



Kugluktuk Angoniatit Association • Hunters' & Trappers' Organization

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**SUBMISSION TO THE NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD
PUBLIC HEARING MARCH 3-4, 2020; KUGLUKTUK NUNAVUT**

FOR

INFORMATION: XX

DECISION:

Issue:

Government of Nunavut proposal for a reduced TAH of 340 to 107 bulls only for the Bluenose East Caribou Herd.

Background:

An interim Total Allowable Harvest of 340 was implemented in 2017 on the Bluenose East Caribou herd for the community of Kugluktuk.

The Governments of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut completed a population estimate in 2018 and came out with 19,294 animals, a decline since the 2015 survey of 38,592.

In preparation for a meeting with Department of Environment, Kugluktuk Angoniatit Association, Kugluktuk Hunters and Trappers Organization (KHTO) had a special community meeting on August 28, 2019. The residents of Kugluktuk made a motion for no lower than 250 animals with a 1:1 sex ratio each hunting season. While the community and the Hunters and Trappers Organization has acknowledged the decline in the Bluenose East caribou herd, harvesting is still required for food, hides and to continue the cultural way of life.

The KHTO met with the Government of Nunavut on October 2, 2019 to discuss the current and future Total Allowable Harvest of the Bluenose East caribou herd. The Government of Nunavut proposed a Total Allowable Harvest of 107 bulls only to the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board in December 2019.

107 bulls only would limit the harvest to a seasonal hunt, occurring mainly in the fall before the rut. Comments were made at the October 2 meeting that harvesting of both females and males are required, as people need meat throughout the whole year: as well as hides for clothing and bedding. Currently the sex-selection patterns and preferences of Kugluktuk harvesters vary on a seasonal basis. The past few harvest seasons has seen a reasonably close male to female ratio.

The KHTO also expressed concerns about the impact a lower Bluenose East caribou TAH would have on other caribou herds and other species in the Kugluktuk area (example: Dolphin Union caribou; moose, muskox). While other species harvest was encouraged to help with the BNE caribou, while the TAH was at 340; a lower TAH could really impact those other species. A lot of discussion revolved around predators and predator management. Currently the community participates in a wolf skull collection pilot project by the Department of Environment. Since the project began in winter 2018/19, 101 wolves were harvested. This number drastically increased due to the \$300/sample than in previous years. Harvesters said that should that amount be higher, they would be out hunting wolves, as the 101 that were harvested, were opportunistic. This winter has seen little wolves harvested due to snow conditions but will increase in the next few months.

Traditional Knowledge states that the grizzly bear population has increased, with many sightings of sows with twins, triplets and even quadruplets, some of which are close to the size of the sow. The Kugluktuk Angoniatit Association will initiate a traditional knowledge study on grizzly bears in the upcoming months.

Bluenose East Community Caribou Management Plan

The Kugluktuk Bluenose East Caribou Management Plan was originally submitted to the NWMB in June 2019; with a response to work with partners to update the plan co-operatively. Collaboration between co-management partners will continue in the next few months

KHTO is already undertaking actions, that are within this management plan, to help the caribou population. These actions include a No Hunting Zone; alternative species harvesting; monitoring; sampling; no commercial and sport hunting of all caribou in our area; and public meetings to inform/discuss situations.

The No Hunting Zone was established in June of 2017, to allow the cows to migrate to calving grounds with little/no disturbance/harvesting thus allowing more calves to be born. This zone also plays a key role in safety for the community. Caribou are easily accessible and would be harvested close to the community, with many gut remains which attract predators. It also prevents inexperienced harvesters from hunting too close to the community, eliminating the chance of wounded animals.

The KHTO continues to work with Department of Environment on monitoring and sample collection.

Recommendation:

Over the past 4 years, Kugluktukmiut have harvested about half of the total allowable harvest of 340. The past season harvests show that the TAH of 340 is not all filled and that females are harvested as well.

Harvest Levels:

2016/17 163 harvested (no breakdown of sex)

2017/18 174 harvested: 101 males; 73 females

2018/19 93 harvested: 59 males; 34 females

2019/20 (to January 31, 2020) 128 harvested: 60 males; 68 females

Almost all harvests and observations on Bluenose East caribou in the fall of 2018 were that of healthy caribou; sightings of many calves, including twins. Community observations of the last two summers include healthy caribou, cooler temperatures, less insects, more wind, wetter conditions, therefore can be a positive sign that the herd may be on the road to recovery.

The KHTO acknowledges the decline in the BNE caribou and that conservation measures need to be taken, but it does agree that a TAH is the only and best tool, as per the Nunavut Agreement.

The KHTO recommends that the Total Allowable Harvest for the Bluenose East caribou go no lower than 250 animals with a 1:1 sex ratio. This recommendation would take into consideration the population estimate from the Government and most importantly the community observations and actions undertaken by the KHTO.

For food security and cultural reasons, the KHTO is opposed to the Government of Nunavut's recommendation for 107 bulls only. Lowering the TAH to 107 bulls only would have a drastic negative impact on a growing community. People need country food; it is much healthier and preferred.