



SUBMISSION TO THE

NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD

FOR

Information: _____

Decision: X

Issue: Mayukalik H.T.O. request for an increase in polar bear quota and status of Davis Strait polar bear inter-jurisdictional meetings

Background:

On October 12th the NWMB received a letter from the Mayukalik H.T.O. requesting an increase in polar bear quota from the Davis Strait subpopulation (attached).

The Davis Strait polar bear subpopulation straddles Quebec, Nunavut, and Labrador (refer to Appendix 1). Together, the three Provincial and Territorial governments share responsibility for the management of this subpopulation. The most recent population inventory (2005-2007) has shown an increase in the number of bears and that at current harvest levels the population is stable. There is concern however that this subpopulation is disproportionately allocated, Quebec (Guaranteed Harvest Level of 62 for all populations), Nunavut (46) and Nunatsiavut (6) across the three jurisdictions. Currently, there is no formal mechanism for the joint management of polar bear subpopulations.

Environment Canada was asked by the jurisdictions to assist in the establishment of a process that would provide recommendations to address this issue. Representatives of all concerned Provinces, Territories, Wildlife Management Boards and concerned organizations met in Montreal on February 4th, 2010 to initiate this process. It was decided that in order to determine the appropriate allocation of harvest, it was necessary to provide advice on the establishment of a population management objective based on conservation principles, and to appropriately allocate the harvest between the three jurisdictions. It was determined that this advice should be based on the best available western science and traditional ecological knowledge, and should also include input from users that harvest polar bear from the Davis Strait subpopulation. As such, it was felt that user advice would most appropriately be sought via a user-to-user workshop. Upon receiving advice from all three sources, the Montreal Group would then review the information and provide recommendations to the various authorities for their consideration.

A two-and-a-half day user-to-user workshop was held in Kuujjuaq, Quebec, September 13th - 16th, 2010. At this meeting, Inuit representatives from Nunatsiavut, Nunavik and Nunavut presented traditional ecological knowledge and participants heard presentations from jurisdiction representatives on their respective polar bear management processes. Dr. Stephen Atkinson (polar bear biologist, Government of Nunavut) also presented on the most recent western science population analyses. Inuit representatives from Nunatsiavut, Nunavik, and Nunavut decided on two resolutions (attached) at the user-to-user meeting for consideration. It was identified that the current population should be reduced to reduce human-bear conflict. This would allow for an increase in harvest.

Environment Canada and the Montreal Group are working on a draft letter to the organizations managing the Davis Strait polar bear, including recommendations for the organization's consideration. This letter is expected to be sent by February.

Recommendation: Provide a reply to the Mayukalik H.T.O. that the NWMB will need to defer its decision on the request for a quota increase until it has received and reviewed all of the information and resolutions being compiled from the user-to-user meeting and the Montreal Group.

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Dated: November 12th, 2010

APPENDIX 1: Aboriginal Communities in the Davis Strait Polar Bear Subpopulation Area

