

PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT

PROJECT NUMBER: 3-14-03

RESEARCHER: Steven Ferguson

TITLE: Abundance of Walrus in Hudson Bay and Hudson Strait

ORIGINALLY FUNDED: 2014-2015

NWMB FUNDING: \$75,000

PROJECT SUMMARY: The primary objective of this project is to estimate abundance of walrus in south and eastern Hudson Bay, James Bay, and Hudson Strait using aerial surveys. Through extensive coverage of the coastlines of these regions as well as haul-out sites recognized through traditional ecological knowledge and previous observations, this project aims to: 1) design a survey acceptable to residents of the Hudson Strait and Hudson Bay communities; 2) hire and train survey crews from local communities; and 3) evaluate the distribution and abundance of walrus in Hudson Bay and Hudson Strait.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

Amount from NWMB:	\$75,000
Amount from Others:	\$418,000
TOTAL	\$493,000
Expenses:	\$534,000
Difference	- \$41,000

COMMENTS: As indicated in the interim report, the survey was conducted as planned in September 2014. The survey was conducted using two Twin Otter aircraft. One plane flew the northern / Nunavut areas, the second plane primarily flew the southern / Nunavik areas. Throughout the survey, effort was focused to get coverage of known haul-out sites identified from traditional knowledge and from previous observations. Some areas along the west Hudson Bay area could not be completed due to weather and time constraints (figure 1). Analysis of the recorded survey results and aerial photographs will take place with results available in 2015-16. As indicated in the interim financial report, the survey expenses were greater than expected. Fisheries and Oceans Ecosystem Fisheries Management has tentatively agreed to provide extra funding to offset the costs.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. NWMB Wildlife staff do not have any recommendations for this reporting period. The project leader has met all of the reporting requirements to date. A final financial report will be required by June 30th 2015 as per the NWRT policy. Project results will be captured in the final project report which is required by September 30th, 2015.

CONSULTATIONS: Danica Crystal, Wildlife Management Biologist, NWMB

PREPARED BY: Karla Letto, Wildlife Management Biologist, NWMB

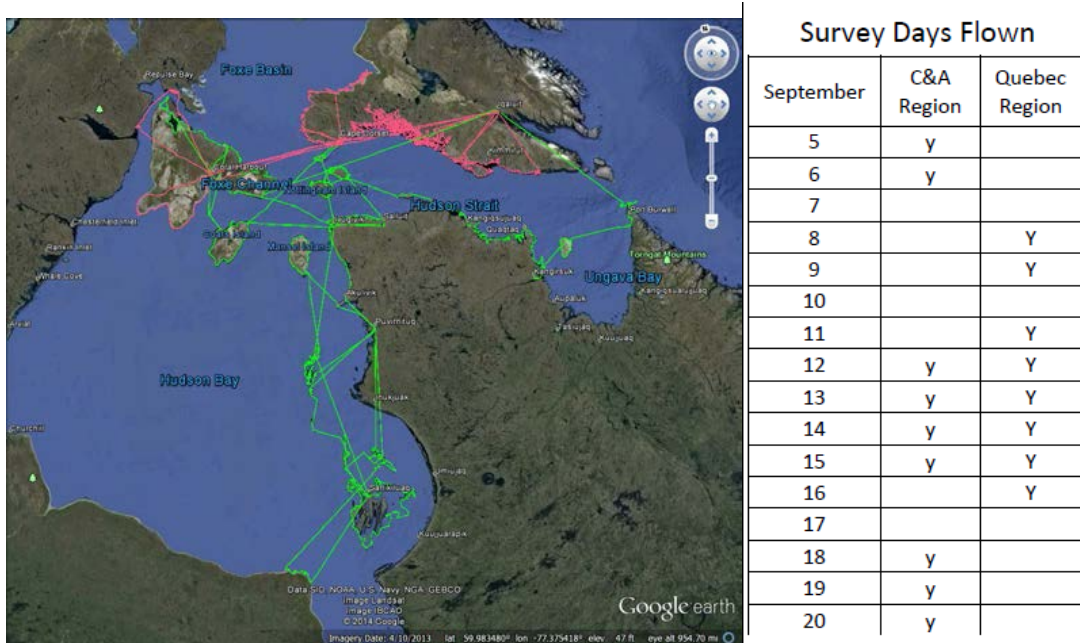


Figure 1. Shoreline coastal areas and survey days flown during the walrus survey. (Central and Arctic: red line, Quebec: green line)