



April 28, 2016

To:

James Qillaq, Chairperson Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board	Simon Qingnaqtuq, Chairperson Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board
Jaypetee Akeegok, Chairperson Iviq (Grise Fiord) HTO	James Qitsualik, Chairperson Gjoa Haven HTA
Philip Manik Sr., Chairperson Resolute HTO	Sam Tularialik, Chairperson Taloyoak HTA
Noah Mosese, Chairperson Pangnirtung HTO	Columban Pudjuarjok, Chairperson Kurairojuark (Kugaaruk) HTA
Joshua Kango, Chairperson Amaruq (Iqaluit) HTO	Bobby Greenley, Chairperson Ekaluktutiak (Cambridge Bay) HTA
Igloodik HTO David Aqqiaruq, Chairperson	Larry Adjun, Chairperson Kugluktuk HTA
Manasie Naullaq, Chairperson Hall Beach HTO	

Subject: Proposed Modification of Existing TAHs for Baffin Bay, Jones and Smith Sounds Narwhal Stocks

In August 2013, Fisheries & Oceans Canada (DFO) conducted the first within season aerial survey of the six Canadian narwhal summer aggregations in the high Arctic: Somerset Island stock, Admiralty Inlet stock, Eclipse Sound stock, East Baffin Island stock in the Baffin Bay population; and the Jones and Smith Sounds stocks near Grise Fiord (Figure 1). DFO Science used the results of this survey to estimate the abundance of narwhal and calculate Total Allowable Landed Catch (TALC) recommendations for each of these stocks (Table 1). In general, the 2013 abundance estimate for the Canadian high Arctic narwhal is higher than previous estimates.

DFO is conducting consultations with potentially affected Inuit on management options to implement the new science advice. The consultation process has two components: (1) in-person consultations with the communities of Arctic Bay, Pond Inlet, Clyde River and Qikiqtarjuaq April 18-22, 2016; and (2) written consultations with the remaining communities that harvest from the Baffin Bay, Jones and Smith Sounds narwhal stocks.

DFO is seeking the input from your HTO and community on:

1. Proposed TAH modifications, specifically, *to modify the existing TAHs for the Baffin Bay and Jones and Smith Sounds narwhal Management Units based on the 2013 survey results*. For the majority of communities, this would result in an increase in the TAH; and
2. The formal implementation of the “narwhal flexible quota system.”

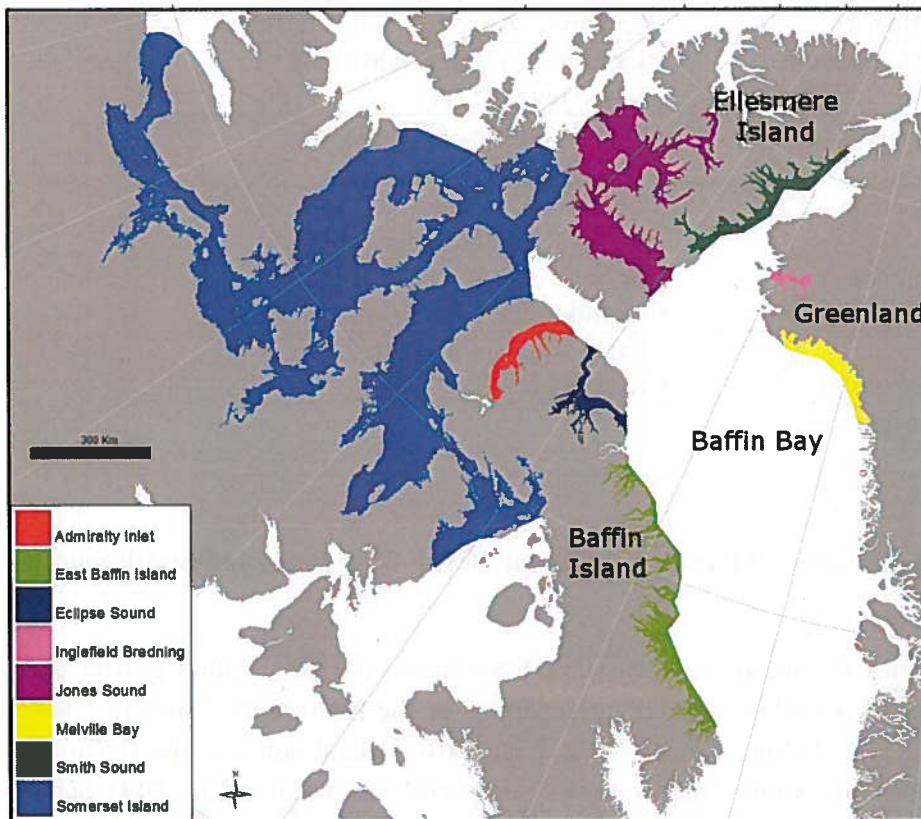


Figure 1. Map of High Arctic narwhal summer aggregations (source: NAMMCO/SC/21-JCNB/SWG/14-05).

Table 1. 2013 survey results including stock abundance estimates, Total Allowable Harvest (TAH) and Total Allowable Landed Catch (TALC) from the 2013 aerial survey (CSAS SAR June 2015) and most recent estimates and current TALCs.

Narwhal Stock	Management Unit	Current TAH	New TALC (TAH) Recommendations
Somerset Island	SI	532	658
Admiralty Inlet	AI	233	389
Eclipse Sound	ES	236	134
East Baffin Island	EBI	122	206
Unassigned	Jones Sound	50*	76
Unassigned	Smith Sound		77

*while there is no TALC, the Minister did approve a Total Allowable Harvest (quota) of 50 for both areas.

Science advice has also been received on the sustainability of the “flexible quota system” that has been used on an interim basis since 2013. This flexible quota system allows for the carry-over of unused TAH to be used in the subsequent hunting season, or to borrow from the following years’ TAH for use in the current hunting season.

The science advice indicates that the flexible TAH system and tag transfer policy currently being used for narwhal is sustainable, as long as the total hunting mortality over the five-year period does not exceed five times the annual Potential Biological Removal (PBR) level. For detailed information on the science advice and the flexible quota/tag transfer policy, please see the attached documents.

Following consultations, DFO will summarize the feedback for inclusion in a Request for Decision package that will be submitted and presented to the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB). The Request for Decision will be to modify the existing TAHs for the Baffin Bay and Jones and Smith Sounds narwhal Management Units based on the 2013 survey results and feedback from consultations. It is important to note that communities and HTOs will have additional opportunities to provide input into the NWMB process as per the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. The goal is to have a final decision approved by the DFO Minister and ready for implementation for the 2017 harvest season.

Through this letter, *we invite your HTO and community members to participate in this written consultation process by providing your comments or concerns on the proposed TAH modifications and implementation of the flex quota system, by May 31, 2016* (see below for email, fax and address options). We can also make ourselves available to participate in a conference call to further discuss this information, if you choose.

If you have questions, comments, or require further information, please contact me directly.



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Attachments: (1) *Abundance Estimates of Narwhal Stocks in the Canadian High Arctic in 2013. Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat. Science Advisory Report 2015/046. (English and Inuktitut)*; (2) *Sustainability of a Flexible System of Total Allowable Annual Catches of Narwhals. Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat. Science Advisory Report 2015/006*; (3) *Marine mammal tag transfer policy and five-point narwhal quota carry-over rule*

c.c.: Jason Akearok, Chief Executive Officer, Nunavut Wildlife Management Board
Peter Kydd, Director of Wildlife Management, Nunavut Wildlife Management Board
Paul Irgaut, Director of Wildlife & Environment, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.
Scott Gilbert, Regional Director- Fisheries Management, Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada
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Jason Mikki and Jackie Price, Coordinators, Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board
Eva Ayalik, West Kitikmeot Regional Coordinator
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