



Request for Decision: Management Unit Boundary, Total Allowable Harvest and Basic Needs Level for the Foxe Basin stocks of Atlantic Walrus



**Monday, September 15, 2014
Anglican Parish Hall, Iqaluit, Nunavut**



Overview

1. Background on the Request for Decision
 - Current management regime
 - Request for information to establish a TAH
2. Objectives for the walrus fishery established by the Walrus Working Group
3. Community Consultations
4. Decisions requested from the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board



Background- Current Management

The Walrus fishery in the Nunavut Settlement Area (NSA) is co-managed by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB), Regional Wildlife Organizations (RWO), and Hunter & Trapper Organizations (HTO) in accordance with the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA) and the *Fisheries Act* and its regulations.





Background- Current Management

Pursuant to subsection 6(1)(c) of the *Marine Mammal Regulations*, an Inuk may, without a licence, fish for food, social or ceremonial purposes, four (4) walrus annually, except where community quotas exist (Coral Harbour (60); Sanikiluaq (10); Arctic Bay (10); and Clyde River (20)).





Background- Current Management

- Sport hunts occur in some communities.
- Annual review of applications by the NWMB against its Interim Policy for Walrus Sport Hunts. Decision to the Minister of DFO.
- If approved, walrus sport hunts are authorized by Marine Mammal Fishing Licences and formal assignment of rights from a NLCA beneficiary to a non-Inuit hunter.





NWMB Request for Information

- In 2007, the NWMB requested information from DFO to use in establishing TAHs for walrus stocks or populations in the NSA.
- At that time, DFO did not have any information/ science advice to provide.



Walrus Working Groups

- Anticipating the collection of science information, in 2007 DFO established Walrus Working Groups to start the development of an Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP) for Walrus.





Walrus Working Groups

Members include:

- Regional Wildlife Organization (QWB):
Co-Chair
- Local Hunters & Trappers Organizations (HTO): Arctic Bay, Grise Fiord, Hall Beach, Igloolik, Pond Inlet, Resolute Bay
- Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI)
- Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) (participants)
- DFO: Co-Chair
- Other invited participants: Elders, Industry, QIA





Walrus Working Groups

The Working Groups recognized that there is a need to improve walrus management:

- Increased national and international interest in how the walrus fishery in Nunavut is managed.
- Demonstrate sustainable harvesting.
- Strengthen walrus co-management consistent with the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement.
- Incorporate best available scientific and Inuit knowledge



Walrus Working Groups

The goal of the Working Group was to develop an IFMP that would identify the main objectives, management measures and requirements for a sustainable walrus fishery in the Nunavut Settlement Area.





Walrus Working Groups

- Since 2007, eight (8) Walrus Working Groups meetings have been held; and two (2) separate rounds of community consultations.



Photo: L. Arreak

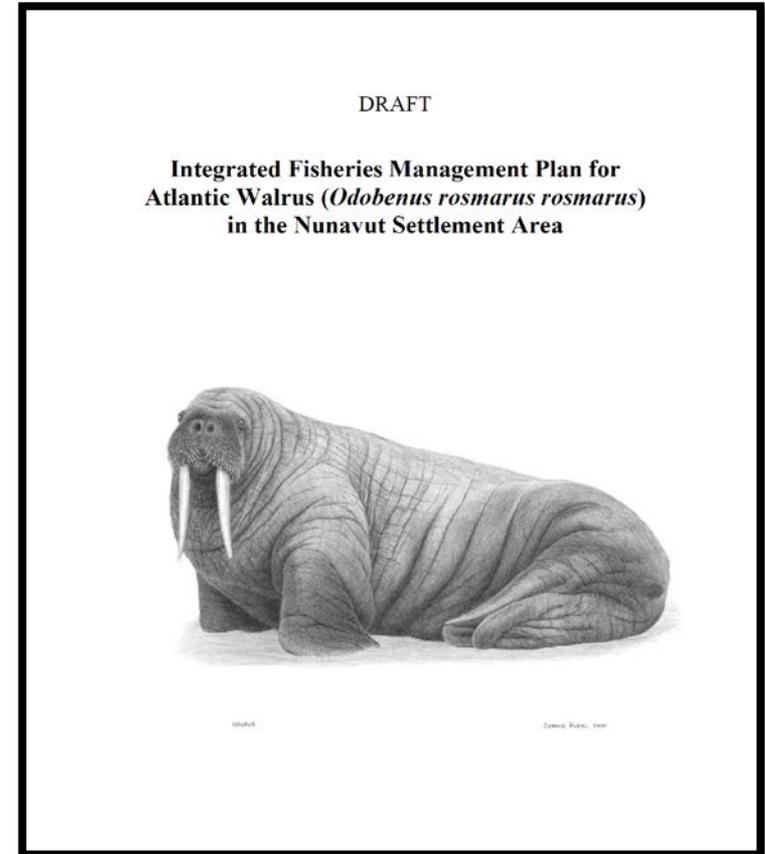


Photo: L. Arreak



Draft Integrated Fisheries Management Plan

- Based on Working Group meetings and 2011 community consultations, a draft IFMP was developed that identified the important objectives, goals and management measures to be able to demonstrate sustainable management of walrus.





DFO Science Advice

- In November 2013, a Scientific Advisory Report was published by DFO that presented survey results for four (4) stocks of walrus in the NSA along with Total Allowable Removal estimates.



Fisheries and Oceans
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Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat
Science Advisory Report 2013/034

ESTIMATES OF ABUNDANCE AND TOTAL ALLOWABLE REMOVALS FOR ATLANTIC WALRUS (*Odobenus rosmarus rosmarus*) IN THE CANADIAN ARCTIC



Atlantic Walrus *Odobenus rosmarus rosmarus*
(Jason Hamilton, DFO)

Context

Walrus in the Canadian Arctic are divided into two genetic populations comprised of seven stocks. The high Arctic population is composed of the Baffin Bay (BB), west Jones Sound (WJS) and Penny Strait-Lancaster Sound (PS-LS) stocks; the central Arctic population is composed of the north and central Foxe Basin (N-FB, C-FB) and Hudson Bay-Davis Strait (HB-DS) stocks (Figure 1). At this time, the relationship between these six stocks and walrus distributed in south and east Hudson Bay (S&E-HB) is unknown.

Ecosystems and Fisheries Management within Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) asked Science to provide population estimates and sustainable harvest advice for Canadian walrus stocks. A previous attempt to provide this advice was unsuccessful because available stock abundance estimates and harvest information was insufficient (Stewart 2008). Aerial surveys conducted in 2007-2011 permitted the calculation of abundance estimates for all stocks except S&E-HB. This document summarizes calculated estimates of abundance and corresponding estimates of total allowable removal (TAR), developed using the Potential Biological Removal (PBR) method, for six walrus stocks.

This Science Advisory Report is from the October 29 to November 2, 2012 annual meeting of the National Marine Mammal Peer Review Committee (NMMPRC). Additional publications from this process will be posted as they become available on the [DFO Science Advisory Schedule](#) as they become available.



Figure 1. Distribution of Atlantic walrus stocks (names in red) in the Canadian Arctic (from Stewart and Hamilton 2013).

November 2013





- The Science Advice was reviewed at the November 2013 Walrus Working Group meetings, along with the draft Walrus Management Plan.
- Agreement was reached to conduct community consultations on the draft Management Plan and the DFO science advice.
- The Working Groups established a timeline for completion of the Management Plan- January 2016.



2014 Walrus Sport Hunt

- The 2013 DFO Science advice indicated that for one stock grouping, the Foxe Basin stocks, the current reported level of harvest was higher than the estimated Total Allowable Removal.



2014 Walrus Sport Hunt

- The NWMB considered the Science Advice in its 2014 Walrus Sport Hunt decision, but as there was no request to establish a TAH for the Foxe Basin stock, the existing regulatory quotas apply, and the sport hunt applications for that stock were approved (40).



- Recognizing the importance of the sport hunt to the Foxe Basin communities and the fact that the Walrus Working Groups were moving forward with the development of an IFMP that would include sustainable harvest levels, the Minister of DFO accepted the NWMB's decision.
- However, due to the conservation concerns identified in the DFO Science Advice, the Minister indicated that a request for decision to establish a TAH for the Foxe Basin stock would be forthcoming.



Community Consultations

- The draft IFMP was presented, along with the Total Allowable Removal estimates from the DFO Science advice, potential struck and lost rates, and the proposed Management Unit boundaries.



Photo: L. Arreak



Community Consultations (cont'd)

- There was general support for the development of a Management Plan and harvest reporting.
- There was agreement that the boundary for the Foxe Basin Management Unit should be further south; although there was no agreement on the exact location. Traditional knowledge needs to be incorporated.



Photo: L. Arreak



Community Consultations (cont'd)

- There was no consensus on an appropriate sustainable harvest level recommendation or struck and lost rate to use.
- HTOs and communities expressed concern that the Total Allowable Landed Catch (TALC) recommendations are too low.

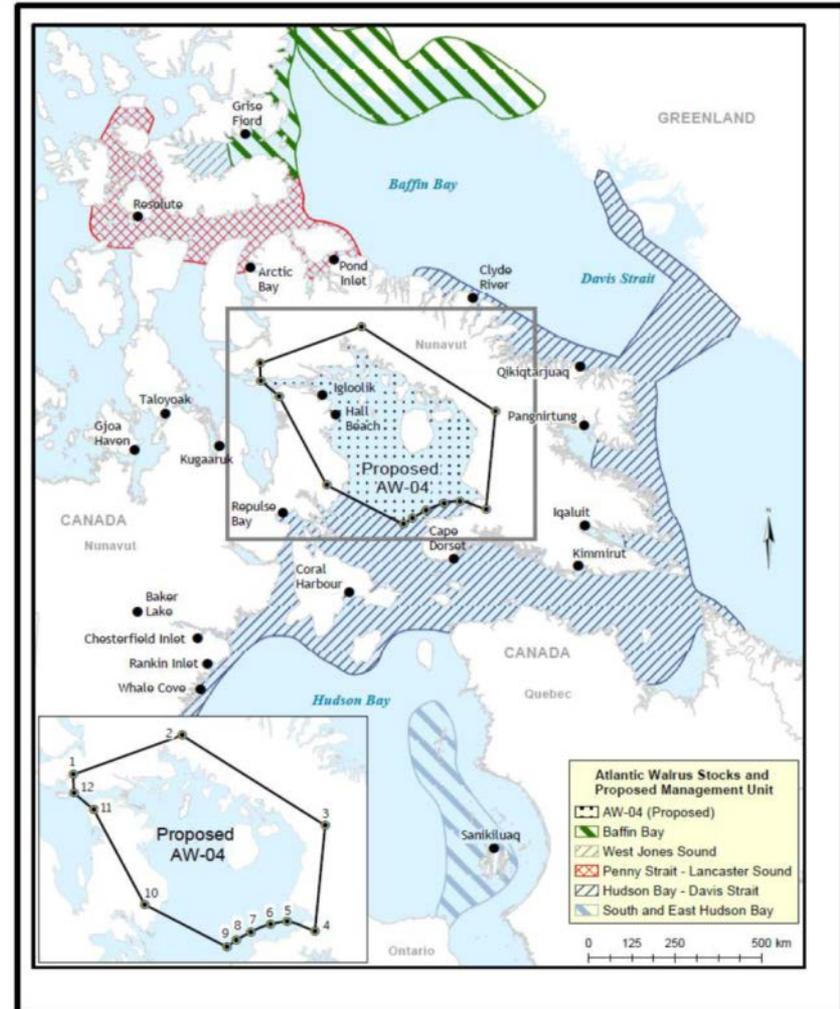


Photo: L. Arreak



Decisions Requested from the NWMB

1. Establish a Management Unit Boundary for the Foxe Basin walrus stocks.





Decisions Requested from the NWMB

2. Establish a Total Allowable Harvest (TAH) for the Foxe Basin Walrus Management Unit (AW-04).
 - DFO recommends a TAH of 116 be established for the Foxe Basin Management Unit AW-04; based on the highest adjusted population abundance estimate and a 30% struck and lost rate.



Decisions Requested from the NWMB

3. Establish a Basic Needs Level (BNL) for the Foxe Basin walrus Management Unit (AW-04).
 - The Minister of DFO accepted the NWMB's 2013 decision that for narwhal, walrus and beluga, the BNL established would be equal to the levels of TAH established or modified by the NWMB.



Decisions Requested from the NWMB

4. Where a TAH has been established for a walrus stock or population, the annual harvest shall not exceed the TAH.
5. Once a Community Harvest Limit, as established annually by the Regional Wildlife Organization (RWO), has been reached for a particular community, no further walrus hunting is allowed, unless approved by the RWO.



Decisions Requested from the NWMB

6. Harvest reporting is required by the RWO and HTOs annually:
 - a. HTOs 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 is reached in Management Unit AW-04 within their Region; and
 - c. HTO to notify DFO of the struck and lost rates associated with the previous year's walrus hunt.



Questions or Comments?