

SUBMISSION TO THE NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD

FOR

Information: X

Decision:

Issue: An update regarding the status of aquatic species already assessed by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) found within the Nunavut Settlement Area and their possible addition to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk on the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA).

Background:

As per 3.0 of the Harmonized Listing Process (the 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*) as well as prior to the signing of the MOU, DFO has informed NWMB of COSEWIC assessment results of species as they were made and what DFO intended to do as a result of these assessments. This is an update on the status of all species COSEWIC already assessed so that the Board is kept informed of where these assessments sit at this time. The possible listing of many of these species is currently awaiting the completion of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board which would be similar to the one completed with the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board in 2008. As we expect that the Nunavik MOU could be completed within the next six months, it will likely soon be possible to begin to move forward with making listing decisions on several species.

The Bowhead Whale (Eastern Canada-West Greenland), which had undergone community consultations in 2006, has since been reassessed by COSEWIC as one population in April 2009. DFO will therefore conduct new community consultations on this species. These consultations will begin after the Board has been informed on how DFO intends to proceed. For the rest of the species for which community consultations have already been conducted between 2005 and 2007 and there are no changes to their COSEWIC status, DFO will assume the views expressed during the initial consultations remain valid and no further consultations are required.

Once the MOU with Nunavik is complete and all consultations have taken place in Nunavut and Nunavik, DFO will provide the Board with a summary of all responses concerning SARA listing of these species and indicate what the Minister plans to recommend to the Governor-in-Council.

Beluga Whale (Western Hudson Bay population)

Beluga Whale (Western Hudson Bay population) were assessed by COSEWIC as a population of Special Concern in 2004. DFO consultations with Nunavut communities in 2005 showed that Inuit did not support listing of this population. We

are still awaiting the completion of an MOU with Nunavik before we move forward with a listing decision. If this population is listed, a SARA management plan would have to be prepared. There would not be any restrictions or prohibitions on harvest as a result of a SARA listing. This population does not require additional consultations.

Beluga Whale (Eastern Hudson Bay)

The Beluga Whale (Eastern Hudson Bay population) were assessed as Endangered in 2004. Consultations carried out in 2005 showed that Nunavut Inuit were not in favour of listing this population. As this population is harvested by Inuit in Nunavut and Nunavik, we are awaiting completion of the MOU with Nunavik before we move forward with a SARA listing decision. This population does not require additional consultations. If this population is listed, a SARA recovery strategy would have to be prepared.

Narwhal

Narwhal were assessed as Special Concern in 2004 with two populations (Baffin Bay and Hudson Bay populations). Consultations in 2005 in 13 Nunavut communities indicated no support for SARA listing. As of this date, there are no plans to repeat consultations in Nunavut as the original COSEWIC assessment remains in effect. However, recent science survey work may result in a reassessment by COSEWIC in the near future. A listing decision was put on hold while we awaited the MOU with Nunavut and now, Nunavik. If this species is listed, a SARA management plan would have to be prepared. There would be no restrictions or prohibitions on harvest as a result of a SARA listing.

Bowhead Whale (Eastern Canada-West Greenland population)

The Bowhead Whale in the eastern Arctic was originally assessed in 2005 as Threatened with two populations (Hudson Bay-Foxe Basin and Davis Strait-Baffin Bay populations). It was reassessed as a species of Special Concern and comprised of a single population in 2009. With the original assessment of two populations, Inuit in 13 communities in Nunavut disagreed with the need to list the two populations. New community consultations will be required due to the changes to the COSEWIC status. These consultations will be conducted when the MOU with the Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board is complete. If this species is listed, a SARA management plan would have to be prepared. There would be no restrictions or prohibitions on harvest as a result of a SARA listing.

Atlantic Walrus

Atlantic Walrus were assessed by COSEWIC as a single population of Special Concern in 2006. DFO carried out consultations in Nunavut in 2006 and 2007. None of the 11 Nunavut communities visited supported listing. This species will be reassessed in the near future, possibly in April 2014. We will await the completion of an MOU with Nunavik and the result of the possible reassessment by COSEWIC before any decisions is made regarding further consultations that may be required. An Integrated Fisheries Management Plan for Atlantic Walrus is currently being developed by DFO and Inuit. If Atlantic Walrus are listed as Special Concern, the

Integrated Fisheries Management Plan could form a large part of the required SARA management plan.

Harbour Porpoise (Northwest Atlantic population)

The Harbour Porpoise was assessed as Special Concern in 2003 by COSEWIC. The original assessment was sent back to COSEWIC for reconsideration, and reconfirmed as Special Concern in 2006. The NWMB responded informally, at their October 2004 meeting, stating that Harbour Porpoise “are of little concern to northern residents” and Species At Risk staff noted that there were no concerns raised by the Board members. There are no records of directed or incidental harvest of this species in Nunavut. DFO continues to await the completion of a MOU with Nunavik before making a listing decision. We are unclear if the statements made by the NWMB in 2004 mean further consultations may be required and would appreciate clarification.

Killer Whale (Northwest Atlantic/Eastern Arctic population)

Due to an absence of more detailed information, Killer Whales in the Northwest Atlantic/Eastern Arctic are considered to be a single population. This population was assessed by COSEWIC as Special Concern in 2008. The listing process will proceed after an MOU has been developed and approved to harmonize the SARA listing process and the Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement. If this species is listed, a SARA management plan would have to be prepared. There would be no restrictions or prohibitions on harvest as a result of a SARA listing.

Roughhead Grenadier

In April 2007 COSEWIC assessed the Roughhead Grenadier as a species of Special Concern. The Board was informed of this assessment in June 2008. Information and letters were sent to communities asking if they wished to be consulted on this deepwater species, but none responded. This species has not been reported in the Nunavut Harvest Study. The listing process will proceed after an MOU has been developed and approved to harmonize the SARA listing process and the Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement. If this species is listed, a SARA management plan would have to be prepared. There would be no restrictions or prohibitions on harvest as a result of a SARA listing.

DFO would like an clarification from the Board as to whether or not they believe in person community consultation by DFO is required for this species.

Roundnose Grenadier

The Roundnose Grenadier, another largely deepwater species, was designated by COSEWIC as Endangered in 2008. DFO notified the Board about the COSEWIC assessment in October 2008. Information has been sent to communities to see if there is interest in this species, but to date no responses have been received. This species has not been recorded in the Nunavut Harvest Study. After an MOU with Nunavik has been signed, DFO will proceed with the SARA listing process with all stakeholders in Nunavut and Nunavik. Should this species be listed under SARA,

automatic prohibitions apply and a SARA recovery strategy and action plan must be developed.

DFO would like clarification from the Board as to whether or not they believe in person community consultation by DFO is required for this species.

Acadian Redfish (Atlantic population)

The Acadian Redfish (Atlantic population) was designated by COSEWIC as Threatened in April 2010 and the Board was notified about this assessment in June 2010. DFO is not proceeding with consultations for possible listing of Acadian Redfish at this time. Information sent to communities and industry about this species has shown that communities do not seem very interested in this deepwater species although the fishing industry is seeking additional information. This species has not been recorded in the Nunavut Harvest Study. The listing process will proceed after an MOU has been developed and approved to harmonize the SARA listing process and the Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement. Should this species be listed under SARA, automatic prohibitions apply and a SARA recovery strategy and action plan must be developed.

DFO would like clarification from the Board as to whether or not they believe in person community consultation by DFO is required for this species.

Deepwater Redfish (Northern population)

The Deepwater Redfish (Northern population) was assessed by COSEWIC as Threatened in April 2010. DFO is not proceeding with consultations for this deepwater population at this time. Information sent to communities and industry about this species has shown that communities do not seem very interested in this deepwater species although the fishing industry is seeking additional information. This species has not been recorded in the Nunavut Harvest Study. After an MOU with Nunavik has been signed, DFO will proceed with the SARA listing process with all stakeholders in Nunavut and Nunavik. Should this species be listed under SARA, automatic prohibitions apply and a SARA recovery strategy and action plan must be developed.

DFO would like clarification from the Board as to whether or not they believe in person community consultation by DFO is required for this species.

Northern Bottlenose Whale (Davis Strait-Baffin Bay-Labrador Sea population)

This species was assessed as Special Concern by COSEWIC in May 2011. DFO presented a briefing note to the NWMB last October informing the Board about the COSEWIC assessment and also asking about the possibility of an abridged listing process for this species. Information on the species was sent to communities (twice) and the fishing industry, as requested by the Board. None of the communities responded that the species was of any interest to them and it has not been recorded in the Nunavut Harvest Study. The fishing industry requested consultation before DFO makes a listing decision.

DFO would like clarification from the Board as to whether or not they believe in person community consultation by DFO is required for this species.

Prepared by:

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