on consultations and final review by the Walrus Working Group in May 2015, the final draft was presented at the three RWO Annual General Meetings in the fall of 2015. A full report on the consultation results can be found in TAB 2.

Recommendations:

DFO is requesting approval from the NWMB on the following:

- Approve the Integrated Fisheries Management Plan for walrus in the NSA, including the proposed management structure under a TAH system that includes supplementary management measures to address current walrus management issues and strengthen co-management of the fishery (TAB 3).
- Approve the new Management Unit boundaries identified in the Management Plan that are based on stock units and local traditional knowledge (Tab 4).

A more detailed summary of the proposed changes in walrus management identified in the IFMP can be found in Appendix 1. The end goal is to have a good system documented and approved to sustainably manage the walrus fishery commencing April 1, 2017.

TAB 1 - History of the Walrus Working Groups

TAB 2 - Consultation Results

TAB 3 – IFMP

TAB 4 - Management Boundaries

Submitted by:

Resource Management , Central & Arctic Region
Fisheries & Oceans Canada

Date: February 12, 2016

Appendix 1: Decisions requested from NWMB to implement proposed changes to the walrus management system in the Nunavut Settlement Area.

A. New Management Measures that will apply to all walrus stocks:

- 1. Establishment of boundaries for six Management Units based on walrus stock delineations and local traditional knowledge within the Nunavut Settlement Area (NSA). This includes:**
 - 1) AW-01 (Baffin Bay stock)
 - 2) AW-02 (West Jones Sound stock)
 - 3) AW-03 (Penny Strait- Lancaster Sound stock)
 - 4) AW-04 (Foxe Basin stock unit)
 - 5) AW-05 (Hudson Bay-Davis Strait stock)
 - 6) AW-06 (South and East Hudson Bay stock)

B. New management measures that would apply to walrus stocks/management units when a Total Allowable Harvest (TAH) is established:

1. Establish TAHs, thus replacing the existing regulatory individual and community quotas on walrus (*Marine Mammal Regulations* sections 6 and 26), pursuant to section 5.6.16.
2. In 2013, as per s.5.6.25, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans accepted the NWMB's decision to establish the BNL for beluga, narwhal and walrus in the NSA to be equal to the levels of TAH for those species.

The IFMP reflects RWO and HTO authority to allocate and enforce regional and community BNL and Adjusted BNL pursuant to NLCA s. 5.7.6(b) and s. 5.7.3(b), respectively. Under the proposed management regime, once the NWMB establishes TAH and BNL for a stock/population, the RWO would allocate the BNL among the respective HTOs in the Management Unit, resulting in Community Harvest Limits. The HTOs would then allocate the Community Harvest Limits among members (including the assignment to non-members).

3. Where a TAH has been established for a walrus management unit, the annual harvest for that management unit shall not exceed the TAH.
4. Establish mechanisms to close specific walrus fisheries in each Management Unit when specific harvest limits have been reached:

- a. Once the sum of the Community Harvest Limits within a Management Unit are reached, the walrus fishery for all communities in that Management Unit is closed.
4. Approve the implementation of a Post-Harvest Walrus Tag system.

The Post-Harvest Walrus Tag is not a licence to hunt and would be issued by DFO without fee or administrative charge. Implementing a Post-Harvest Walrus Tag system will assist in:

- Evidencing a person's authority to harvest/possess wildlife appropriate to the particular Management Unit;
- Regulating the allocation of a share of TAH (Community Harvest Limit), including the BNL, as allocated by the RWO and/or HTO;
- Collecting information in relation to harvesting activities;
- Regulating harvesting activities in relation to sport hunt assignment.

The Post-Harvest Walrus Tag will be an important management tool for RWOs and HTOs to allocate and account for harvesting among their members. The Post-Harvest Walrus Tags will be allocated by the RWO/HTO and will be proof of allocation to a share of one walrus from the walrus TAH for a particular management unit. This forms part of the walrus management system in which RWOs and HTOs decide on community allocations.

5. Approve the Walrus Sport Hunt Policies:

- a. Where a TAH has been established: as per the NLCA, HTOs and RWOs are responsible for allocating their community's and regional TAH to their members and the assignment to non-members (e.g. walrus sport hunt) (s. 5.7.3 and 5.7.6). The Sport Hunt Policy identifies the process that will be used under this situation; and
- b. Where a TAH has not been established: the Sport Hunt Policy identifies the existing process being used by co-management organizations to provide for sport hunting opportunities.

C. Provision of Information

1. Harvest information is provided by Inuit hunters to the HTOs, which is then relayed to DFO (MMR s. 17; Fisheries Act s. 61; NLCA s. 5.7.43).
2. When a TAH is established, harvest reporting is required by the Regional Wildlife Organizations (RWO) and Hunter and Trappers Organizations (HTO) in a timely fashion:
 - a. HTO to notify RWO and DFO when their Community Harvest Limits are reached.

- b. RWO to notify DFO when the sum of the Community Harvest Limits are reached in each Management Unit within their Region.

D. Approve the Integrated Fisheries Management Plan for Walrus in the Nunavut Settlement Area (effective date April 1, 2017).