

בסב≫יר לוערת אינעלי הרבייף Nunavunmi Anngutighatigut Aulapkaijitkut Katimajiat Nunavut Wildlife Management Board

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17, 2022 ה∙ל ער 17, 2022

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בסב≫יר לוערת אינעלי הרבייף Nunavunmi Anngutighatigut Aulapkaijitkut Katimajiat Nunavut Wildlife Management Board

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 Nunavut Wildlife Management Board

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January 17, 2022

Honourable David Akeeagok Minister of Environment Government of Nunavut

Re: Nunavut Wildlife Management Board's Decision regarding the Total Allowable Harvest for Dolphin and Union Caribou

Dear Minister Akeeagok:

Background

At the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board's (NWMB or Board) December 9, 2021, Regular Meeting in Iqaluit, your department submitted a proposal to the NWMB requesting that the Board maintain the total allowable harvest (TAH) for Dolphin and Union caribou at 105. The proposal was in response to an updated population abundance estimate. The previous TAH was based on a 2018 population abundance survey. A more recent survey conducted by the Government of Nunavut from October 23, 2020 to November 2, 2020 supports an updated population abundance estimate.

The 2020 survey report shows that in total, 1,431 caribou were observed—mostly on Victoria Island, resulting in an abundance estimate of 3,815 (95% CI = 2,930–4,966). The 2020 survey was more extensive than the 2018 survey covering an estimated 130,187 km² compared to 7307.5km² in 2018, including half of Victoria Island's surface area. Twenty (20) individuals representing the communities of Cambridge Bay, Kugluktuk, and Ulukhaktok participated in the 2020 survey as observers. Your Department concluded—based on the differences between the 2018 and 2020 abundance estimates (4,105 versus 3,815, respectively)—that the Dolphin and Union caribou population abundance has not significantly changed but continues to trend downward. Your department further stated that "due to the importance of the Dolphin and Union herd to Inuit subsistence and culture, the implications of the [continuous] decline are serious." Other species observed during the 2020 survey, included 28 wolves, 452 muskoxen, 30 moose, and 2 wolverines.

The Board was made aware that your staff held an in-person consultation meeting with three affected Hunters and Trappers Organizations (HTO): Omingmaktok HTO, Kugluktuk Angoniatit Association, and the Cambridge Bay (Ekaluktutialik) HTO. During the consultation meeting, none of the affected communites objected to your department's recommendation to maintain the TAH at 105. However, members raised concerns about the



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high number of wolves recorded during the surveys and expressed that predation from wolves and grizzly bears was the main threat contributing to caribou population decline. HTO members recommended that community wolf removal programs be an important component of Dolphin and Union caribou recovery and management plan, and advocated for more incentives to encourage community wolf harvesting.

Furthermore, your department informed the Board that the Government of Nunavut has initiated a caribou collaring program on Victoria Island and will use data from the program to further understand the distribution, habitat selection, and seasonal ranges of the Dolphin and Union caribou herd.

NWMB Decision and Recommendation

Decision on the TAH

During it's In-Camera Meeting (IC003-2021) on December 10, 2021, the Board considered your department's proposal to maintain the Dolphin and Union TAH at 105. The Board also considered the results of the 2020 population abundance survey, as well as input from affected communities including the fact that the survey was more extensive than the 2018 survey (covering an estimated 130,187 km² compared to 7307.5km² in 2018) and twenty (20) individuals representing the communities of Cambridge Bay, Kugluktuk, and Ulukhaktok participated in the 2020 survey as observers. Based on the evidence before it, the Board agreed that the TAH for Dolphin and Union caribou should be maintained at 105 caribou, as recommended by your department.

Pursuant to section 5.6.16 of the *Nunavut Agreement*, the NWMB can "establish, modify, or remove" but not "maintain" TAHs. Therefore, the Board determined that a *Nunavut Agreement* decision is not warranted.

Recommendation on wolf harvest incentives

During the Government of Nunavut consultation meeting, Inuit raised concerns about the high number of wolves observed during the caribou survey. HTO members recommended that community wolf removal programs be an important component of Dolphin and Union caribou recovery and management plan. The NWMB strongly recommends that the Government of Nunavut consider communities' request for an increase in wolf harvesting incentives. Based on evidence from recent wolf culling efforts in the Northwest Territories, the Board is of the opinion that that ground-based wolf harvest



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incentives are an effective and sustainable alternative to aerial wolf culling programs and recommend that any wolf management program in Nunavut should be community-based.

Should you have any questions or concerns with respect to this letter, please do not hesitate to contact the NWMB.

Daniel Shewchuk Chairperson

David Slubul

Nunavut Wildlife Management Board

c.c. Drikus Gissing, Director of Wildlife Management, Government of Nunavut.



「でく dやつこんやすって Minister of Environment Ministaat Avatiliqiyitkut Ministre de l'Environne ment

February 08, 2022

Mr. Daniel Shewchuk Chairperson Nunavut Wildlife Management Board P.O Box 1379 Iqaluit, NU XOA 0H0

Re: Nunavut Wildlife Management Board's Decision regarding the Total Allowable Harvest for Dolphin and Union Caribou

Dear Mr. Shewchuk,

Thank you for your decision sent on January 17, 2022 concerning the Total Allowable Harvest (TAH) of the Dolphin and Union caribou herd.

To reiterate the decision of the NWMB:

 Based on the evidence before it, the Board agreed that the TAH for Dolphin and Union caribou should be maintained at 105 caribou, as recommended by [the Department of Environment].

 Pursuant to section 5.6.16 of the Nunavut Agreement, the NWMB can "establish, modify, or remove" but not "maintain" TAHs. Therefore, the Board determined that a Nunavut Agreement decision is not warranted.

As the decision has been made to maintain the existing TAH for Dolphin and Union caribou herd, no changes will be made to the existing TAH. This decision will remain in place until I receive a new NWMB decision following the submission of updated population information.

Thank you for your recommendation regarding wolf removal programs. The wolf harvest incentive program is very effective and resulted in 699 wolves harvested in the last harvest season. My department is committed to reviewing our wolf harvesting incentive program and identify what options are available to enhance the program.



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I trust that we will work collaboratively in the continued implementation of this management decision and the close monitoring of this caribou herd to ensure that the management objective is maintained. I appreciate the efforts that have been put forth in its consideration.

Sincerely,

Hon. David Akeeagok, Minister of Environment

CAMA APAZEL

Cc. Jimmy Noble Jr., Deputy Minister of Environment Drikus Gissing, Director of Wildlife Research