

Pêches et Océans Canada

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October 14, 2016

Mr. Jimmy Pitseolak, Chairperson Mittimatalik Hunters and Trappers Organization P.O. Box 189 Pond Inlet, Nunavut X0A 0S0

Dear Mr. Pitseolak:

We would like to acknowledge and provide some updates regarding the letter that the Mittimatalik HTO sent to the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) on May 27, 2016. Your letter summarizes the views of Mittimatalik HTO about consultation meetings held by DFO officials in Pond Inlet in April 2016.

In April, 2016, DFO invited the Mittimatalik HTO to participate in a series of in person consultations held with North Baffin communities. The purpose of these meetings was to exchange information about recent science advice concerning the Baffin Bay narwhal stocks. Inuktitut and English copies of the new science advice were included in the invitation letter (attached).

The in person consultation meetings were held in Arctic Bay, Pond Inlet, Clyde River and Qikiqtarjuaq during April 18-23, 2016. Two meetings were held in each community, one with the HTO Board and one with the public. At both meetings, DFO asked for input and feedback about proposed TAH modifications for narwhal (based on the 2013 aerial survey results), about formal implementation of the "narwhal flexible quota system" about the Tag Transfer Policy phase II and about how the new science advice would affect international exports of narwhal products from Canada.

I would like to thank you for providing the NWMB with additional information and comments about the new science advice. Your letter summarizes the reasons why Mittimatalik HTO and Pond Inlet residents disagree with the results of narwhal abundance surveys conducted in 2013. These concerns were noted by DFO officials during the Pond Inlet meetings on April 19th, and were included in DFO's consultation report to the NWMB (see attached).

In response to these concerns, DFO undertook additional research on Eclipse Sound narwhal in August 2016. These included an aerial survey for narwhal in the Eclipse Sound area and a satellite tagging study of narwhal in Tremblay Sound. DFO discussed the aerial survey plans with the HTO Manager in June 2016, and it was agreed that the narwhal survey would increase coverage in areas where the community regularly sees



narwhal in August (Milne Inlet, Tremblay Sound and western Eclipse Sound). The survey team appreciated the participation of two HTO observers and, as a follow-up, DFO provided Mittimatalik HTO with all of the photographs taken along the survey transects. Mittimatalik HTO also participated in the DFO satellite tagging study of narwhal in Tremblay Sound. The information resulting from these two studies will assist in updating the 2013 abundance estimates.

I notice that your letter does not include additional comments about the CITES implications of the proposed TAH adjustment for the Eclipse Sound narwhal stock. At the April 2016 consultation meetings, DFO reviewed the status of narwhal under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna (CITES), and the need for a positive CITES non-detriment finding (NDF) to authorize international trade.

It should be emphasized that if international trade in Eclipse Sound narwhal products is to continue, then the existing level of Total Allowable Harvest (TAH) would need to be reduced so it is in line with the new science advice based on the survey conducted in 2013. At the April 2016 consultation meetings, DFO officials heard from Mittimatalik HTO that Inuit are less concerned about selling narwhal products internationally and more interested in harvesting for food. At this time, DFO requests confirmation of this position to inform the upcoming review of the CITES non-detriment finding (NDF) for narwhal, as the finding for narwhal will determine whether narwhal products can be exported internationally.

In closing, I would like to thank the Mittimatalik HTO Board and Pond Inlet residents for actively participating in the April consultation meetings. It is clear that much valuable information was exchanged at both meetings, despite the community's understandable disappointment with the 2013 abundance estimate. I commend the Mittimatalik HTO for providing its additional information and feedback to the NWMB.

Sincerely,

Larry Dow

Director, Northern Operations

CC: J. Akearok, NWMB

P. Irngaut, NTI

J. Qillaq, QWB

Encl: February 2016 invitation letter (Eng-Inuk)

May 2016 Consultation summary (Eng-Inuk)

