



NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD

HIGHLIGHTS OF MEETING #13 19-21 NOVEMBER 1996

PELLEY BAY, NU

1. This was the thirteenth meeting of the NWMB, and the first meeting conducted in Pelly Bay.



2. Members identified concerns about contaminants leaching into the watershed and marine environment from old abandoned Distant Early Warning (DEW) sites throughout Nunavut. The situation of a potential PCB contamination on Resolution Island was mentioned, in particular. Members requested that NWMB address these concerns to the appropriate Government agencies and Co-management Boards.

3. The Board was apprised of the status of the new Endangered Species Legislation. The new legislation (Bill C-65) passed first reading in parliament this fall. The Board also reviewed and approved a submission on the new legislation prepared by the Board's Legal Advisor for submission to the Standing Committee reviewing the new legislation.

4. The Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) of the Department of Environment advised that one of their main research priorities for 1997/98 would be centred around declining eider duck populations.



5. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) noted that the next meeting of CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) is scheduled for June 1997.

The DFO Science Division (both Central and Arctic Region and Laurentian Region) will be embarking on a major three-year stock identification program of the Eastern Hudson Bay beluga. Initial indications are that the beluga stock utilized by people from the Belcher Islands (Sanikiluaq) may be different from the Eastern Hudson Bay stock found along the coast of Northern Quebec. Plans are underway for the NWMB to meet with Makivik representatives in 1997 to discuss such overlap issues



Walrus sport hunting was discussed, and the development of a Walrus Management Plan is progressing. Two walrus sport hunts were conducted in Igloolik, and one at Coral Harbour this past summer. Plans for walrus sport hunting near Nottingham Island (overlap area) by the community of Salluit in Northern Quebec was cancelled this autumn due to insufficient preparation time.

DFO noted that twenty beluga were tagged with satellite radio collars this past summer in Baffin Bay (Devon Island). Early indications are that the whales remain in Canadian waters; however one tagged beluga was tracked in Greenland waters.

6. DFO advised that there is a CITES concern with the export of whale bone carvings from Canada. Indications are that some countries are calling for tighter restrictions on the shipment of whale bone. The problem centers around the fact that it is very difficult to distinguish between the bones of different species of whale. Meanwhile, some whale bones can be commercially traded while others cannot. This problem may evolve to the point where Canada could/would not be able to issue commercial export permits for any whale bones, and would only permit export for non-commercial reasons, with the prior obtaining of an appropriate import permit.



7. DFO noted that it will be forming a DFO Science Advisory Council in the near future, and appointments to this council are presently being considered. The NWMB appointed Mr. Gordon Koshinsky (DFO appointee to the NWMB) to the Council.

8. The Board discussed the issue of DFO Officers carrying sidearms in the Arctic. This policy was put in place without consultation in the North and is a concern. The Board agreed to bring this concern to DFO's attention. Officers in some parts of Newfoundland have been exempted from this policy.

9. Many communities in Nunavut have been calling for an increase in narwhal quotas. The Canada Greenland Joint Commission on Beluga and Narwhal reviews narwhal quotas regularly and suggest present quotas are sustainable. However, the Commission generally advocates no increase. The NWMB will be requesting a narwhal status report from DFO for its next regular meeting in February, to review the issue.



10. The Board was apprised of the status of the new Fisheries Act (Bill C-62). This is the first comprehensive re-write of the Act since 1868. DFO advised the Board that the proposed changes to the Act aim to make a more flexible, simple, streamlined and user-friendly form of legislation.

The Act allows for partnering, where Industry and Government work together to manage the resource. Bill C-62 has passed first reading in parliament and is in the process of second reading. A Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans will then tour Canada to hold public hearings. The NWMB has been preparing a submission to the Standing Committee to ensure that its jurisdiction under the NFA is properly recognized in the new Act.

11. The Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development (DRW&ED) provided an update on the progress of the consolidation of the three departments.

12. The Board reviewed the status of polar bear Memoranda of Understanding for various polar bear populations and the status of legislative changes.



13. The Board was apprised of an attempt to capture and relocate 25 Peary caribou from Bathurst Island in November. Unusual heavy snowfall, no sun and whiteout conditions prevented the capture. Plans are now underway to continue the project when the light returns. Plans for Peary caribou survey work in 1997 were discussed. Board members also discussed the pros and cons of restricting hunting on the islands due to the decline in the population of caribou.

14. The Board discussed a possible de-listing of gyrfalcons from CITES Appendix I. Other countries are now less concerned about the status of these birds. All indications are that the gyrfalcon population is healthy and that captive breeding has decreased poaching of this prized bird. The Board passed a motion to support the de-listing.

15. A decision paper tabled by DRW&ED on the sale of bear gall bladders was reviewed by the Board. International organizations are calling for a complete ban on sale of bear gall bladders (all species). The Board was presented with three possible options. The first option being a "status-quo" approach, allowing hunters to sell bladders; the second option being a plan to consult with all user groups; and the third being an immediate restriction on all trade of bear gall bladders. The Board chose to support the second option.



16. The Board was provided with a discussion paper, prepared by DRW&ED, on the management of caribou calving grounds in the Northwest Territories. DRW&ED has asked the NWMB to comment on the discussion paper by February, 1997.

17. The Board reviewed several discussion papers on the "Effects of Research Methods on Polar Bears" prepared by CWS and DRW&ED. This has been a long-standing concern of resource harvesters in Nunavut. The Board is reviewing such information in an attempt to ascertain whether an independent review is required. The Board decided to wait for further information from the government departments, before proceeding further.

18. The Board was apprised of the status of a Biodiversity Strategy for the NWT. DRW&ED is currently coordinating preparation of an "Action Plan" for the NWT.

19. The Board was advised that the Akiliniq Planning Committee has released a draft of the management plan for the Thelon Wildlife Sanctuary. A consultant is currently preparing a final draft based on comments received on the first draft.



20. The Board reviewed calls for another bowhead whale hunt for 1997, and is currently considering all aspects of this important issue.

21. The Board reviewed the announcement by the Prime Minister regarding development of new national parks at Wager Bay and Bathurst Island. The expectation is that development of these parks will take considerable time to negotiate. For the next three years no development will be allowed in these areas.

22. The Board discussed development of "Research Priorities" for the 1997/98 season. The Board decided to hold a workshop with Regional Wildlife Organizations and Government Wildlife Agencies in early January to discuss and further develop these priorities.

23. One research funding request was approved by the NWMB at the meeting. The Board approved a contribution of \$47,700 to assist the Southeast Baffin Beluga Management Committee to conduct an "Inuit Knowledge Study of Southeast Baffin Beluga."




24. The Board reviewed and approved a "Donation Guideline" for incorporation in its Operating Procedures Manual.

25. Updates were provided to the Board on the Wildlife Harvest Study, Inuit Bowhead Traditional Knowledge Study and production of a report for the NWMB, covering the years 1994 to 1996.

26. A public meeting was conducted on Wednesday evening, November 20 at the community centre. Among other concerns, Pelly Bay residents raised the concern about possible contamination of the community's water supply from the old DEW Line Site.

27. The next quarterly meeting of the Board is scheduled for Pangnirtung, the week of 24 February 1997.

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