

SUBMISSION TO THE
NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD
FOR

Information:

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Decision:

Issue: Supplementary Submission in Response to Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board Submission Concerning Eclipse Sound Narwhal Surveys

Background:

During the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board public hearing to consider modifying the existing total allowable harvests for Eclipse Sound and Admiralty Inlet narwhal held in Pond Inlet this past November, the Department may not have been as clear as it could have been with regards to the knowledge of aerial surveys conducted by LGL (consultants conducting the survey work) and offer the following clarifications.

The Department has known of marine mammal surveys, conducted as part of the Baffinland Iron Mine (BIM) project in the Eclipse Sound area since at least 2010. It was not the intention of the Department to leave the impression that the marine mammal surveys were something that the Department had recently become aware of.

Baffinland Iron Mine Corporation was contacted in July 2016 about obtaining the survey data for 2015, 2014 and 2013 and a Collaborative Sharing Agreement was developed and the data shared in October 2016. While the survey data for 2007 and 2008 was not included in the original Collaborative Sharing Agreement, both BIM and LGL have indicated that they would provide the 2007 and 2008 data at some time. The Department is currently analyzing and assessing the quality of the survey data to see if it is possible to use and compare results with the DFO surveys previously conducted in 2004, 2013 and 2016. It is currently unknown at this time when this will be completed. Consulting company reports detail industry-funded surveys that have been conducted for impact predictions and may not be suitable for population estimates and are not peer-reviewed.

Prepared by: Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Date: January 25, 2017