

**SUBMISSION TO THE**  
**NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD**  
**FOR**



**Information:**

**Decision: X**

**Issue: Regional total allowable harvest for the Western Hudson Bay polar bear subpopulation**

**Background:**

On June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2012, the NWMB issued a public notice that it would be conducting a written hearing to consider a request for decision from the Government of Nunavut on the total allowable harvest for the Western Hudson Bay polar bear subpopulation. On August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012, during in-camera meeting number 006-2012, the NWMB considered the best available Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and scientific knowledge presented by the hearing parties, and passed the following resolution:

*“RESOLVED that – pursuant to Sections 5.3.3, 5.6.16, and 5.6.17 of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement – the NWMB approve a regional total allowable harvest of twenty four (24) polar bears for the Western Hudson Bay subpopulation for three (3) years only, to be formally reviewed following the 2014-2015 harvesting season, or at such time as new relevant information based on western science and/or Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit becomes available”*

As stated in the NWMB’s August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2012 decision letter (Appendix 1), the information considered by the NWMB showed a difference in perspective between Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and Scientific knowledge on the status and health of the Western Hudson Bay subpopulation. Therefore, the NWMB employed the precautionary approach and set the total allowable harvest for three years only. On August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2012, the Minister of Environment accepted the NWMB’s initial decision (Appendix 2).

**Overview:**

On August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2014, the NWMB was copied on a letter from the Kivalliq Wildlife Board requesting that the Government of Nunavut Department of Environment set the Western Hudson Bay polar bear total allowable harvest as soon as possible (Appendix 3). As of the completion of this Briefing Note, the Government of Nunavut has neither responded to the Kivalliq Wildlife Board nor issued a *Proposal for Decision* to the NWMB.

The NWMB has made a commitment to review and set the total allowable harvest in time for the opening of the 2015-2016 harvesting season on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015. In addition,

new scientific information has become available since Environment Canada has recently completed an updated population status report (not yet peer reviewed) based on analysis of mark-recapture and harvest data collected between 1984 and 2011<sup>1</sup>. This new report estimates a 2011 population size of 806 bears (95% confidence interval = 653-984), which is broadly consistent with the 2011 aerial survey abundance estimate.

**Prepared by:** Karla Letto, Wildlife Management Biologist

**Reviewed by:** Danica Crystal, Wildlife Management Biologist and Michael d'Eça, NWMB Legal Counsel

**Date:** August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2014

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<sup>1</sup> The NWMB used similar data from Environment Canada collected between 1984 and 2004 during its 2012 decision-making session.