

NWMB Recommendation #1 - development of sharing arrangements with Nunavik and Greenland

DFO: In response to a sharing arrangement with Greenland, it was noted that Canada is not a member of the International Whaling Commission (IWC), therefore there is currently no appropriate forum for management discussions with Greenland. DFO specified that once an appropriate forum is established, Canada and Greenland will begin to discuss shared stewardship of the EC-WG bowhead population. With respect to Nunavik, it was noted that DFO prefers that Nunavut Inuit (NTI) and Nunavik Inuit (Makivik) develop a sharing arrangement within the existing TAH for the EC-WG bowhead harvests.

NWMB Recommendation #2 - re-examination of current scientific information

DFO: In response to the re-examination of historic pre-commercial whaling estimates for the EC-WG bowhead population, DFO provided a recent scientific publication entitled "Commercial and subsistence harvests of bowhead whales in Eastern Canada and West Greenland" (Higdon, 2010). The main conclusion of the report is that it estimates that a combined harvest from all sources during the years 1520 to 2009 results in a total estimated removal of 70,000 bowhead whales, with most (88%) being taken by commercial whalers¹. This estimate does not include struck and lost whales or known gaps for certain nations/areas,

In response to the reconciliation of current population estimates, DFO indicated that its estimate remains unchanged and is consistent with the IWC's estimate. DFO further indicated that it has initiated a process to update the existing abundance estimate (currently scheduled to be available in 2015) and will reassess the advice regarding the TAH for the population following the review of the abundance estimate.

NTI: To provide verbal response at the Board meeting.

NWMB Recommendation #3-NTI continue to ensure that necessary equipment and training is available

NTI: To provide verbal response at the Board meeting.

Recommendations: Responses provided by DFO and the submission provided by NTI from RM 2011-004 indicate support for maintaining the current TAH of three bowheads for the Nunavut Settlement Area for the next two years. If the NWMB is satisfied with the reports provided and the review conducted through this briefing, then there is no requirement for the NWMB to modify its March 11th 2009 decision. However, the Board should provide a resolution

¹ The publication does not specifically address the recommendation from the NWMB (i.e. provision of pre-commercial whaling estimates) as the publication only provides an overview and estimate of the total removal of bowheads from 1530-2009. There is still the requirement

indicating that it has completed its review following the 2011 harvesting season and will not be modifying its March 11th, 2009 decision.

Draft Resolution:

“RESOLVED that upon the review and consideration of reports and submissions following the 2011 harvest season regarding the total allowable harvest (TAH) for the Eastern Canada-West Greenland (EC-WG) bowhead population in the Nunavut Settlement Area (NSA), the NWMB has decided to not modify the TAH for the EC-WG bowhead population (3 whales annually) in the NSA.”

Consultations: Anna Magera, Fisheries Management Biologist, NWMB; Rebecca Jeppesen, Director of Wildlife Management;

Prepared By: Adam Schneidmiller, Wildlife Management Biologist, NWMB

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APPENDIX 1: NWMB resolution and recommendations concerning the total allowable harvest for bowhead whales in the Nunavut Settlement Area (March 11th 2009)

RESOLUTION:

“RESOLVED that the NWMB establish an annual total allowable harvest of three bowhead whales for the NSA –to be reviewed following the 2011 harvesting season –which will restrict Inuit harvesting only to the extent necessary: (a) to effect the valid conservation purpose of continuing the successful restoration and revitalization of the depleted population of Eastern Canada –West Greenland bowhead whales (Sections 5.3.3 (a) and 5.1.5 (d) of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA); and (b) to provide for public safety (NLCA S 5.3.3 (c)).”

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI) engage in appropriate discussions –and work towards reaching agreements –with neighboring jurisdictions (Nunavik and Greenland) concerning both the sharing and the responsible stewardship of the Eastern Canada – West Greenland bowhead whale population;
2. That DFO continue in its efforts to: (a) re-examine –in light of new information –the historic, pre-commercial whaling population numbers for the Eastern Canada –West Greenland bowhead whale population; and (b) seek a reconciliation of its current population estimates with those of the International Whaling Commission;
3. In anticipation of potential future increases in the TAH, NTI continue to ensure that necessary equipment and training needs keep pace with the number of hunts undertaken in the NSA.