

SUBMISSION TO THE
NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD
June 2015

FOR

Information: X

Decision:

Issue: Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada - Operational Updates.

Updates:

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT:

Marine Mammals:

1) Narwhal:

- The majority of the 2014/15 narwhal tags have been returned to the Iqaluit office and these harvest statistics have been summarized.
- The 2015/16 narwhal tags and information packages are currently being prepared and distributed in coordination with the Regional Wildlife Organization's (RWO) Liaison Officers.

2) Walrus:

- DFO has been working with Nunavut co-management organizations through the Walrus Working Group to develop a Walrus Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP). The IFMP will include the regulatory and non-regulatory measures that will be used to sustainably manage the fishery.
- A public hearing to establish a Total Allowable Harvest (TAH) for Foxe Basin was scheduled for April 15-16, 2015. However, on March 27, 2015, new information was identified by DFO Science that may influence the sustainable harvest levels recommended by the Department for Foxe Basin walrus.
- This information was discussed by Nunavut co-management organizations on March 31, 2015 and agreement was reached to postpone the public hearing until the new information could be assessed.
- A Walrus Working Group meeting is scheduled for May 2015 to review the final draft IFMP. This will provide an opportunity to inform and collaborate with co-management organizations on the new science information and determine the next steps for finalizing the IFMP ahead of the next CITES Conference of Parties (September 2016)..

Arctic Char:

1) Pangnirtung Arctic Char Fishery:

- The 2015 Arctic Char Winter Fishery in Cumberland Sound commenced in January. A few fishers were still active at the time this briefing note was prepared.

2) Exploratory Arctic Char Fisheries:

- Qikiqtarjuaq, Coral Harbour, and Pangnirtung had active exploratory Arctic Char Fisheries in winter 2015.

Greenland Halibut:

Cumberland Sound Turbot Management Area:

- The licence for the Cumberland Sound ice fishery was issued to the Pangnirtung Hunters and Trappers Organization (HTO) on January 8, 2015 and fishing started on January 15th.
- There are currently 117 fishers on the licence.
- As of May 5, 2015 a total of 291.3 tonnes (t) or 640,860 lbs had been landed by 79 fishers.
- In late March 2015, a Fisheries Management Technician from the Iqaluit Office visited Pangnirtung to continue administration of an annual Turbot Ice Fisher Questionnaire. The questionnaire was considered a success due in large part to fisher cooperation and assistance from the Pangnirtung Fish Plant.

CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION:

Currently, there are 5 Fishery Officers posted to the Nunavut Detachment. All Officers are located in the Iqaluit office and are responsible for the territory. There is currently one position vacant and efforts are being made to staff that position.

Highlights for 2014:

- 2014 saw two staff resign and move south. Fortunately, we received two new Fishery Officer trainees in June/July 2014.
- Conducted a six week At-Sea fishery patrol of Davis Strait monitoring the commercial Greenland Halibut and Northern Shrimp fisheries.
- Conservation and Protection (C&P) continued to build excellent relationships with the Greenland Fisheries Licence Control Authority, the Veterinary & Food Authority of Greenland and the European Union Border Inspection Post staff in Nuuk and Sisimiut, Greenland.
- C&P conducted two operational visits to Greenland to observe the offloading of Canadian fishing vessels landing in Greenland. The first visit was to Nuuk in July and the second to Sisimiut in September.
- Conducted nine aerial surveillance patrols to monitor harvesting around Nunavut.

- C&P has been working with our partners to implement the new Narwhal tusk certification process and initial reports is that while there have been some issues, overall it has improved the post-harvest tracking and trade on narwhal ivory.
- C&P also spent time and effort addressing issues and concerns with several fisheries, such as the commercial Arctic Char fishery in Cambridge Bay, beluga in Cumberland Sound, Atlantic Walrus, Bowhead Whale hunts, and recreational Arctic Char fishing at the Sylvia Grinnell River.
- C&P was able to attend and present at two of the three RWO Annual General Meetings.

2015 Objectives:

- Maximize presence in as many communities as possible with proper distribution across the 3 regions of Nunavut.
- Participate in all three RWO Annual General Meetings.
- Continue to implement the new Narwhal tusk certification system and review to ensure the process is effective and address any issues to improve how it is delivered both in the communities and in the post-harvest trade industry
- C&P will be contributing to the development of various IFMPs.
- Continue to provide training to Government of Nunavut – Department of Environment Conservation Officers at their annual Conference and in the communities with regard to activities done on DFO's behalf.
- As of the end of March, C&P has made several visits to the community of Pangnirtung to monitor the winter harvest of Greenland Halibut in Cumberland Sound.
- Conduct an At-Sea fishery patrol - onboard Canadian Coast Guard vessel and/or on a Royal Canadian Navy vessel.
- Conduct 10-12 aerial surveillance flights.
- Build opportunities for students from the Environmental Technology Program for graduates within C&P.
- Continue to expand upon the work done with authorities in Greenland regarding the offshore fisheries.

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