

August 11th, 2014

Ben Kovic
Chairperson
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board
Inuksugait Complex, P.O. Box 1379
Iqaluit, NU, X0A 0H0



RE: Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board Submission to the NWMB hearing for the consideration of the total allowable harvest for bowhead whales in the Kivalliq Region.

Mr. Kovic,

The present letter is in response to the NWMB's July 4th, 2014 notice of a written public hearing to consider the Kivalliq Wildlife Board's (KWB) proposal to increase the total allowable harvest (TAH) by one bowhead whale for the Kivalliq region. This letter should be considered the Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board's (NMRWB) submission to the written public hearing.

As you are aware, the NMRWB has recently completed its own written hearing to consider the establishment of a total allowable take (TAT) for bowhead whales in the Nunavik Marine Region (NMR). Although the NWMB had asked that the NMRWB consider postponing its decision-making process to ensure a coordinated effort, we could not accommodate this request as Nunavik Inuit hoped to hold a bowhead hunt during summer/early Fall 2014. Through its process, the NMRWB established a TAT of two (2) bowhead whales in the NMR (in line with the Basic Needs Level established by the NMRWB in 2012), with the caveat that one additional strike shall be permitted for each harvest in the event that a whale is struck and lost. The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans approved the NMRWB's decision on May 16th, 2014 and it will remain in effect until new information becomes available, which would require the NMRWB to reevaluate the TAT.

As in the Kivalliq region, all bowhead whales hunted in the NMR are taken from the Eastern Canada-West Greenland (EC-WG) population. In reaching its decision, the NMRWB accepted the scientific advice provided by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) that a total human-induced mortality of 18 bowhead whales per year or less would not pose a threat to the EC-WG bowhead population (based on the Potential Biological Removal method).

For populations of wildlife found in the NMR that cross jurisdictional boundaries and are hunted outside the NMR by persons resident elsewhere, section 5.5.4.1 of the Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement (NILCA), requires the NMRWB to take account of harvesting activities outside the NMR. Considering the distribution of the EC-WG bowhead whale population, the NMRWB accounted for harvesting in Nunavut (annual TAH of three bowheads) and Greenland (annual limit of two bowheads). Because the NMRWB was aware of the Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board's proposal to increase the TAH within the Nunavut Settlement Area, it was also assumed that the additional harvest of one bowhead in Nunavut was forthcoming (i.e. a total human-induced mortality, outside the NMR, of six bowhead whales per year from the EC-WG population was assumed).

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Although the present request by the KWB, if approved, would result in a potential harvest of seven bowhead whales per year outside the NMR, the NMRWB supports the KWB's request for an increase in the TAH from one bowhead to two bowheads per year for the Kivalliq. This represents a small increase in the human-induced mortality of EC-WG bowhead whales, but to a level that is supported by the available science, and which is not out of chord with the NMRWB's own decisions.

Should the NWMB require clarification on any of the information contained herein, please do not hesitate to contact the NMRWB Director of Wildlife Management, Mark O'Connor, at moconnor@nmrwb.ca or by phone at (819) 254-8667.

The NMRWB looks forward to working closely with the NWMB to ensure the effective management of the EC-WG bowhead population in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Josepi Padlayat". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Josepi Padlayat
Chairman
Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board

Please confirm receipt.