



the Dolphin and Union caribou herd and the limited number of tags available under the Total Allowable Harvest. They also stated that they were not informed during government consultations that collaring mortalities would be counted against the Total Allowable Harvest. They emphasized that lost harvest opportunities also result in missed chances to build relationships, strengthen social bonds, and enhance knowledge of the land.

The Kugluktuk Hunters and Trappers Organization emphasized that caribou are essential to Inuit culture and identity and play a significant role in the Inuit way of life. They also stated that, initially, when the collaring project began, there was no mention of mortalities being taken off the Total Allowable Harvest.

In reaching its resolution, the Board considered the written submissions from the Government of Nunavut and the Cambridge Bay Hunters and Trappers Organization. These included the following key points:

1. Both the Government of Nunavut and the Cambridge Bay Hunters and Trappers Organization do not want caribou that die from collaring research to count towards the Total Allowable harvest for herds that are subject to a Total Allowable harvest.
2. The Government of Nunavut wants this to apply to all caribou herds in Nunavut that are subject to Total Allowable Harvest.
3. Counting caribou tags lost because of a collaring mortality towards the Total Allowable harvest represents a loss of Inuit rights to cultural expression.
4. The Cambridge Bay Hunters and Trappers Organization made several collaring-related recommendations concerning Inuit knowledge and participation in collaring work, compensation to affected communities, reporting, and sample collection.

The Board also listened to oral submissions from both applicants and other co-management partners during its Regular Meeting on November 29, 2023. The Board asked the Government of Nunavut why collaring mortalities are counted towards the Total Allowable Harvest. The Government of Nunavut explained that the authority to count all mortalities (including those resulting from collaring research) towards the Total Allowable Harvest comes from Harvesting Regulation section 17(2) of the *Nunavut Wildlife Act* # R-011-2015 which states that:

“Every dead member of that species of wildlife must be accounted for in accordance with this section when administering, calculating and enforcing the



provisions of the Act and regulations respecting the total allowable harvest for that species' population."

The Board then considered whether this authority from the *Nunavut Wildlife Act* is in line with the definition of harvest under the Total Allowable Harvest in the *Nunavut Agreement*. Section 5.1.1 of the *Nunavut Agreement* defines Total Allowable Harvests as:

"The amount of wildlife able to be lawfully harvested as established by the NWMB pursuant to Sections 5.6.16 to 5.6.18."

Based on this evidence, the Board ultimately determined that section 17(2) of the *Nunavut Wildlife Act* does not align with the *Nunavut Agreement*, which defines Total Allowable Harvest as the amount of wildlife of a particular stock or population that may be "lawfully harvested." As a result, the Board concluded there is no justification to count caribou mortalities due to collaring research towards a Total Allowable Harvest.

Further, the Board considered Cambridge Bay Hunters and Trappers Organization's comprehensive list of best practices for collaring programs, including collaring mortalities not contributing to the Total Allowable Harvest, financial compensation and so on. The Board agreed that there was a need for a clear Nunavut-specific collaring policy for caribou, but it did not consider an NWMB decision to be the best way to do so. Also, it is not clear what *Nunavut Agreement* authority the Board would use if it were to make a decision. Therefore, the Board recommended that the Government of Nunavut collaborate with Inuit Organizations to develop a Nunavut-specific collaring policy for caribou, taking into consideration the issues raised by Cambridge Bay Hunters and Trappers Organization.

The Board recognizes the importance of collaring research in managing caribou populations and encourages all parties to work together towards sustainable management of caribou in Nunavut.

Daniel Shewchuk

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Daniel Shewchuk'.

Chairperson
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board

c.c. Drikus Gissing, Government of Nunavut

