

**SUBMISSION TO THE**  
**NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD**  
**FOR**

**Information:**

**Decision: X**

**Issue:** Coral Harbour Emerging Char Fishery Application

**Background:**

The Aiviit Hunters and Trappers Organization (HTO) have requested exploratory licences for the Canyon River and Cape Donovan watersheds within the Coral Harbour area. The HTO is the applicant and has consulted with Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), Kivalliq Arctic Foods, the Nunavut Development Corporation, and the Government of Nunavut's Department of Environment (GN-DoE). This briefing note and the attached fishing plan are being presented to the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) for decision. None of the proposed waterbodies have been fished under Exploratory Licences in the past.

According to the application and previous correspondence with the applicants there is a large abundance of Arctic Char at the 3 Canyon River Lakes and Cape Donovan Area (Figure 1). The Canyon River Lakes currently support an annual subsistence harvest greater than 5000 lbs (or 2232 kg). The Cape Donovan area supports an annual subsistence harvest greater than 2000 lbs (or 909 kg). The HTO feels that it may be more viable for fish harvesters to fish these lakes commercially, and look into alternate sites for subsistence harvest. If the attached fishing plan was approved, the HTO would ensure that sufficient subsistence fishing locations were identified for their membership.

Note: The attached fishing plan was drafted based on information provided in the emerging fishery application. The HTO Chairperson was unavailable to review the fishing plan at the time this briefing note was drafted. DFO hopes to review the plan with the HTO within the next two weeks and provide an update at the NWMB's December Meeting.

**Canyon Lakes and Cape Donovan Area:**

There is no DFO science advice available for the two waterbodies of interest. The best information was provided by the community of Coral Harbour. Traditional knowledge and fishing history suggests that the exploratory harvest levels in the attached fishing plan are reasonable. Furthermore, these initial harvest levels are inline with previous exploratory harvest levels recommended by DFO. The collection of information as per the five-year exploratory protocol would allow DFO science to verify sustainable harvest levels. These waterbodies should start in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the 5-year approach.

The five-year exploratory fishery protocol is used to provide information on the viability of a commercial fishery in a particular waterbody. It requires sustained harvest annually of the quota over the five-year period and a comparison of biological characteristics of the fish caught at the start and at the end of the five-year period. Changes to the population

structure following sustained levels of harvest may indicate that the level is not sustainable. However, if the harvest over that period does not change indicators of population health, then a higher level of harvest may be sustainable. Harvest of the full quota annually is necessary for this approach.

**Recommendations:**

Based on a review of the available information, DFO's view is there would be a moderate risk<sup>1</sup> of harm from fishing if the attached fishing plan was approved, provided that the current subsistence harvests in these areas take place elsewhere, as per the suggestion of the HTO.

The fishery should be monitored to assess the effect of the exploratory fishery on the stock and the following conditions implemented:

- Each fishery should follow the exploratory fisheries five-year approach, with all samples and data being submitted annually to DFO-Science in Winnipeg, as per the Exploratory Licence;
- Minimum gillnet mesh-size of 5 ½ inches employed.

**Consultations:** DFO Central & Arctic Region  
Sarah Arnold - GN-DoE – Fisheries and Sealing

**Prepared by:** Chris Lewis  
Fisheries Management Biologist  
Fisheries and Oceans  
Eastern Arctic Area

**Date:** Nov. 14, 2011

**Attachment 1:**  
Coral Harbour Emerging Char Fishery Fishing Plan.  
Figure 1.

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<sup>1</sup> Moderate risk: some information is missing which would allow for the assessment of the health of the stock. We think fishing at this level may not adversely affect the stock; however, it is very important to collect data from any harvest that occurs. It is also important to reassess the stock once biological data has been collected and analyzed.

ATTACHMENT:

CORAL HARBOUR EMERGING CHAR FISHERY

LICENCE APPLICANT:

Aiviit Hunters' and Trappers' Organization (HTO), Coral Harbour, NU

PURPOSE:

To develop a sustainable commercial char fishery and promote economic opportunities for Inuit in Coral Harbour.

LOCATION & HARVEST LEVEL:

<b>Waterbody</b>	<b>Coordinates</b>	<b>Exploratory Harvest Level (kg)</b>
Canyon Lakes (3)	(1): 65°09'41.38"N 84°11'5.30"W; (2): 65°09'17.58"N 84°12'20.75"W; (3): 65°09'3.37"N 84°12'46.39"W	2500 (total)
Cape Donovan Area	64°45'9.26"N 82°34'45.35"W	1000

METHODS:

Most fishing will take place during the winter months, ideally between January and May. Arrangements may be made to fish these lakes for approximately one month in the fall, when the fish are running back to the lakes from the ocean. The HTO will be the licence holder and as such will coordinate community members to fish the exploratory harvest level. The exploratory char fisheries five-year approach for collecting biological and catch-effort data will be followed. A minimum gillnet mesh-size of 5.5 inches will be employed. Any harvested Arctic Char that is exported across Nunavut's territorial borders will follow the prescribed direction by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) as directed by the "Fish Inspection Act" and "Fish Inspection Regulations."

Note: Arrangements are already in place to sell fish to Kivalliq Arctic Foods in Rankin Inlet for value-added processing.



Figure 1. Locations of Canyon Lakes and Cape Donovan Area, Nunavut.