

**CONSULTATION SUMMARY NOTES FOR THE 2016 WESTERN HUDSON BAY
POLAR BEAR AERIAL SURVEY COMPILED DURING MEETINGS CONDUCTED
BETWEEN 4-7 JULY 2017**

4 July, 2017: Rankin Inlet HTO, Rankin Inlet

5 July, 2017: Issatik HTO, Whale Cove

6 July, 2017: Arviat HTO, Arviat

7 July, 2017: Aqigiq HTO, Chesterfield Inlet



Department of Environment, Government of Nunavut

Igloolik, NU

Prepared: 11 July, 2017

Executive Summary

Government of Nunavut, Department of Environment representatives together with delegates from Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. and the Kivalliq Wildlife Board conducted consultations with the Hunters and Trappers Organizations of Rankin Inlet, Whale Cove, Arviat, and Chesterfield Inlet on July 4, 5, 6, and 7, 2017, respectively. Invited Baker Lake HTO representatives did not attend the meeting in Chesterfield Inlet on 7 July 2017.

The primary purpose of these consultations was to provide co-management partners with:

- 1) an overview of the most recent scientific study results on the western Hudson Bay (WH) polar bear sub-population (Appendix 1); and
- 2) the GN's management recommendation of no change to the current TAH despite a decline in abundance in the 2016 population estimate (842, 562-1121 95% CI) relative to the 2011 aerial survey estimate (1030, 754-1406 95% CI).

In addition, the GN representatives collected feedback on the results and any additional information or management concerns expressed by co-management partners. This included public safety concerns expressed by the Arviat HTO, to which the GN suggested it would recommend re-setting the current TAH of 28 bears to the NWMB, thus eliminating existing polar bear tag credit issues so as to allow each community full, restored access to its quota allocation.

Only communities that hunt from the WH polar bear sub-population were consulted.

The feedback and information collected during these consultations will be considered when forming Total Allowable Harvest (TAH) recommendations for the WH sub-population to be submitted for decision to the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) at its September, 2017 meeting.

This report attempts to summarize the comments made by HTO members/participants during these consultation meetings.

Preface

This report represents the Department of Environment's best efforts to accurately capture all of the information that was shared during consultation meetings with the Hunters and Trappers Organizations of Rankin Inlet, Whale Cove, Arviat, and Chesterfield Inlet.

The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Environment, or the Government of Nunavut.

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1.0 Report Purpose and Structure

This report is intended to: 1) provide the details of the GN DOE presentation and resulting management recommendations for the WH polar bear subpopulation assessment, 2016 (Appendix 1), and 2) collate and summarize comments, questions, concerns and suggestions provided by the HTOs in response to the results from the recent western Hudson Bay (WH) scientific study. In addition, these consultations were conducted with community HTOs to collect feedback and TK prior to submitting formal recommendations for the WH sub-population to the NWMB that include no change to the current TAH. The following community HTOs were consulted from July 4-7, 2017:

- 4 July, 2017: Rankin Inlet HTO, Rankin Inlet
- 5 July, 2017: Issatik HTO, Whale Cove
- 6 July, 2017: Arviat HTO, Arviat
- 7 July, 2017: Aqigiq HTO, Chesterfield Inlet

After these consultations, the DOE will provide a submission to the NWMB for decision that includes no change in the existing TAH and management approach, but as per Arviat HTO's suggestion GN DOE will recommend to re-set and zero credits so that communities are able to harvest bears but are also in a position to deal with defense of life and property kills, should the situation arise.

In addition to the HTO Board members, co-management representatives from Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI), and the Kivalliq Wildlife Board (KWB) also attended each of the consultations. The NWMB had no delegates present during these meetings.

2.0 Purpose of Consultations

The purpose of these consultations was to discuss the newest scientific information that was collected during the 2016 aerial survey regarding the WH polar bear sub-population, and as reported in the final GN report which was produced by several co-authors. After the consultations the GN DOE will submit TAH recommendations for the WH sub-population to the NWMB for decision which will include no change in the existing TAH and management approach, but as per Arviat HTO suggestion to re-set the credits to zero. This would allow communities to harvest bears while also being in a position to deal with defense of life and property kills, should the situation arise.

2.1 Format of Meetings

The meetings were held in the evenings, usually between 19:00 and 22:00, and ran approximately 2.5 hours depending on HTO engagement. Meetings were facilitated and led by the GN Polar Bear Biologist, M. Dyck, who was also the presenter. Each consultation session began with an overview of the study design, study execution, and results from the aerial survey study conducted on the WH polar bear sub-population (Appendix 1). It was also mentioned that the population has remained relatively stable and that no difference between the 2011 and 2016 aerial survey results existed. The GN's position, therefore, was to recommend no change in the current TAH for the WH sub-population. The participants were invited to ask any questions, raise concerns, or provide recommendations throughout the meetings. After the presentation, questions/discussions continued until no further questions were raised.

3.0 Summary by Community

The objectives of the consultations were made clear to the HTO members prior to and at the start of each meeting. There were many similar questions, concerns and suggestions raised by HTO Board members in all the communities consulted. A full report of the questions and comments from each community follows in Appendix 2.

3.1 Rankin Inlet Consultation Summary

Date: 4 July, 2017

Representatives:

- GN-DOE, Polar Bear Biologist: Markus Dyck
- GN-DOE, Regional Manager: Rob Harmer
- GN-DOE, Conservation Officer: Joanne Coutu-Autut
- NTI: Raymond Mercer
- NTI: Robert Karetak
- Rankin Inlet HTO, Secretary: Nigel Kubluitok
- Rankin Inlet HTO, Temporary Secretary: Clayton Tartak
- KWB Representative: Qovik Netser

Comments and questions:

There were no HTO board members present in Rankin Inlet, however, several questions regarding the presentation and results of the study were raised by representatives. The question whether there is current concern for this population was raised, and it was discussed that although there does not seem to be a significant decline in abundance, declines in body condition, survival rates, and reproduction have

been documented for years. In particular, there are some effects on cubs-of-the-year that only allow a small proportion to survive to the yearling stage.

There was also some support for a new IQ study, and a fall coastal survey to determine when and how many bears migrate through and are in the vicinity of the community.

3.2 Whale Cove Consultation Summary

Date: 5 July, 2017

Representatives:

- GN-DOE, Polar Bear Biologist: Markus Dyck
- GN-DOE, Regional Manager: Rob Harmer
- NTI: Raymond Mercer
- NTI: Cheryl Wray
- KWB Representative: Nick Arnalukjuaq
- Issatik HTO: Shirley Kabloona
- Issatik HTO: Eva Voisey
- Issatik HTO: Martha Arualak
- Issatik HTO: Chris Jones
- Issatik HTO: Robert Enuapik

Comments and questions:

In response to questions asked by M. Dyck regarding when many bears would show up near the community, HTO members responded usually in the fall between October and December, and that there may be a disproportionate migration of bears north from Manitoba. HTO members agreed that there were fewer polar bears during the 1960s and 1970s, and that during the 1980s more bears were seen on the land. It was also suggested whether biopsy sampling could be used in order to track problem bears near the community, or if a fall coastline survey could be used to determine some trends over time. There also seemed to be support for a renewed study in order to continue the monitoring of the WH polar bears.

3.3 Arviat Consultation Summary

Date: 6 July, 2017

Representatives:

- GN-DOE, Polar Bear Biologist: Markus Dyck
- GN-DOE, Regional Manager: Rob Harmer
- GN-DOE, Conservation Officer: Joe Savikataaq Jr.
- NTI: Raymond Mercer

- NTI: Cheryl Wray
- NTI: Bert Dean
- NTI: Robert Karetak
- KWB Representative: Nick Arnalukjuaq
- KWB Chairperson: Stanley Adjuk
- Arviat HTO: Thomas Alikaswa
- Arviat HTO: Ludovic Issumatarjuak
- Arviat HTO: Gordy Kidlupik
- Arviat HTO: Angelina Suluk
- Arviat HTO: Sam Garry Muckpa
- Arviat HTO: Jamie Kablutsiak
- Arviat HTO: Mary Issumatarjuak

Comments and questions:

In response to questions asked by M. Dyck regarding when many bears would show up near the community, HTO members responded usually in the fall between October and December. HTO members agreed that there were fewer polar bears during the 1960s and 1970s, and that during the 1980s more bears were seen on the land. It was also discussed if a fall coastline survey could be used to determine some trends over time. Concern over the TAH was expressed and that it is likely low to deal with problem bears. M. Dyck suggested to bring forward to DOE whether it is possible to re-set credits and TAH for the new harvest season. Some HTO members suggested that bears in the Arviat area move inland up to 120 miles – and that this was important local information that should be documented for the next aerial survey. Problem bears do also not seem to be scared anymore of people like they used to.

3.4 Chesterfield Inlet Consultation Summary

Date: 7 July, 2017

Representatives:

- GN-DOE, Polar Bear Biologist: Markus Dyck
- GN-DOE, Regional Manager: Rob Harmer
- GN-DOE, Conservation Officer: Peter Kattegatsiak Sr.
- NTI: Raymond Mercer
- NTI: Cheryl Wray
- NTI: Bert Dean
- NTI: Robert Karetak
- KWB Representative: Nick Arnalukjuaq
- Aqigiq HTO: Harry Aggark
- Aqigiq HTO: Leonie Mimialik
- Aqigiq HTO: Patrick Putulik

- Aqigiq HTO: Jerome Misheralak
- No Baker Lake HTO members attended the meeting after invitations and travel was arranged to Chesterfield Inlet

Comments and questions:

In response to questions asked by M. Dyck regarding when many bears would show up near the community, HTO members responded usually in the fall between October and December, but also in the spring time. HTO members agreed that there were fewer polar bears during the 1960s and 1970s, and that during the 1980s more bears were seen on the land, and that there are bears from 2 sub-populations near the community (e.g., Foxe Basin and WH). It was also discussed if a fall coastline survey could be used to determine some trends over time.

4.0 Summary

Some common themes that were apparent during several HTO discussions were that communities would likely support a fall coastal survey allowing to monitor bears near communities, and possibly means of genetic biopsy sampling so that bears near communities could be identified and their background examined if they had contact with communities and humans before. It also seemed that HTOs would be in support of a new traditional knowledge study that would examine whether freeze-up patterns near their communities have changed during the past 20-30 years, and how the fall distribution of bears near communities has changed from the 1970s to the present. The Arviat HTO commented that the current TAH likely is not sufficient to cover problem bears and it was suggested that a credit re-set could be considered so that the full TAH is available for all communities, given the public safety concern. M. Dyck and R. Harmer offered all communities to forward questions to the GN should they arise so that anything that was not discussed or unclear at the meetings could be explained.