

2. DFO continue in its efforts to:
 - a. Re-examine – in light of new information – the historic, pre-commercial whaling population numbers for the Eastern Canada – West Greenland bowhead whale population; and
 - b. Seek a reconciliation of its current population estimate with those of the International Whaling Commission; and
3. In anticipation of potential future increases in the TAH, NTI continue to ensure that the necessary equipment and training needs keep pace with the number of hunts undertaken in the NSA.”

The Board decided to conduct its review by asking DFO, NTI and the three Regional Wildlife Organizations to provide their views with respect to NTI's request, and by asking DFO and NTI to provide reports with respect to the three recommendations from the NWMB's 2009 TAH decision.

DFO indicated support for NTI's proposal for the extension of the bowhead TAH for 2012 and 2013 as it is consistent with the current DFO science advice for the EC-WG population. With regards to Recommendation 1, DFO suggested that there is currently no appropriate forum for management discussions between Canada and Greenland because Canada is not a member of the International Whaling Commission (IWC). However, DFO suggested that when a suitable forum is established Canada and Greenland should discuss shared stewardship for the EC-WG population. Moreover, DFO indicated its preference for the development of a sharing arrangement for the existing TAH between Nunavut Inuit (NTI) and Nunavik Inuit (Makivik). As for Recommendation 2, DFO referenced a scientific publication¹ which indicated that most bowhead whales in the population (88%) between 1520 and 2009 were removed by commercial whaling. DFO indicated its bowhead population estimate remains unchanged, but that it has begun to update the existing abundance estimate with results expected in 2015.

NTI provided responses verbally at the March 13th, 2012 Board Meeting. For Recommendation 1, NTI indicated that they do not see developing a sharing arrangement with Makivik on bowhead as being a high priority at this point in time given their list of other pressing wildlife management issues. As for Recommendation 3, NTI indicated that it initiated and will continue safety training, and necessary equipment for the bowhead hunts. NTI, as well as a veterinarian from the University of Prince Edward Island, will continue to attend at least one hunt per year to document the efficiency of killing devices, and gain information regarding bowhead anatomy.

The NWMB did not receive any responses from the Regional Wildlife Organizations.

Conclusion

With its March 13th, 2012 decision, the NWMB has completed its planned review of the bowhead TAH following the 2011 harvesting season, and will not be modifying its March 11th, 2009 decision. That decision will remain in effect until such time as circumstances require a modification to, or removal of, the level of TAH.

¹ Higdon, J.W. 2010. Commercial and subsistence harvests of bowhead whales in Eastern Canada and West Greenland. *Journal of Cetacean Research and Management*, 11(12): 185-216.

In the meantime, the Board urges DFO to make it a priority to establish a forum for bowhead management discussions between Canada and Greenland – and to reach an agreement with Greenland concerning both the sharing and the responsible stewardship of the Eastern Canada – West Greenland bowhead whale population. Similarly, the NWMB recommends that NTI make it a priority to develop a mutually-agreeable Nunavut-Nunavik bowhead sharing arrangement with Makivik. In the NWMB's view, it is essential that the co-management partners strive to develop sharing and stewardship arrangements with neighbouring jurisdictions that will responsibly contribute to the ongoing and remarkable recovery of the Eastern Canada – West Greenland bowhead whale population.

Should you have any questions or concerns with respect to this decision, please do not hesitate to contact the NWMB.

Sincerely,



Jim Noble
Chief Operating Officer
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board

c.c. James Qillaq, Chairperson of the Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board
Ross Tatty, Chairperson of the Kivalliq Wildlife Board
Lucassie Nakoolak, A/Chairperson of the Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board

