



**SUBMISSION TO THE
NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD**

FOR

Information:

Decision: X

Issue: Draft Management Plan for High Arctic Muskoxen of the Qikiqtaaluk Region

Background:

In response to the delay in developing new regulations for Muskoxen in support of the *Wildlife Act*, the Kivalliq Regional Wildlife Board and community HTOs, driven by a desire to see management changes for muskoxen in their region, have developed a consensus-based draft management plan. This effort has not only been successful in the Kivalliq but has fueled further action based on its success.

Current Status:

Using the existing management plan for the Kivalliq as a template, DoE has developed a draft for the Muskoxen of the High Arctic Islands of the Qikiqtaaluk region, has shared this draft with the co management partners, and has consulted with relevant communities this past winter. The proposed Draft Management Plan for high Arctic Muskoxen of the Qikiqtaaluk Region has been developed in conjunction with input from the communities of Arctic Bay, Resolute, and Grise Fiord, as well as NTI. Revisions to the current draft have been made according to input received to date.

The Plan seeks to use the information presented in the DoE report “*Recent trends and abundance of Peary Caribou and Muskoxen in the Canadian Arctic Archipelago, Nunavut,*” (Jenkins et al., 2011) as a baseline to monitor future trends. Through community based ground surveys that are conducted annually, but on a spatially cyclic basis, changes in herd status can be monitored. An annual meeting to discuss results and potential management recommendations will be used to target future survey efforts and in the event of observed declines or concerns of herd status, trigger further action which may include increased ground survey frequency or aerial surveys. Recommendations that would change harvest rates or Non-Quota Limitations such as harvest seasons would be sent the NWMB for decision.

Consultations:

Extensive consultations have been conducted in the high Arctic communities of Arctic bay, Resolute, and Grise Fiord, all of whom harvest from the six muskox

island groups identified in the management plan. Workshops were held in Grise Fiord and Resolute in the fall of 2010 to share research results from the aerial surveys done to estimate Peary Caribou and Muskoxen population and distribution from 2001-2008. These workshops were very well received and generated significant discussion about management implications and Inuit knowledge about muskox of the high Arctic.

Consultation on the draft management plan was conducted in Arctic Bay, Resolute, and Grise Fiord in March 2012. Support was generally high for the draft management plan and DOE personnel collected input and feedback on the plan that was incorporated into the latest draft. The final draft has been sent to the three community HTOs for final review in parallel with this Request for Decision submission. Overall, the three communities have expressed support for the Management Plan and its recommendations, in particular because of the ongoing collaborative process it outlines for the management of muskoxen in the region.

Recommendations:

DOE is requesting approval from NWMB on the following:

- Approve the Draft Muskox Management Plan
- Change the regulations under the *Wildlife Act* to eliminate existing muskox harvesting zones, and replace them with 6 management units identified in the Muskox Management Plan (Figure 1).
- Change the regulations under the *Wildlife Act* to remove all existing TAHs and harvest seasons for all muskox populations in the high Arctic
- Approve the new TAH recommendation for the Bathurst Island Group
- Approve the new TAH recommendation for the Devon Island Group

References:

Jenkins, D. and M. Campbell, G. Hope, J. Goorts, and P. Mc Loughlin. 2011. *Recent trends in abundance of Peary Caribou (Rangifer tarandus pearyi) and Muskoxen (Ovibos moschatus) in the Canadian Arctic Archipelago, Nunavut.* Department of Environment, Government of Nunavut, Technical Report Series.