

NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD

Minutes: Regular Meeting No.61

Iqaluit, October 1, 2009

Members and Staff Participating:

Harry Flaherty	A/Chairperson
Robert Moshenko	Member
Peter Awa	Member
Makabe Nartok	Member
Joannie Ikkidluak	Member
Willie Nakoolak	Member
Pitseolak Alainga	Member
Kevin McCormick	Member
Mikidjuk Akavak	Chief Executive Officer
Jim Noble	Chief Operating Officer
Tom Demcheson	Director of Finance and Admin
Joe Justus	Director of Wildlife Management
Adam Schneidmiller	Wildlife Management Biologist
Evie Amagoalik	Interpreter
Lazarus Arreak	Interpreter
Michael d'Eça	NWMB Legal Advisor

Not Available:

Chairperson	Vacant
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Other Participants at Various Times:

Eric Kan	DFO, Iqaluit
Chris Lewis	DFO, Iqaluit
Amanda Currie	DFO, Iqaluit
Patt Hall	DFO, Winnipeg
Glenn Williams	NTI, Iqaluit
Paul Irngaut	NTI, Iqaluit
Jeff Maurice	NTI, Iqaluit
Bert Dean	NTI, Rankin Inlet
Drikus Gissing	GN DOE, Iqaluit
Elizabeth Peacock	GN DOE, Igloolik
Chris Hotson	GN DOE, Iqaluit
Moshi Kotierk	GN DOE, Igloolik

Thursday, October 1, 2009

12 Environment Canada: Issues/Decisions

No submissions.

13. Fisheries and Ocean (DFO): Issues/Decisions

13.A Marine Mammal Entrapment Procedures

The NWMB requested an analysis of existing policies and procedures related to the ice entrapment of marine mammals, to use when the Board conducts its review of the 2008 entrapment of narwhal in Eclipse Sound. DFO indicated that it is in the process of preparing the analysis. DFO proposed to strike a working group with representatives of the co-management partners, including NTI and government departments, to review and discuss existing policies and procedures and propose enhancements that would be practical for implementation in Nunavut. DFO staff noted that a new budget had been developed for the next two years (\$80,000 annually) to assist with workshops and operational procedures related to the entrapment of marine mammals.

13.B Update on 2008 Eclipse Sound Narwhal Entrapment

The narwhal entrapment and subsequent humane harvesting for the 2008 Eclipse Sound narwhal entrapment was carried out as an 'interim decision' under S. 5.3.24 of the NLCA. Accordingly as per this section of the NLCA, the NWMB is required to conduct a full review as soon as practicable thereafter. DFO noted that it anticipates that its advice on the possible effects of the entrapment on the Eclipse Sound narwhal stock will be available to the NWMB by December 2009. In addition, DFO informed the Board that it is also finalizing a summary report of the actions taken, and anticipates that this will be available to the NWMB by December 2009.

13.C Update on 2009 Aerial Surveys, Beluga and Narwhal

Aerial surveys of the Cumberland Sound beluga population were conducted during July 29-August 7, 2009. These included photographic surveys, visual surveys and reconnaissance surveys. Analyses of the data have begun and will continue through the winter. The report will be forwarded to the NWMB once the internal DFO approval process is completed (mid-late 2010). The current abundance estimate for this population, from a 1999 survey, is 1,960 belugas which includes an estimate for diving whales.

DFO indicated that it had planned to survey narwhals summering in Admiralty Inlet this summer, however the survey was postponed. DFO contacted the Ikajutit HTO in early June, to request their support for the survey and for local observers to participate. In late July DFO learned that permission to survey in August had been denied. DFO staff then attended both HTO and public meetings (August 4-5) to provide more information about the survey. Permission to conduct the survey was again denied, because of local concerns that the survey would disturb the whales and that photographs taken during

the survey might be used later to misrepresent the hunt. On August 7, the Ikajutit HTO approved the aerial survey but by the time its decision was received the survey aircraft had left Nunavut. Aerial surveys conducted in 2002-2004 were hampered by poor weather conditions, but the best abundance estimate was 5,326 animals. DFO indicated that plans will be made to survey Admiralty Inlet narwhal in 2010.

NTI questioned whether DFO had met with the narwhal hunting communities to discuss the new approach of looking at summering stocks rather than the two current stocks of Baffin Bay and Foxe Basin currently used for management. The NWMB Director of Wildlife Management noted that the NWMB is currently only considering the two stocks hypothesis until new information is presented to the Board and that it is too early in the process to be discussing changes in the management of narwhal.

13.D Update on Narwhal Hunt Monitoring, Repulse Bay

DFO and the Arviq HTO conducted a second year of narwhal hunt monitoring in Repulse Bay, during July 25-August 7, 2009. DFO and HTO representatives observed narwhal hunts, and HTO observers also interviewed local hunters to obtain information about their hunts. The purpose of this monitoring is to obtain information about struck and lost rates. Poor weather and late arrival of narwhal were a factor in this project for 2009.

An analysis of observations collected during 2008 and 2009 will be presented to the Arviq HTO in late October 2009. A final report, including HTO comments and concerns, will be submitted to the NWMB once completed.

13.E Support for the Annual NSRF Research Survey

The 5th year of the annual Northern Shrimp Research Foundation (NSRF)-DFO shrimp research survey conducted in the Shrimp Fishing Area 2EX (SFA 2EX) and Resolution Island areas adjacent to Nunavut is being completed in 2010. The survey provides data required to assess the status of the shrimp stocks commercially fished within these areas. The survey is planned to be conducted every year and the basic survey design is to be consistent from year to year.

A letter of support has been requested from the NWMB in each of the past 5 years. The NWMB has reviewed the research application and approved it with the same two conditions in each of the past 5 years: 1) the licence for the work explicitly states that there is no historic attachment for any vessel of fisher participating in the survey; and 2) a representative from the Eastern Arctic Area (Nunavut office) of DFO continues to be appointed as a member of NSRF.

DFO requested that the NWMB grant a letter of support for the duration of the survey (indefinite time), so that the NWMB and DFO do not have to review this matter every year. It was discussed that the Board's letter of support could state the condition that the basic survey design does not change from the one used in the first 5 years of the survey and that alterations to the design or scope of the survey would require a review by both DFO and the NWMB.

It was noted that the project should be reviewed on a periodic basis rather than an open approval. DFO was questioned on whether they had approached the Government, fishing industry or NTI with this concept. The Board recommended to DFO that it consult with the GN, NTI, and the Nunavut fishing industry on the request for indefinite support for the duration of the NSRF-DFO research survey. Once the views on the matter are received from all relevant parties, the Board further recommended that DFO resubmit its request to the Board, along with documentation of the parties views, for the NWMB's further consideration. It was decided that postponing the decision on this matter would not affect the survey as the Board had recently approved the 2010 survey at Conference Call No.119.

13.F Update on Entrapped Beluga Harvested From Shark Fiord

In fall-early winter, belugas may be observed in small inlets or fiords along the coast of Cumberland Sound, and may appear to be entrapped. In 2001, DFO and the Pangnirtung HTO developed an Action Plan for Trapped Whales. The Action Plan recommends that entrapped whales be monitored over several high tide cycles, to see if they will leave the area independently. The Action Plan has been used to guide the response to entrapment reports received in 2005, 2006 and 2007. DFO had received reports that one apparently entrapped beluga was harvested at Shark Fiord on August 12, 2009; that one seriously wounded beluga was sighted at Tussiujuah Bay, and that based on the condition of the animal the HTO was recommending a humane harvest; and that 3 belugas are possibly entrapped at Targioyak Fiord.

DFO noted that it is awaiting additional information on the Shark Fiord harvest. When it is received, DFO may recommend that the NWMB consider counting the Shark Fiord beluga against Pangnirtung's 2010 beluga quota. DFO had no recommendation regarding the Tussiujuah Bay beluga. DFO recommended that the Targioyak Fiord belugas continue to be monitored until early November (5 spring tide cycles). DFO was informed that the NWMB had already made a decision on this earlier in the Internal In-camera meeting.

In addition, the NWMB's legal advisor directed noted that the "Action Plan for Trapped Whales" had not been reviewed or approved by the NWMB. The Board directed staff to start the review process of the "Action Plan for Trapped Whales".

14. Department of Environment (DOE Nunavut): Issues/Decisions

14. A Davis Strait Polar Bear Population Study Report

The DS polar bear population inventory included a geographic delineation of the population (Taylor et al. 2001) and a mark-recapture-recovery study to estimate population size, annual survival and population growth (Peacock 2009). The collaborative mark-recapture study occurred throughout the autumn in the DS region (Nunatsiavut, Nunavik and Nunavut) from 2005 – 2007. DOE staff used mark, recapture and recovery data from 1974 to 2008 to estimate demographic parameters. It was noted that harp seal make up 50% of the current diet of bears along with evidence

of hooded seal consumption. Bears in the Labrador region showed up to a 90% harp seal diet. The population increase is directly related to the increase in harp seals, however the survival of bears is also dependent on ice cover.

The DS polar bear subpopulation is currently abundant and healthy. The new population estimate of 2,142 (2007) is larger than earlier estimates of abundance (700 bears). The current natural population growth rate is 0.98 ± 0.001 (SE); this indicates that, currently, the subpopulation is declining without harvest. GN's polar bear biologist has met with communities to present the results of the population inventory. GN has tried to establish management agreements with the three other polar bear regions in Davis Strait without success.

GN suggested that the jurisdictions and boards responsible for polar bear management in Davis Strait should meet to discuss allocation of harvest among jurisdictions, and potential changes in harvest. GN indicated that the next step in the management process would be to renegotiate the MOU with the relevant RWO/HTOs. It was further recommended that the NWMB may wish to consider a modification of the TAH in Nunavut for the harvest year 2010-11.

14.B Davis Strait Inuit Qaujimajatuqanqit Study

Concurrently with the mark-recapture population inventory in Davis Strait, the GN conducted interviews with Elders and active hunters about polar bears, climate change and Inuit knowledge. The GN also conducted surveys with the general public, to gauge public preferences about polar bears, other environmental issues and Inuit knowledge. The analysis of the interviews is in progress. Most public survey respondents indicated that there are currently many polar bears. The most preferred polar bear population abundance was that there are polar bears. Slightly more people seem to find that the current polar bear population abundance is higher than what they would prefer. More people seem to find that the current polar bear population abundance is within their tolerance. GN's social science researcher has met with communities to present the results of the public survey. There was concern expressed during these public meetings about using opinions of the general public in decision-making, as the general public may not necessarily be knowledgeable about polar bears. Concerns were also raised at the meeting by the NWMB's Director of Wildlife pertaining to the methodology being used and the application of the results of the research to wildlife management.

14.C Inter-Jurisdictional Agreement with NWT for Polar Bear

The GN Department of Environment has been in discussion with neighbouring jurisdictions on development of agreements for shared polar bear populations. Nunavut shares both the Viscount Melville and Northern Beaufort Sea polar bear populations with the Northwest Territories (NWT). The intent of the agreement is primarily to coordinate management and research of the shared populations between Nunavut and the NWT. The agreement recognizes the current user-user agreement between Inuit of the Kitikmeot region and the NWT. GN suggested that the NWMB support the draft Inter-jurisdictional Agreement, with any amendments as the Board sees fit. With support from the NWMB, the GN would take the draft to affected communities for review and

input. Following this consultation, the GN would request the NWMB's approval of the Agreement, prior to the agreement being signed by the respective Ministers. The NWMB's Director of Wildlife noted that staff had not had the opportunity to review the draft agreement. The Board directed staff to review and provide comments on the agreement prior to the agreement being brought to the communities.

It was noted that other inter-jurisdictional agreements with, Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba are taking much longer. It was noted that the agreement with Quebec has slowly starting to move forward in the past year.

15. Nunavut Tunngavik Inc: Issues/Decisions

15.A Creation of Oversight Committee/Funding Request for NIWS

There is a need to identify funding requirements and/or processes for Hunters & Trappers Organisations (HTOs) and Regional Wildlife Organisations (RWOs) to effectively carry out their Nunavut Land Claim Agreement (NLCA) responsibilities. The NLCA and the Implementation Contract identify and envision a coordinated management system between the NWMB and the HTOs and RWOs, which includes providing adequate funding for the HTOs and RWOs. The Nunavut Inuit Wildlife Secretariat (NIWS) provides support to the HTOs and RWOs. A funding request of \$350,000 was submitted to the NWMB by the NIWS. NTI requested that the NWMB allocate funds and provide assistance to the HTOs and RWOs and work with them in a coordinated manner as part of their strategic planning and priority setting. The Board recommended that NIWS review their own budget and decide how to find the necessary funding from within the organization.

15.B Bowhead Hunt Overview

Over the years there has been an evolving process to assist the HTOs and RWOs to prepare and plan for safe and successful hunts. As the hunt has evolved, there is a need to clarify the role of the co-management partners and ensure there are not gaps or overlaps. The approval process of the hunt plan in the recent hunts has become a concern to Inuit preparing for whale hunts. NTI maintains that the review and approval of a hunt plan is not one of the powers, duties or functions of the NWMB or DFO. The approval of management plans by the NWMB is identified in NLCA S. 5.2.34(d), however there is no reference made to hunt plans in these provisions. The NWMB's legal advisor responded that interpreting S. 5.2.34 (d) of the NLCA simply by what a particular plan is called is problematic, providing the example that changing the wording of a particular plan.....

NTI maintains that there are license conditions that are not established as per 5.6.48 or 5.6.51 and therefore are not NQLs as per the NLCA. There is a need to review all the license conditions and ensure that these conditions are compliant with the NLCA. Some of the issues are the dates on the licence, identification of hunt area and now DFO is discussing size of calves with female whales, these items should not be thought as responsibilities of the NWMB or Government. The Board directed NTI, DFO and NWMB

staff to meet to discuss these particular issues and other matters related to the management of the bowhead hunts.

NTI requested that the NWMB host a workshop to review the bowhead hunts and discuss recommendations prior to the 2010 hunts in Nunavut. HTO representatives would require financial assistance to attend. To date there have been 7 communities that have been involved in the previous hunts. NTI provided a budget estimate, and requested that the NWMB allocate approximately \$35,000 - \$40,000 for this workshop. The Board noted that the operational matters with the hunt is an NTI responsibility not an NWMB responsibility. No formal decision was made on this item and it was deferred until a meeting with co-management partners.

16. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Minutes Approved by:  
A/Chairperson Date