

## BAFFIN BAY NARWHAL TOUR – APRIL 2016 – WHAT WE HEARD

### CONTEXT

The narwhal fishery in the Nunavut Settlement Area (NSA) is co-managed by Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB), Regional Wildlife Organizations (RWOs), and Hunter and Trapper Organizations (HTOs), in accordance with the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA), the *Fisheries Act* and its regulations, and in some communities, by local HTO hunting rules (or by-laws).

The Narwhal Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (Management Plan), developed jointly with Inuit, summarizes the main objectives for sustainable narwhal co-management in the NSA, and the measures that are used to achieve these objectives. The Management Plan also sets out the role of each of the co-management partners in ensuring that narwhal harvest levels are sustainable, and that products destined for export comply with both domestic and international trade requirements.

Co-management organizations work together on an on-going basis to provide for the conservation of narwhal stocks and populations and facilitate the implementation of a management regime consistent with the NLCA to demonstrate sustainable harvesting activities.

In August 2013, the Department of Fisheries & Oceans (DFO) conducted a series of aerial surveys designed to cover the six known summering stocks of narwhal in the Canadian High Arctic simultaneously. DFO Science used these survey results to estimate the abundance of narwhal and calculate Total Allowable Landed Catch (TALC) recommendations for each of the stocks. The Science advice was published in December 2015.

In 2015 DFO Science advice was also published regarding the tag transfer policy Phases II and III. Phase II provides for simple transfers of migratory Marine Mammal Tags between Arctic Bay and Pond Inlet, and between Clyde River and Qikiqtarjuaq who do harvest from mixed narwhal stocks. Phase III provides for a “flexible” quota system whereby all communities can carry-over an unused portion of their Marine Mammal Tags to use for narwhal harvesting in the next harvest year (these carry-over tags must be used first as they expire after one year).

On October 30th 2015, representatives from NWMB, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI), and DFO met by conference call to discuss a way forward in developing a management response to the new narwhal survey abundance estimates. There was general agreement-in-principle to strike an initial steering committee of representatives from NWMB, NTI, and DFO to begin development and evaluation of various management options consistent with the new DFO science advice and to develop a consultation plan for affected Inuit communities.

The steering committee will ultimately submit an application for NWMB evaluation under the NLCA decision making process. On January 20th and 21st 2016 the steering committee held a strategic planning meeting to develop and evaluate some management options, as well as collaborate on the development of a consultation plan.

The narwhal steering committee agreed to collaboratively consult with Inuit on management options developed at the strategic planning meeting.

The consultation process included two components: (1) in-person consultations with the communities of Arctic Bay, Pond Inlet, Clyde River and Qikiqtarjuaq from April 18-22, 2016; and (2) written consultations with the remaining communities that harvest from the Baffin Bay stocks and from the Jones and Smith Sounds stocks. The Kitikmeot and Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Boards will also be included in these consultations.

In February 2016, DFO invited HTO representatives from the four Baffin Bay narwhal hunting communities, i.e. Ikajutit (Arctic Bay), Mittimatalik (Pond Inlet), Nangmoutaq (Clyde River), and Nattivak (Qikiqtarjuaq) and their RWO (Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board) to attend a consultation meeting in each community. Each HTO meeting was followed by a public meeting, in order to review the new DFO Scientific advice for Baffin Bay narwhal stocks, and explore narwhal management options and implications for 2016 and beyond. DFO's responsibilities under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) with respect to issuing export permits for narwhal tusks and products were also discussed.

Consultation meetings were well attended, approximately 20-25 participants attended public meetings in each community. At all meetings, participants were encouraged to share their views, provide comment, express any concerns they may have and share expertise related to the topics discussed. Community members and harvesters shared Inuit and local knowledge and expertise related to narwhal management and harvesting. The report summarizes "what we heard" during the April 2016 consultation meetings.

Topic	DFO Information – “What We Said” <sup>1</sup>	Inuit Knowledge - “What We Heard” (separated by the community in which it was heard)
CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora)	<p>-narwhal are currently listed on Appendix II</p> <p>-a non-detriment finding (NDF) decision from the DFO Scientific Authority is required to obtain a CITES Export/Re-export permit to export narwhal products internationally</p> <p>-harvested narwhals from Canadian management units are not eligible for international trade if the harvest exceeds the Total Allowable Landed Catch (TALC) recommendation for a population</p> <p>-Scientific Authority review and NDF decision are expected in 2016 following consultations</p>	<p><i>Arctic Bay, Clyde River, and Qikiqtarjuaq:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were no concerns raised about these points during both the community and HTO meetings.</li> </ul> <p><i>Pond Inlet:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The HTO said that Inuit are less concerned about selling narwhal products internationally and more interested in harvesting for food.</li> </ul>
Tag Transfer Policy Phase II	<p>-science advice published in 2015</p> <p>-it is sustainable to exchange unused Arctic Bay and Pond Inlet migratory tags</p> <p>-it is sustainable to exchange unused Clyde River and Qikiqtarjuaq migratory tags</p>	<p><i>Arctic Bay and Pond Inlet:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were no concerns raised about implementation of tag transfer phase II during the community and HTO meetings.</li> </ul> <p><i>Clyde River:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were some questions asked related to the clarification about which communities could exchange tags under this policy.</li> <li>• There was interest in exploring this policy and a request for some support from DFO on how to implement it.</li> </ul> <p><i>Qikiqtarjuaq:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was interest in exploring this policy further.</li> </ul>
Tag Transfer Policy Phase III (i.e., Flex-Quota System)	<p>-science advice published in 2015</p> <p>-a flex-quota system for narwhal is</p>	<p><i>Arctic Bay:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were no concerns raised about implementation of the flex quota</li> </ul>

	sustainable	<p>system during the community and HTO meetings.</p> <p><i>Pond Inlet and Qikiqtarjuaq:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There appeared to be general support for a flexible tag system.</li> </ul> <p><i>Clyde River:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was support for a flex-quota system due to the advantages for the community.</li> </ul>
Baffin Bay Aerial Survey 2013 – abundance estimates and TALC recommendations	<p>-science advice published in December 2015</p> <p>-the 2013 Baffin Bay total abundance estimate is higher than previous estimates – approximately 141,900</p> <p>-the survey produced the first abundance estimates for Jones Sound and Smith Sound</p> <p>-new estimates for Eclipse Sound and Admiralty Inlet suggest a change in narwhal distribution and/or stock uncertainty</p> <p>-2013 abundance estimates and TALC recommendations for each stock</p>	<p><i>Arctic Bay:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were no concerns raised about these points during both the community and HTO meetings.</li> </ul> <p><i>Pond Inlet:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The HTO pointed out that narwhal are increasing as more and more ships travel to the North.</li> <li>• The increasing number of ships has caused later migrations by narwhal, which led to the entrapment in 2015.</li> <li>• Narwhal migrate near Milne Inlet every year to feed and they migrate back out in the fall.</li> <li>• The HTO and community had lots of questions about the survey methods, correction factors, and the ability to count small whales from the planes.</li> <li>• The HTO suggested that the decrease in the abundance estimate for Eclipse Sound was a result of ship traffic, whales moving all over the place (including to Western Nunavut communities), killer whale presence, and difficulty in counting submerged whales.</li> <li>• The HTO specifically pointed out that the decreased count was not a result of Inuit overharvesting in the Eclipse Sound area.</li> <li>• The community stated that the numbers of narwhal vary from year to year.</li> <li>• The HTO also explained that there was a lot of movement by narwhal between Admiralty Inlet and Eclipse Sound. If the count had been done at a different time it is possible that there would have been a decrease in Admiralty Inlet and an increase in Eclipse Sound.</li> <li>• Elders try to conduct their own surveys and explained that Baffinland is also</li> </ul>

		<p>causing negative effects on the wildlife near their community. Underwater devices were also identified as having a detrimental effect on the marine life in Eclipse Sound.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The community pointed out that narwhal dive and remain submerged for over two hours when planes pass over.</li> </ul> <p><i>Clyde River:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The HTO and community had lots of questions about the survey methods, number of observers, and correction factors.</li> </ul> <p><i>Qikiqtarjuaq:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The community had lots of questions about the survey methods and design.</li> </ul>
<p>Management Option and Considerations</p>	<p>-modify Total Allowable Harvests (TAHs) for all management units to reflect 2013 survey TALC advice          -Considerations:          a) stocks would continue to be managed based on most current science advice (meets CITES commitment);          b) current NDF status and ability to export internationally would be retained for all stocks;          c) focus is on current data rather than trend data over time; and          d) restricts harvesting in Eclipse Sound by lowering the TAH.</p>	<p><i>Arctic Bay:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were no concerns raised about these points during both the community and HTO meetings.</li> </ul> <p><i>Pond Inlet:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The HTO wanted to maintain the status quo (i.e., the Total Allowable Harvest that was established in 2013) for a period of five years.</li> <li>• The HTO and community discussed the importance of using marine mammals for food and the negative impact that a quota reduction would cause for them.</li> <li>• The HTO and community strongly disagreed with reducing the quota for the Eclipse Sound Management Unit.</li> <li>• The community pointed out that it would be inconvenient to reduce the quota when there are so many narwhal in Baffin Bay and the fact that not all tags are being used annually.</li> <li>• The community was disappointed that DFO planned to share the science recommendations to reduce the Eclipse Sound quota with the NWMB.</li> <li>• The community was disappointed that DFO would recommend a quota reduction for Eclipse Sound based on one year of data.</li> <li>• Pond Inlet should be compensated if they lose tags.</li> </ul>

		<p><i>Clyde River and Qikiqtarjuaq:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was support for implementing the new science recommendations.</li> </ul>
<p>Future Science Considerations</p>	<p>-a Canada/Greenland Joint Commission on Conservation and Management of Narwhal and Beluga (JCNB) Model is being developed</p> <p>-the model is more robust and accounts for harvesting of narwhal by Greenland</p> <p>-the model is tentatively scheduled for review at the National Marine Mammal Peer Review (NMMPR) Meeting in Fall 2016</p> <p>-Science is also developing some research options or ideas in partnership with Hunters and Trappers Organizations (HTOs) to consider linkages between Admiralty Inlet and Eclipse Sound Narwhal Stocks – survey/tagging.</p>	<p><i>Arctic Bay:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were no concerns raised about these points during both the community and HTO meetings.</li> </ul> <p><i>Pond Inlet:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some community members explicitly stated that they wanted a rigorous five-year research project conducted prior to modifying the current quota for the Eclipse Sound Management Unit. Multiple surveys should be conducted prior to making a recommendation.</li> <li>• The HTO asked DFO to have a closer look at the utility of the Baffinland research information on narwhal from the Eclipse Sound area.</li> <li>• The HTO and community discussed a group of narwhal from Greenland that were seen in the Eclipse Sound area last summer. These narwhal were different and easier to catch.</li> <li>• The community speculated that offshore exploration adjacent to Greenland caused narwhal to get scared off the Greenland shores and move into the Eclipse Sound area last year.</li> <li>• The community asked for more justification and reasoning prior to lowering their quota.</li> <li>• The community requested that more <i>Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit</i> is incorporated and referenced in the science work. The community also suggested including the help of hunters to conduct research.</li> <li>• There were some concerns raised about satellite tagging and the effects it has on the whales. Whales are not edible after being tagged.</li> <li>• The community asked for some additional research on diseases in marine mammals.</li> <li>• The NWMB identified some funding opportunities for the collection of <i>Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit</i>. The NWMB also told the public about their <i>Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit</i> Coordinator who could help collect the information.</li> </ul>

		<p><i>Clyde River:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was some interest in developing a satellite tagging project to better understand the movement of narwhal in the Clyde River area.</li> <li>• The NWMB identified some funding options for satellite tagging work in the Clyde River area.</li> <li>• There was general support to conduct tagging studies in the area and one community member said that it can be a good thing when it is done correctly.</li> </ul> <p><i>Qikiqtarjuaq:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was interest expressed in developing a satellite tagging project in the Home Bay area, which according to local knowledge is an area that is filled with narwhal every summer.</li> <li>• Greenland information should be incorporated into narwhal management.</li> <li>• The HTO asked for more involvement of Inuit in research studies.</li> <li>• The NWMB identified some funding options for satellite tagging work in the Home Bay area.</li> </ul>
<p>NWMB and Co-Management Process</p>	<p>-it is anticipated that the NWMB will hold a public hearing -communities and HTOs will be able to provide additional input into that process</p>	<p><i>Arctic Bay:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety issues during the hunt were voiced during the community meeting. NWMB explained that they could limit harvesting to provide for public safety.</li> </ul> <p><i>Pond Inlet:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The NWMB and QWB explained the hearing process that would include everybody and give people/organizations an opportunity to have additional input.</li> <li>• The HTO explained their interest in having elders share their knowledge as part of the NWMB process.</li> <li>• The HTO explained that tags should not be lowered based on estimates and that proper channels and partners need to be involved prior to making these types of decisions.</li> </ul>

		<p><i>Clyde River:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were no concerns raised these points during both the community and HTO meetings.</li> </ul> <p><i>Qikiqtarjuaq:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was some discussion and acknowledgement of the process that would need to be followed during both the community and HTO meetings.</li> </ul>
<p>Harvest Allocation Workshop</p>	<p>-we expect to hold a second harvest allocation workshop in fall or winter 2016/17          -HTOs will be invited and it will be important for them get input from their respective communities regarding summer catch proportions          -HTOs authority to set summer and migratory seasons was also discussed</p>	<p><i>Arctic Bay:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ice break up is happening later. Seasons should be modified.</li> <li>• Summer tags are getting used earlier in the season and the fall migratory season is dangerous for hunters.</li> <li>• Concerns were raised about the seasons and boundaries for the management units.</li> </ul> <p><i>Pond Inlet:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spring breakup varies from year to year, which makes it difficult to use seasonal tags.</li> </ul> <p><i>Clyde River:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The migration patterns of narwhal vary from year to year.</li> <li>• The community expressed an interest in providing input into the harvest allocation workshop.</li> <li>• There were some concerns raised by the community and HTO about the use of seasonal tags; however, there was an appreciation expressed for the explanation that was provided by DFO staff.</li> </ul> <p><i>Qikiqtarjuaq:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The community expressed some concerns about the seasons and dates. There was interest in having more input into the selection of the seasonal dates and tag allocations.</li> </ul>

Other		<p><i>Arctic Bay:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The HTO and community raised concerns about the length of time it takes to get a found tusk tag.</li> <li>• Interest was voiced by the HTO about assignment of rights options to a non-beneficiary with respect to narwhal harvesting.</li> <li>• The HTO requested more presence and support by DFO in the community during main narwhal harvesting periods.</li> <li>• The HTO asked about being more involved in the tusk certification process (i.e., possibility of tusk certification being completed by the HTO).</li> </ul> <p><i>Pond Inlet:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One HTO delegate shared his observations of narwhal in 1994 near Milne Inlet. At the time there was lots of ice and the narwhal pods swam in the same direction into the Pond Inlet area for three days straight. He counted at least 3000 narwhal in five minutes.</li> </ul> <p><i>Clyde River:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was some interest expressed about exploring the possibility of having a narwhal sport hunt option.</li> </ul> <p><i>Qikiqtarjuaq:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Narwhal are born in the Home Bay area and they return there every year.</li> <li>• There was lots of discussion about preserving narwhal for their future generations.</li> <li>• The HTO also expressed the importance of respecting the fishing closure in the Baffin Bay narwhal overwintering area.</li> </ul>
	<sup>1</sup> see copies of presentations for further detail	