

PROPOSAL REVIEW

Project Number: 3-14-05

Applicant: Steve Ferguson

Title: Jones Sound Narwhal Study.

Funding Requested: Single Year Funding - \$45,000 for 2014-2015

Rank: 8 / 18

Total Score 76.94 / 100
(no deductions)

Scoring Breakdown: NWMB Priority: 17.50 / 17.50
Regional Priority: 6.50 / 7.50
Quality: 24.50 / 35.00
Consultation: 11.00 / 15
Funding: 17.44 / 25

Project Summary: The objectives of this project are to: 1) obtain information on the seasonal distribution and diving behaviour of Jones Sound narwhals as it relates to stock identity, climate change, autumn ice entrapments, and wintering area; 2) gather information on the overall health of captured animals and the level of stress during restraint; and 3) determine narwhal diet by analyzing skin and blubber samples.

Project Contributions:

Requested from NWMB	\$45,000	36%
Other Contributions	<u>\$81,000</u>	<u>64%</u>
Total	\$126,000	100%

NWMB Staff Evaluation:

NWMB Priority: #1 - Contributes to the establishment, modification or removal of levels of Total Allowable Harvest (S 5.6.16 to S 5.6.18) for stocks or populations where there is believed to be a conservation concern or that are priority species for harvest by Inuit.

Regional Priority: #2 Baffin – Narwhal: Population estimate (Baffin wide).

Project design: The field work will be conducted from May through August 2014 near Grise Fiord. Narwhals, captured by stationary nets attached to the shore, will be restrained for up to 35 minutes while satellite tags are attached and body measurements and skin, blubber and blood samples are collected. During the restraint period heart and breathing rates will be monitored. If an animal appears to be stressed during the restraint it will be released without application of a tag. There is a remote chance that a whale may drown in the net.

Application of results: The study will provide scientific advice on stock identity, migration timing in relation to entrapments, and wintering areas in relation to commercial fishing and industrial activity, all of which could be used to assist in the development or modification of management plans. These results may also aid in providing information necessary to assess maintaining closure of the narwhal winter use area in North Atlantic Fishery Organization Sub-area 0A.

Community involvement / consultation: The project leader has contacted the Grise Fiord Hunters and Trappers Organization to request support for the project, but has not received a response. It has also been indicated that 4 local Hunters and Trappers Organization members will be hired for a combined 60 days to assist with the field work; all necessary training will be provided. The project leader plans to visit the Grise Fiord Hunters and Trappers Organizations to present the results and final report.

As per the NWRT policy, if the project is funded by the NWRT the project leader is required to: (1) provide a letter of support from all affected communities by June 30th, 2014; **OR** (2) provide a letter of support from a majority of the affected communities by June 30th, 2014 and provide evidence that the research has done a “conscientious” job of consulting; **OR** (3) provide the required information to demonstrate that “conscientious” consultation has been conducted by June 30th, 2014.

Recommendations: If this project is funded, the following conditions should apply:

1. Funding should be conditional on other funding, as identified in the proposal, being approved. This should be confirmed in writing; and
2. Funding should be conditional on meeting the consultation requirements identified as per the NWRT policy.

Consultations: Danica Crystal, Wildlife Management Biologist, NWMB

Prepared By: Peter Kydd, Wildlife Management Biologist, NWMB