



Wildlife Briefing Note

NTI Request NWMB Modify or Remove the Total Allowable Harvest Level for Eastern Arctic Bowhead Whale, as per 5.6.16 of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement

Background:

At Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) regular meeting #54 in December 2007, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc (NTI) requested that the NWMB Modify or Remove the Total Allowable Harvest Level for Eastern Arctic Bowhead Whale, as per 5.6.16 of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. Furthermore, NTI recommended that the NWMB review both the Inuit Traditional Knowledge Study and the DFO submission "*DFO analysis of bowhead whale abundance and stock identity and interim advice regarding TAH of bowhead whales*" dated 8 January 2007. NTI requests that the NWMB then consider the modification or removal of the TAH on Bowhead Whales from the Eastern Canadian Arctic population, based on full considerations of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and scientific information.

On 6 March 08 the NWMB held a public hearing to consider a proposed increase for 2008 of one additional bowhead whale to the existing 2008 TAH of one bowhead whale in the Nunavut Settlement Area (NSA). The NWMB Chairperson indicated that this TAH increase of one Bowhead Whale for 2008 was an in term measure to facilitate the planned harvest of two Bowhead Whales in summer of 2008, and that the NWMB would make a decision on the NTI request to modify or remove the TAH for Bowhead Whales in the NSA prior to 2009.

On 11 September 08 at NWMB regular meeting #57, NTI raise the issue of the request for the modification or removal of the Bowhead whale TAH. The NWMB deferred the issue to the next regular meeting of the NWMB scheduled for December 08.

In a submission dated 21 December 07 that was prepared by NWMB Wildlife Biologist and presented to the NWMB in January 08, staff identified their concern that a modification or removal of the TAH on Bowhead Whales "require a reasonably high level of procedural fairness". NWMB staff also identified concerns with "timing of the decision", due to the annual research funding meeting in March. A NWMB decision that would be made in April would not allow sufficient time for the Minister to respond (60 days) and then allow the allocation of the TAH and preparation required for the harvesting of Bowheads in August. The NWMB recognized the staff concerns and made an "in term"

decision that did not address NTI's request for the modification or removal of the TAH on Bowhead Whales in NSA.

The current Bowhead Whale TAHs in the NSA are based on scientific information that recognizes two populations of Bowhead Whales in NSA, and population estimates that are based on outdated and inaccurate scientific information. The scientific information on the population delineation and population estimates of Bowhead Whales in the NSA that DFO collected in 2004, has presented to NWMB initially in 2006 has not been applied to the TAH. In a letter to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans dated 16 July 07, Mr. Raymond Ningeocheak 2nd Vice President of NTI expressed numerous concerns, the cultural and social importance of the hunt and a request to have the TAH for Bowhead Whales in NSA modified or removed in a timely manner.

Recommendation:

NTI recommends that the NWMB review both the Inuit Traditional Knowledge Study and the DFO submission "*DFO analysis of bowhead whale abundance and stock identity and interim advice regarding TAH of bowhead whales*" dated 8 January 2007. NTI is requesting that the NWMB confirm that the review of the new scientific information and consideration of the modification or removal of the TAH on Bowhead Whales in NSA will be completed in a timely fashion so as not to interfere with the proposed three Bowhead Whale hunts that Inuit of Nunavut are expecting in summer of 2009.

Prepared by
NTI Wildlife Department
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