

SUBMISSION TO THE NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD

FOR

Information: X

Decision:

Issue:

Atlantic Walrus Integrated Fisheries Management Plan Update.

Background:

In 2007, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) initiated the development of an Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP) for walrus, starting with the North Foxe Basin stock. In 2010, plan development has also begun for the Baffin Bay stock.

Current Situation:

Development of an IFMP for Atlantic walrus in the eastern Arctic is ongoing.

The IFMP will ensure the sustainable harvest of walrus consistent with the principles of conservation set out in the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. Individual chapters of the walrus IFMP are being developed by co-management Working Groups (WGs). The WGs are comprised of representatives from the local Hunter & Trapper Organizations (HTOs), the Regional Wildlife Organization (RWO), Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI) and DFO (Resource Management, Conservation & Protection, and Science). Others may be invited to attend meetings as requested or required (e.g. Elders, Industry representatives, or other government departments). NWMB technical staff is unable to attend WG meetings; however their input is requested on WG documents and decisions. The WGs are developing Terms of References (ToR) to guide the development of the IFMP chapters. Two WGs have been established to date.

The Foxe Basin Walrus Working Group (FBWWG) - mandate includes the North and Central Foxe Basin Walrus Stocks:

The FBWWG met in Igloolik in June 2009 and in Iqaluit in February and December 2010. The HTOs that are represented on the FBWWG are Hall Beach and Igloolik. A Terms of Reference (ToR) has been finalized and the approval process will be initiated. A traditional ecological knowledge map is being produced that identifies important biological and ecologically significant areas for walrus in Foxe Basin. At the meeting in December 2010, the working group began the identification of management goals and measures for walrus in Foxe Basin. The resulting IFMP will be based on the best available knowledge, including scientific, local and Inuit and will follow the national DFO IFMP

template. The next meetings will take place in February 2011, in both Igloolik and Hall Beach, where delegates will continue working on management goals, measures, and recommendations for the duration of the plan. These meetings will also provide the opportunity to update the public on the progress of the plan's development. It is anticipated that a draft Foxe Basin chapter of the IFMP will be completed within 6-12 months.

Baffin Bay Walrus Working Group (BBWWG) - mandate includes the West Jones Sound, Penny Strait-Lancaster Sound, and Baffin Bay Walrus Stocks (high Arctic):

The BBWWG held two meetings in Iqaluit in 2010, the first in February and a second November 30-December 1. The HTOs represented on the BBWWG are Resolute Bay, Grise Fiord, Pond Inlet and Arctic Bay. The BBWWG agreed to develop a Management Plan for walrus in the high Arctic based on the best available knowledge, including scientific, local and Inuit, and will follow the national DFO IFMP template. The next meetings for the BBWWG will take place in each of the high Arctic communities in February and March 2011. The meetings are intended to continue with the collection of local and Inuit knowledge, and the finalization and prioritization of management goals, measures, and recommendations for the duration of the plan. These meetings will also provide the opportunity to inform the public on the purpose of the plan and progress that has been made to date. It is anticipated that a draft high Arctic chapter of the IFMP will be completed within 6-12 months.

DFO-Science, as a Working Group member, will collaborate with the HTOs to develop estimates of Atlantic walrus abundance and distribution. In 2008 DFO advised the NWMB that it was not possible to recommend sustainable harvest levels for walrus in Nunavut until more recent estimates of walrus population size and better harvest reporting were provided. It is anticipated that information provided through the IFMP process will assist in filling these gaps.

Consultations:

DFO Central & Arctic Region

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