

SUBMISSION TO THE
NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD

August 2023

FOR

Information: X

Recommendation:

Decision:

Issue: Update on New Walrus Sport Hunt Licencing Process

Background:

On behalf of the Nunavut Walrus Working Group (NWWG), Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is providing information on an updated Walrus Sport Hunt Licencing Process (the Process) that will replace the Interim Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) Policy for Walrus Sport Hunts.

Following the NWMB's decision to discontinue their Interim Walrus Sport Hunt Policy after the 2023 season, the NWWG has been meeting and co-developing an updated process to ensure the sustainable management and efficient licencing of walrus sport hunts in Nunavut with Inuit outfitters. Walrus will continue to be sustainability harvested by Inuit and sport hunters while providing economic benefits to Nunavut communities.

The NWWG has drafted and is working on finalizing the Process, which currently includes five steps as follows:

1. **Call for Applications:** The call for applications will be issued by Regional Wildlife Organizations (RWOs) with the timing associated with each RWO's Annual General Meeting (AGM). This is a familiar process for Hunters and Trappers Organizations (HTO) and outfitters as it is currently used for the bowhead hunt call for applications. Applications will be submitted to HTOs.
2. **HTO Review and Support of Applications:** Each HTO board will review applications and, if it is complete and they approve, they will send the application and a letter of support from the HTO to their RWO.
3. **RWO Review and Approval of Applications:** The RWOs will review the applications sent by HTOs and ensure all required information has been submitted. In their review of applications, the RWOs may consider conservation concerns, RWO by-laws related to walrus hunting, the apparent capacity and experience of the outfitter to successfully carry out the sport hunt as planned, consistency of the proposed sport hunt with the principles and objectives of the *Nunavut Agreement*, and any other information the RWO finds pertinent to the evaluation of the

application. The RWO will then send a letter of approval or rejection for each application to DFO with copies to the HTO and outfitter.

4. **DFO Review:** DFO will review the RWO and HTO letters and any applicable information contained in the sport hunt applications to ensure compliance with all Acts and Regulations under their purview. DFO will notify applicants, HTOs, and RWOs via email if their application has been approved.
5. **Issuance of the Marine Mammal Fishing Licence:** Upon receiving the completed documents and licence fee, DFO Fisheries Management staff will issue a Marine Mammal Fishing Licence for walrus pursuant to Section 4(1) of the *Marine Mammal Regulations*.

The NWWG acknowledges that capacity at the RWOs may be limited and has identified that in the event an RWO cannot fulfil their duties as outlined above, DFO will fulfil these duties.

In the NWMB's decision to discontinue the Interim Walrus Sport Hunt Policy, the NWMB stated that the policy presented a prohibitive timeline to Inuit outfitters. The Process proposes to alleviate this issue by having DFO's Regional Director General (RDG) approve walrus sport hunt applications instead of DFO's Minister. The NWWG will work together to update the Walrus Integrated Fisheries Management Plan to reflect this new process for sport hunts.

Barring any significant issues or concerns raised by the NWMB at this Regular Meeting, the NWWG will continue to work on and finalize the Process. At the same time, DFO staff will prepare a memorandum for the Minister outlining the Process and request the Minister delegate her authority to approve walrus sport hunts to the RDG. With these concurrent processes underway, it is anticipated that the call for walrus sport hunt applications will occur this fall in conjunction with the RWO's AGMs as indicated in the current draft Process.

Consultation:

The NWWG includes participation from:

- Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.;
- Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board;
- Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board;
- Kivalliq Wildlife Board;
- Nunavut Wildlife Management Board; and
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada- Fisheries Management and Science (as required).

The NWWG met most recently on July 11, 2023, and will meet again in September.

Recommendation:

At the July 11 NWWG meeting, NWMB representatives identified that a NWMB decision on the Process would not be required. DFO, on behalf of the NWWG, wanted to present the Process at this time to afford the NWMB the opportunity to provide any feedback prior to finalizing the Process.

Prepared by: Fisheries Management, Arctic Region – Fisheries & Oceans Canada

Date: July 24, 2023