

SUBMISSION TO THE
NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD
FOR

Information: X

Decision:

Issue: Draft Eastern Canada Coral and Sponge Conservation Strategy

Background: In 2010, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) informed northern co-management and Inuit organizations, fishing industry representatives, and other stakeholders that a coral and sponge conservation strategy was under development for Newfoundland, Labrador and eastern Arctic waters. An information note entitled “Development of a Coral and Sponge Conservation Strategy for Newfoundland, Labrador and Eastern Arctic Waters” was submitted to the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (Board) for its December 2010 meeting. The intent of this note is to update the Board on this initiative.

In 2012, DFO re-considered its approach and expanded the strategy to cover the entire east coast of Canada. The goal of the *Eastern Canada Coral and Sponge Conservation Strategy* is to facilitate the conservation and protection of coral and sponge species, communities, and their habitats in the Atlantic and Arctic Oceans of eastern Canada. The *Strategy* describes the current state of knowledge of corals and sponges, provides the international and national context for conservation, and outlines existing research and conservation efforts. It also articulates DFO’s management approach to coral and sponge conservation thereby promoting consistency in the implementation of relevant legislation and policy between all five eastern DFO regions. The *Strategy* identifies departmental conservation, management, and research objectives. Annexes provide regionally specific targets, actions, and timelines, and identifies lead and support roles for various DFO sectors. It is important to note the *Strategy* is neither a management plan nor an interjurisdictional agreement for the management and protection of wildlife.

Consultations on the *Strategy* will be conducted this fall and winter and will involve, amongst others, the Board, Nunavut fishing industry, Government of Nunavut, and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. Should the *Strategy* lead to management decisions to protect corals and sponges in the future, relevant processes under the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement will be followed.

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