

May 16th, 2012

Nunavut Wildlife Management Board

Inuksugait Complex

P.O. Box 1379

Iqaluit, NU

X0A 0H0



RE: NMRWB written submission for public hearing to consider proposed shrimp fishery management changes for *Pandalus borealis* and *Pandalus montagui* in Shrimp Fishing Areas 2, 3 and 4.

Dear Colleagues,

Please accept the present letter as the Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board's submission to the public hearing during which you will consider the Department of Fisheries and Oceans proposed management changes to the shrimp fishery in northern waters.

As you are aware, the NMRWB shares management responsibility of commercial shrimp fishing with the NWMB and other co-management partners. Under the present proposal, it is the NMRWB's responsibility to establish a Total Allowable Harvest (TAH) for shrimp in SFA NK (NK E and NK W). Similarly it is the NWMB's responsibility to establish Total Allowable Catch (TAC) limits in the Nunavut Settlement Area (SFA NU). The distribution of *P. montagui* in the area currently referred to as SFA 3 (the most abundant shrimp species in this zone) is highly unpredictable, due mainly to strong currents. However based on previous surveys, a significant portion of the stock is thought to occur within the NMR. As such any decision taken by the NWMB, will consequently impact management of the fishery in Nunavik. Since the opposite is also true, the NMRWB is tabling this submission to ensure that the NWMB is informed of the decisions our board members have taken on this matter.

As you will recall, the proposed changes were first presented to the NMRWB and the NWMB during a joint meeting of the Boards held in Quebec City during March 2011. Subsequent to this presentation the NMRWB's board members voted in favour of the boundary modifications. This decision was made in consideration of concerns about the high potential exploitation rate around Resolution Island and to better align management units with stock assessment survey areas and with Land Claims boundaries. While the NMRWB agreed with the proposal to modify the boundaries of shrimp fishing areas and management units, we did not present the Minister with a decision pertaining to harvest levels in any of these management units.

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Concerning harvest levels, the NMRWB indicated in its decision that a TAH recommendation would be made at a later date, following input from co-management partners. In particular, this decision was intended to allow the Makivik Corporation and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. an opportunity to discuss potential sharing arrangements for future allocations of the resource in the NMR and NSA. At this time, we are not aware that an agreement has been reached between the two organizations.

Although the NMRWB's 2011 decision did not address exploitation rates and TAH under the proposed management regime, our board members voted to approve an earlier version of the proposal in May 2010. That decision included a recommendation that TAH for *P. montagui* in the Ungava Bay/Hudson Strait area be based on a conservative target exploitation rate of 10% given the short time-series of DFO's surveys in this area. While potential exploitation in the past have been much higher than 10%, fishing pressure has remained quite low in much of the area addressed by DFO's most recent proposal. However, this is expected to change as accessibility to the region increases in the future (through changes in sea ice dynamics and technological advances in fishing vessels). As such, management decisions must be taken conservatively, given our limited knowledge of the shrimp stock, in order to ensure the long-term viability of this fishery.

The current proposal will, by aligning management and land claims boundaries, lessen the administrative burden of co-ordinating decisions from several management boards involved in regulating harvest within a single management unit. However, a coordinated effort between our boards will be necessary to ensure the successful management of this resource, especially as it pertains to the SFA NU/SFA NK complex where a school of shrimp can move from one side of a land claims boundary to the other in a matter of days or even hours. Unfortunately the NMRWB will be unable to attend your public hearing, but we hope that staff from our respective organizations can work closely together on this issue in the future.

Should you require further information or clarification concerning this submission please do not hesitate to contact Mark O'Connor, the NMRWB's director of wildlife management.

Sincerely,



Johnny Oovaut
Chairman
Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board