

SUBMISSION TO THE NWMB
FOR

Information:

Decision: X

Issue: Approval of Recovery Strategy for the Ivory Gull pursuant to the *Species At Risk Act* (SARA)

Background: The Ivory Gull is a seabird found only in the Arctic that was listed as *Endangered* on Schedule 1 of the *Species at Risk Act* in 2009.

Ivory Gulls are medium-sized, pure white gulls that nest in the High Arctic in Nunavut, and migrate to Davis Strait in the winter. The population in Nunavut has declined by more than 70% since the 1980s, as confirmed by local ecological knowledge (LEK) and survey work by the CWS and High Arctic communities. Ivory Gulls also nest in Greenland, Norway and Russia, and populations there seem to have declined a little, but not as much as in Canada.

Community Contact and Consultation

The CWS collected LEK on Ivory Gulls around southern Baffin Island in 2000 (Cape Dorset, Kimmirut, Iqaluit, Pangnirting) and in the High Arctic in 2001 and 2004 (Arctic Bay, Resolute Bay, Pond Inlet). Since 2002, the CWS has been surveying all known colonies (2002-2006, 2009), as well as annual surveys at Seymour Island (2002-2010).

Aside from LEK work, CWS has consulted with communities on the status and uplisting of Ivory Gulls in Resolute Bay, Arctic Bay and Grise Fiord (2004-2006). We have also presented results on the Ivory Gull in Nunavut to the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board almost annually between 2001-2007. After consultations with communities, we received a support letter for the uplisting from the Iviq HTO in Grise Fiord (but nothing from Arctic Bay or Resolute Bay). In 2007, the NWMB approved the recommendation to uplist this species to *Endangered* (Resolution 2007-161).

On the Recovery Strategy for this species, CWS met and consulted with the Resolute Bay HTA in March 2011 and received written approval for the strategy. Information packages were sent to Arctic Bay and Grise Fiord in May 2011, but no responses have been received yet.

Recovery Strategy: The draft recovery strategy for Ivory Gull addresses most of the issues that were highlighted in the Status Report. The recovery plan recommends several research and management activities relevant to Nunavut. Those that the CWS has been working on since 2009 include:

- 1) establish critical habitat as a 2 km radius around the centre of all colonies that have had a gull present at least once since 2002. Establishing these sites as critical habitat mean that no activities that directly result in the destruction of that habitat can occur within 2 km;
- 2) survey all known colonies once every three years to determine if population is changing;
continue to work with Greenland to minimize illegal shooting of gulls;
- 3) conduct local knowledge study on Ivory Gulls in Grise Fiord;
- 4) monitor for evidence of Ivory Gulls killed during winter oil spills;
- 5) continue international cooperation and increase efforts to inform the public, government and industry of the Ivory Gull status; and
- 6) conduct satellite telemetry study to determine migration and wintering areas.

Other activities suggested in the Recovery Strategy include:

- 1) investigate possibility of minimizing predation by bears and foxes at some colonies;
- 2) survey areas north of known colony locations to look for new colonies;
- 3) sample eggs and feathers to examine whether contaminants continue to be a threat to Ivory Gulls.

In 2009-11, CWS continued its work on points 1, 2, 4 and 8.

Recommendations:

The Ivory Gull Recovery Strategy is complete. The CWS seeks NWMB support of the Recovery Strategy.

Prepared by:

Mark Mallory
Canadian Wildlife Service, Iqaluit

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