



APR 26 2018

Mr. Daniel Shewchuk
Acting Chairperson
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board
c/o Taqialuq Sataa
< tsataa@nwmb.com >

Dear Mr. Shewchuk:

Thank you for your letter of January 18, 2017, in which you: 1) forwarded the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board's (NWMB) decision to accept the current consultations on the *Action Plan for the Blue Whale (Balaenoptera musculus), North Atlantic population, in Canada* and; 2) asked for the final recovery documents with respect to Blue Whale and Northern, Spotted and Atlantic Wolffish to be sent to the NWMB for approval once the 60-day public consultation period has been completed. I apologize for the delay in responding.

First of all, thank you for your understanding regarding Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) consultations on the Blue Whale. Your concerns regarding the possible effects of climate change, particularly the potential for species to undergo a range expansion, is a concern shared by this Government. I acknowledge the recommendations of the NWMB that, should evidence arise indicating that the species has expanded in or adjacent to the Nunavut Settlement Area (NSA), it will be necessary and appropriate for DFO to conduct consultations with Nunavut communities in the NSA. The Action Plan for the Blue Whale supports research to better estimate the size and distribution of the Blue Whale in the Northeast Atlantic. I would like to specify that the recovery actions proposed in this Action Plan for the Blue Whale do not currently occur in the NSA.

To accommodate the NWMB's request on the review and approval of final versions of recovery documents, we will forward final versions of the following three recovery documents to the NWMB once the public comment period on the Species at Risk Public Registry has been completed and comments have been incorporated:

- Proposed Action Plan for Blue Whale, Northwest Atlantic population;
- Amended Recovery Strategy for Northern Wolffish and Spotted Wolffish, and Management Plan for Atlantic Wolffish; and
- Proposed Action Plan for the Northern Wolffish and Spotted Wolffish.

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Regarding NWMB's approval of other final recovery documents, we acknowledge that submission of final recovery documents to the NWMB for approval has recently been communicated to Environment and Climate Change Canada and has become a practice of the Canadian Wildlife Service. However, submitting recovery documents to the NWMB once the 60-day public consultation period has been completed would not make it possible for DFO to finalize these documents within the subsequent 30 days, as required by the *Species at Risk Act*. Therefore, we respectfully request that the NWMB, DFO, and other federal departments first work together to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for fair consultations and decision making on the approval of recovery documents going forward.

In the meantime, we will continue to work with the NWMB with respect to the occurrence of rare species in the NSA, and to update the 2008 MOU, "A Memorandum of Understanding to Harmonize the Designation of Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species under the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement* and the Listing of Wildlife Species at Risk under the *Species at Risk Act*".

Thank you for writing. I look forward to ongoing correspondence with the NWMB.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. LeBlanc". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Dominic LeBlanc, P.C., Q.C., M.P.
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard

