

SUBMISSION TO THE
NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD
June 2014

FOR

Information: X

Decision:

Issue: Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada – Operational Update.

Updates:

Resource Management

Marine Mammals:

The majority of the 2013/14 narwhal tags have been returned to the Iqaluit office and these harvest statistics have been summarized. Narwhal tags and information packages for the 2014/15 harvest season are currently being prepared. After the Regional Wildlife Organizations (RWOs) have confirmed the 2014/15 allocation decisions, the tags will be distributed. We expect that most tags will have been distributed by the time this regular meeting takes place.

Walrus sport hunt outfitters were notified of their 2014/15 sport hunt allocation approvals. The first walrus sport hunt licence was issued for May 15th. Iqaluit office staff has also been heavily involved with the walrus community consultations planned for May 28th to June 4th.

Arctic Char:

The winter Arctic Char Fishery in Cumberland Sound started on April 1, 2014. Licences were issued for 3 waterbodies and as of May 5th, the total harvest reported was 2216 lbs of round weight.

The Igloolik Arctic Char Exploratory Fishery started at the Unnamed Lake (local name is Atikittuq) on March 17, 2014. The Igloolik Hunters and Trappers Organization (HTO) worked closely with the Nunavut Community Aquatic Monitoring Program (N-CAMP) to collect their year 1 biological and catch-effort data. The goal of N-CAMP was to train community members collecting year 1 biological data, in hopes that the community members will continue their exploratory sampling for years 2 to 5. In total, N-CAMP participants collected 200 fish samples and out of that, 77 samples have been fully collected for biological information. Biological samples and data sheets have been sent to DFO. Overall, the program was a success since the participants were able to get hands on training to collect biological information for their exploratory fishery.

The Coral Harbour Exploratory Arctic Char Fishery started on April 25, 2014 at Canyon Lakes. Coral Harbour was another community that participated in N-CAMP

and there were 9 local participants involved in the program. Under the exploratory fishing plan, the use of 5 1/2" mesh gillnets was approved for this fishery. However, fish harvesters found that in using this particular size of nets, the catch rates were low. They only caught about 90 fish within 4 days of sampling. Also, the wind conditions were quite strong during the N-CAMP sampling and some of the biological collections had to be done when they were back in town. Exploratory harvest is still being carried out and the fishermen hope to finish the rest of the exploratory year 1 data collection in the middle of May.

Furthermore, the DFO Fisheries Management (FM) Biologist has been working closely with Mr. Charlie Inuarak and his son Niko to help prepare for this summer's exploratory Arctic Char Fishery in Pond Inlet.

Turbot and Shrimp:

The Pangnirtung HTO chaired a public meeting in Pangnirtung, on February 12, 2014, to discuss options for a research plan to obtain scientific data on Turbot movements and stock structure in Cumberland Sound. Later that month, the HTO Board of Directors met and passed a resolution to support two additional years of Turbot tracking data collection, using electronic tags and bottom monitors. DFO and Ocean Tracking Network researchers plan to tag fish and deploy bottom monitors in August 2014, tag more fish and refit the monitors in August 2015, and retrieve the monitors in August 2016.

In 2014, the licence for the Cumberland Sound ice Turbot fishery was issued to the Pangnirtung Hunters and Trappers Organization on January 9 and fishing started on January 31. As of May 5, around 337 tonnes (t), or 689,000 lbs, had been harvested by 69 fishers. There are currently 104 fishers on the licence. This is more fish than was caught in both the 2012 ice fishery (292t) and the 2013 ice fishery (315t), despite a later start to the fishery this year. Towards the end of April, fishing had started to slow down a little, but was still keeping the plant busy. The ice platform was not as far out into the Cumberland Sound this year as it had been in previous years, so fishers were fishing further north towards the end of the Sound, in different locations than they traditionally did.

One person from DFO-Conservation and Protection, and one from DFO-Resource Management, visited the Cumberland Sound ice turbot fishing grounds for 2 days in mid-February. Fish harvesters generally seemed happy about this DFO presence.

General Licensing Operations:

As of May 7th, 2014 the breakdown of licences issued by the Iqaluit office in 2013/14 was:

Marine Mammal Fishing Licences – 3

Commercial Fishing Licences (finfish) – 11

Exploratory Fishing Licences – 2

Licences to Fish for Scientific Purposes – 1 (15 more were under review)

Science

In the past, DFO Science provided updates on the Emerging Fisheries Program and other Science programs currently operating in Nunavut (e.g. Narwhal Aerial Survey, Offshore Trawling Survey).

Currently, DFO Science is in the process of planning and executing field work for the 2014 season. This is a very busy time with many people travelling to remote locations in Nunavut. At this time DFO Science personnel are on the ground working closely with local communities and Hunters and Trappers Organization to collaboratively collect the best data possible. In the coming months we will have updates for the NWMB regarding this field work.

Conservation and Protection

There are 5 Fishery Officers posted to the Nunavut Detachment and all are located in the Iqaluit office. Currently, two more Fishery Officers are in training and will be relocating to Iqaluit later this summer. This addition will bring the total complement of Conservation and Protection staff to seven.

Highlights for 2013:

- Conducted annual At-Sea fishery patrols in the Davis Strait
- Conducted another successful program of Aerial Surveillance patrols
- Conducted a successful Outreach program which included participating in Nunavut Day, Nunavut Tourism's James Smedley event and conducted several interviews regarding our Aerial Surveillance Program with CBC
- Conservation & Protection had a substantial presence in all three regions of Nunavut. C&P visited the following 18 communities: Kugluktuk, Kugaaruk, Gjoa Haven, Taloyoak, Cambridge Bay, Rankin Inlet, Whale Cove, Arviat, Coral Harbour, Repulse Bay, Baker Lake, Arctic Bay, Qikiqtarjuaq, Clyde River, Igloolik, Hall Beach, Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet.

2014 Objectives:

- Conduct At-Sea fishery patrols of the Northern Shrimp and Greenland Halibut fisheries
- Conduct aerial surveillance flights
- Continue to implement the new Narwhal tusk certification system
- Participate in the Atlantic Walrus Integrated Fisheries Management Plan
- Continue to maximize Fishery Officer presence in as many communities as possible with proper distribution across the 3 regions of Nunavut. Particular attention will be given to those communities not visited in 2013

Prepared by: Iqaluit Office – Fisheries and Oceans Canada

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