



Reasons for NWMB Decision

Decision to increase the overall TAH from 190 to 250

Results from aerial surveys conducted by the Government of Nunavut in July 2017 indicate a stable-to-increasing muskox population, at least in the southern portion of the MX-10 management unit. According to the Government of Nunavut's survey report, the estimated abundance of MX-10 muskox increased significantly in the last two decades, from an estimated 1,522 in 1999 to 3,239 in 2017. The survey report also indicates an increase in the proportion of calves, from 12.5% in 1999, to 13.2% in 2012, and to 17% in 2017, suggesting a growing population. The 2017 survey reports a 41% expansion in the range of muskox in the southern portion of the management unit within the last decade. Local harvesters have also confirmed the increase and eastward expansion of muskox in the MX-10 management unit. Relying on this evidence, the Board determined that an increase in the overall annual Total Allowable Harvest from 190 to 250 muskoxen would be unlikely to have a negative conservation impact on the population.

The neighboring muskox management units MX-08 and MX-13 also show stable to increasing population trends. The muskox population in MX-08 is estimated to have increased from 1,058 muskoxen in 2006 to 3,649 in 2017, while the estimated population of MX-13 muskoxen remained stable with 4,434 in 2016, down slightly from 4,506 in 2012. Healthy populations in neighbouring management units can be a source populations in the future, reducing risk from an increased harvest in MX-10.

In reaching its decision, the Board considered past harvest records. These records indicate harvest rates below the TAH limit over the past five years by the seven communities that typically harvest from MX-10. The Board determined that an increase in the overall MX-10 TAH of 60 muskoxen would be unlikely to negatively impact the MX-10 muskox population significantly. Instead, an increase could provide additional harvesting opportunities for communities in the Kivalliq, Kitikmeot and Qikiqtaaluk Regions to harvest from the management unit.

The Board also considered a written submission from the Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board and letters provided by Chesterfield Inlet, Coral Harbour, Gjoa Haven, Igloodik, Sanirajak, Naujaat and Rankin Inlet Hunters and Trappers Organizations supporting an increase to the TAH following consultations in August 2021.



Decision to modify the regional TAH, allocating 140 muskoxen (56 percent) to the Kitikmeot region, 90 muskoxen (36 percent) to the Kivalliq region, and 20 muskoxen (8 percent) to the Qikiqtaaluk region.

The NWMB received two written submissions, from QWB and KRWB, following its September 21, 2021, letter to RWOs.

The KRWB reviewed the MX-10 harvest data for Gjoa Haven and Kugaaruk, noting both communities had fully used their allocations in recent years, and suggested harvest data from before 2019 may be inaccurate due to limited community capacity to report harvests. The KRWB proposed a sharing arrangement for the 60 additional tags available after the TAH was increased. On the basis of Gjoa Haven and Kugaaruk's harvesting, the KRWB requested 40 tags of the increase be allocated to those communities (20 for each community), and 20 tags for the other regions.

The QWB submitted an interpretation of the *Nunavut Agreement* that there should be one regional TAH for the MX-10 management unit, and the RWOs, working together, would set and change allocations among the HTOs in the regions. The QWB argued the NWMB does not have the authority to set a TAH for the regions, and that only RWOs have the power and function to allocate a regional BNL (or, in this case, a TAH) among Inuit. The Board considered QWB's argument but was not persuaded. The Board relied on an interpretation from its legal counsel of the *Nunavut Agreement*. Article 5 defines Region as Baffin [Qikiqtaaluk] Region, Keewatin [Kivalliq] Region, or Kitikmeot Region. Other references to "region" in the *Nunavut Agreement* include *Regional Wildlife Organization* and *Regional Inuit Organization*. There does not appear to be support in the text of Article 5 for a regional TAH to be set according to the boundaries of a management unit. The Board determined a regional total allowable harvest referred to in s. 5.6.17(b) of the *Nunavut Agreement*, for "a species ordinarily harvested by members of more than one HTO", applied to the defined regions of Nunavut.

No submission was received from the Kivalliq Wildlife Board.

Based on these submissions, and harvest data provided by the Department of Environment, the Board decided to establish a TAH of 140 muskoxen (56 percent) for the Kitikmeot region, 90 muskoxen (36 percent) for the Kivalliq Region and 20 muskoxen (8 percent) for

