



From: NTI Wildlife & Environment  
Subject: NWMB Public Hearing on Foxe Basin walrus  
Date: March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015

In May 2014, a draft IFMP was presented to the two Foxe Basin communities, along with total allowable removal recommendations from DFO science, potential struck and lost rates, and the proposed Management Unit boundaries. Communities immediately expressed their concerns about the proposed population boundaries and the population estimates developed by DFO science. The boundaries did not agree with their knowledge of walrus including walrus movements. Further, communities and HTOs expressed that the survey design and other logistical problems such as weather had affected the survey results. They have expressed that the information including the surveys were incomplete due to lack of coverage.

The Working Groups established a timeline for completion of the Walrus Integrated Fisheries Management Plan by January 2016.

### **Current Status and Concerns:**

The management plan has not been finalized and the establishment of a TAH will likely compromise the management plan and the effort by DFO and Inuit to achieve long term conservation goals for walrus as initially planned.

DFO's TAH recommendation of 116 was introduced at the very last community consultation between Igloolik and Hall Beach along with the draft IFMP on Atlantic walrus. NTI has discussed this matter with representatives from QWB and the HTO's of Hall Beach and Igloolik, and they did not have any recollection on a discussion on specific numbers.

The communities and the two HTOs felt that the IFMP on Atlantic walrus should be completed first, before any TAH. The HTOs and communities have also argued that any proposed TAH would need to be informed by a complete aerial survey of the whole area of North Foxe Basin. Inuit must be involved in the design of the survey, and its completion.

Communities are supportive of the management plan process but do not support the total allowable harvest recommendations due to lack of communication and consensus on management boundaries, survey design and survey results.

The suggested harvest restrictions do not consider or recognize Inuit systems of wildlife management and work against the conservation of wildlife and protection of critical habitat (ss. 5.1.2) as they are not supported by the communities and the respective Hunter's and Trapper's Organizations and Regional Wildlife Organization. HTOs have expressed that proceeding with the harvest recommendations would produce more challenges than solutions.

The communities and HTOs do not feel that there a valid reason to restrict or limit Inuit harvesting as per 5.3.3: (a) to effect a valid conservation purpose, (b) to give effect to the allocation system outlined in this Article (NLCA Article 5), to other provisions of this Article and to Article 40; or (c) to provide for public health or public safety

### **Recommendation:**

In considering these factors, NTI is of the opinion that in the matter of establishing a TAH for the proposed Foxe Basin population, adequate consultation was not achieved. NTI argues that adequate consultation for this population would need to consider the following points:

1. Any consideration of establishment of management units and restrictions of Inuit harvesting of walrus for Foxe Basin should be postponed until adequate consultation has occurred with the affected communities and the management plan has been finalized.
2. A full complete aerial survey of all areas of North Foxe Basin should be conducted with participation and input from the affected HTOs and the communities.

3. Once a complete aerial survey is done then the information should be given to the HTO and the communities in a timely manner and integrated into the final IFMP for North Foxe Basin walrus.
4. After the Integrated Fisheries Management Plan for North Foxe Basin is accepted, then the Department Of Fisheries can do community consultations on their recommended TAH using the most accurate and latest information.