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CITES and Non-Detriment Findings: Implications for Canadian Arctic Marine Mammals

Patrice Simon

CITES Scientific Authority for Aquatic Species



Contents

- What is CITES? How does it work?
- CITES in Canada
- What is a Non-Detriment Finding (NDF)?
- Why are NDF done?
- Implications for Canadian Arctic marine mammals
- Species specifics (narwhal, walrus)



What is CITES?

- CITES = *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora*
- An international agreement; Canada has been a member since 1975
- Goal of CITES?
 - *To ensure international trade does not threaten the survival of species in the wild*



How does CITES work?

- 3 Categories of Species
 - Appendix I: species threatened with extinction (no commercial trade permitted)
 - e.g. large whales, including bowhead; elephants; tigers; crocodiles
 - Appendix II: species that could become threatened if trade is not regulated
 - e.g. narwhal; beluga; minke whale; polar bear
 - Appendix III: species that are voluntarily listed by individual countries to monitor trade
 - e.g. walrus



How does CITES work?

- CITES regulates international trade using permits
- Species listed on CITES require a permit for export
- The DFO Management Authority is responsible for issuing CITES permits for aquatic species
- The DFO CITES Scientific Authority evaluates the sustainability of harvests and issues an NDF where appropriate



What is an NDF?

- NDF = Non-Detriment Finding
- An evaluation of whether exports will be detrimental to the survival of the species in the wild
- An assessment by the DFO Scientific Authority of the available information to determine the sustainability of harvests
- Results of this assessment are provided by the DFO Scientific Authority to the DFO Management Authority



Why do we do NDF?

- NDF assist in ensuring that international trade does not threaten species
- NDF are a requirement under CITES and must accompany CITES permits for Appendix I and II species



Implications of CITES & NDF

- It is in Canada's best interest to demonstrate to the international community that traded products (e.g. narwhal tusks) originate from a sustainable harvest that is based on effective wildlife management practices
- If not, exports of CITES-listed Canadian species could be further regulated or banned



Implications of CITES & NDF cont'd

- CITES can affect Canadian exports through:
 1. Proposals to up-list a species to a higher (more restrictive) CITES Appendix
e.g. from Appendix II to I = no commercial trade
 2. A Review of Significant Trade
 - CITES countries decide whether trade is detrimental to a species and whether specimens in trade are originating from a sustainable harvest
 - If not satisfied:
 - A CITES-imposed export quota that may have specific science and/or management requirements may be implemented;
 - A proposal to up-list the species to Appendix I may be triggered.
- CITES-imposed trade restrictions are very difficult to reverse



Canadian Response to CITES

To avoid CITES-imposed trade restrictions:

- Canada must be able to demonstrate that exported products originate from a sustainable harvest based on effective management practices
- If this is not possible:
 - NDF may not be issued; and/or
 - Implement stricter domestic measures such as a self-imposed trade ban (0 export quotas) which can be lifted at our own discretion



2011 Narwhal NDF

- A peer-review to evaluate available information and provide science advice re: the 2011 narwhal NDF is scheduled for mid-July
 - Information considered will include:
 - existing scientific advice + new scientific advice for Admiralty Inlet;
 - outcomes of these community consultations;
 - A summary of existing traditional knowledge; and
 - any new management actions.
 - The peer-review will determine whether current harvest levels are sustainable based on the available information
 - No management decisions re: changes to harvest limits will be taken at this meeting
- The Narwhal NDF for 2011 harvests is anticipated to be issued in August



Walrus and CITES

- Listed on Appendix III; no NDF required for export
- Interest by some countries and environmental groups to up-list walrus to Appendix II
- An NDF for walrus would be challenging based on current information if it was listed on Appendix II
 - Limited scientific advice
 - Lack of an appropriate management plan
 - Poor estimates of harvest levels and monitoring/tracking



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Thank you

Questions or Comments?