

HTO Consultations Report Dolphin and Union Caribou Management Recommendations

October 2018



Department of Environment, Government of Nunavut Iqaluit, Nunavut

Executive Summary

Government of Nunavut, Department of Environment (DOE) representatives conducted consultations with the Hunters and Trappers Organizations (HTO) of Kugluktuk and with the co-management partners in Cambridge Bay on September 28th, 2018. The primary purpose of these consultations was to consult on the recommended managements actions resulting from the results from the 2015-2017 Dolphin and Union Caribou (DUC) research program. During the consultations, feedback was received regarding the research manuscript, management recommendations. The concerns and input, from co-management partners, were taken into consideration during the final review of the research report and before submission to the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB).

HTOs and community members agreed that the DUC herd is a fundamental part of their current subsistence, and this herd is declining in number. The rate of this decline is worrisome. At the present time, the implementation of a Total Allowable Harvest (TAH) is not supported by the Government of Nunavut, HTOs, or the communities. However, the HTOs and community members are showing strong initiatives and stewardship in implementing community-based actions to address the current decline. The HTOs would like their own management initiatives to be recognized. The HTOs have shown constant interest in being part of the management of DUC through engagement in the monitoring of the herd and active participation in meetings and management processes. This report attempts to summarize the comments made by HTO board members during these meetings.

Preface

This report represents the Department of Environment's best efforts to accurately capture all of the information that was shared during consultation meetings with the Hunters and Trappers Organizations.

The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Environment, Nunavut or Government of Nunavut.

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1.0 Report Purpose and Structure

This report is intended to collate and summarize comments, questions, concerns, and suggestions raised during the consultations held with HTOs on the proposed management recommendations for the DUC. The summary and notes herein only reflect what was shared during the meeting.

2.0 Purpose of Consultations

After the round of engagement and meetings from 2015-2018 (Appendix I), the primary objective of the third round of meetings, organized and led by DOE, was to consult on the proposed management recommendations derived from the 2015-2017 Dolphin and Union caribou herd research program results. Such recommendations are in accordance with the recently approved Dolphin and Union Caribou Management Plan when the herd are in decline. These meetings were an opportunity to record HTO suggestions in order to potentially accommodate their requests and highlight their current community-based management initiatives. HTOs were consulted as the designated representatives of the hunting community under the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA).

2.1 Format of Meetings

The meetings were held during the evening and morning and their duration varied between 1 to 3 hours in length depending on HTO engagement. The same information (herd status, recommendations from in the management plan, and recommendations from the report) was presented and their perspectives were recorded. Meetings were facilitated and lead by the Regional Biologist, and Conservation Officers were present in Kugluktuk to record the discussion. The presentation format was informal and the HTO Board was invited to ask questions, raise concerns, and make suggestions on the proposed recommendations. It was an open dialogue.

3.0 Public and HTO Consultation Summary

The objective for this consultation was made clear and pertinent information was given to the HTOs prior to the meeting, and at the start of the meeting. There were many similar questions, concerns, and suggestions raised by the HTO Boards.

The DUC have an important contribution to the subsistence of the communities, especially since there are harvest restrictions on the Bluenose-East and Bathurst caribou herds. Several members from different HTOs stated the importance of sustaining the Dolphin and Union herd to a certain number to assure the continuation of their harvest rights and their growing concern of a plausible limitation of these rights if the herd continues to decline. The following section summarized the consultations.

3.1.1 Kugluktuk HTO Consultation Summary-2018

Issues: Proposed management recommendations derived from the 2015-2017 Dolphin and Union caribou herd research program results.

Purpose of the Consultations:

A special meeting was organized in Kugluktuk on July 18, 2018. The primary purpose of the meeting was to engage the HTO in an ongoing dialogue on the Dolphin and Union caribou herd future management recommendations. The meeting was an opportunity to inform the audience that the DOE does not recommend a TAH based on the available information.

Date: July 18, 2018

Representatives:

Amanda Dumond (HTO manager)
Larry Adjun (HTO Chair)
Jayko Palongayak (HTO member)
Stanley Carpenter (HTO member)
Bobby Anavilok (HTO member)
Lisa-Marie Leclerc (DOE, Regional Wildlife Biologist)
Russell Akeegok (DOE, Conservation Officer)

Summary of the Discussion:

The HTO was happy to announce that they now have someone at NTI to provide technical expertise to review governmental reports and associated management recommendations.

The current management recommendations were discussed. The Kugluktuk HTO has already been proactive in implementing some conservative measures. Since about 2007, the HTOs by-laws do not support any sport hunt. Therefore, the sport tags allocation (35) for the DUC went all to Cambridge Bay HTO to be used as follow: 10 for the Cambridge Bay sport hunts and 5 for the local sport outfitter and the remaining 20 tags will be set aside. This Kugluktuk HTO is concerned about sport hunts, as this type of harvest targets big bulls. Their perspective on the matter is that it is important to keep big bulls so the “good” genes are transmitted to keep the population strong and be successful in mating.

The Kugluktuk HTO is also being very vocal to increase research on predators, such as wolves. Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit (IQ) suggests that wolves are the primary cause for the decline in DUC; wolf recruitment is high with 7 to 8 pups this year. They are satisfied that the GN removed the harvest season and there is currently no harvest limitation. However, they would like and are currently working with the carnivore biologist to develop a pilot project for wolf sampling collection. This might help in compensating the hunters in creating additional revenues so they could have a higher price for wolf (pelt and samples).

The number of sport tags for grizzly bear also increased for Kugluktuk, and can help in controlling predator numbers. Cambridge Bay is also doing their own research to understand how many bears there are on Victoria Island. In 1979, the first Grizzly bear was spotted in Read Island. Now, the Grizzly bear distribution seems to have spread over a large area on Victoria Island and sightings are more frequent.

Dolphin and Union migration was also discussed as a potential source of decline. In the fall, once they reach the south shore of Victoria Island, they always rush to cross the Coronation Gulf. Many years ago (15 to 20 years) and a few years back, many caribou were reported to have drowned. The majority of them seems to be bulls, since they lead the way and are more prone to fall first through thin ice.

Recommendations to the GN:

There was no proposed change in the current management recommendations. However, the Kugluktuk HTO proposed to add a management recommendation to minimize the impact of predators. It was proposed to develop a pilot wolf sample collection program to encourage research. This recommendation is supported in the Dolphin and Union management plan under a “declining status” and this additional management recommendation could be included to accommodate the HTO.

Since the management plan and the proposed recommendations call for community-based management initiatives, the HTO would like to complement its on-going management actions by hosting a community meeting. They will take this opportunity to discuss what is currently proposed, and to have the community members provide input for additional programs or management actions that they would like to see.

Comments and questions:

It was commented that the DUC front teeth seem to be abnormally worn. It was suggested to contact the team currently working on muskox teeth and potentially expand their research program, as there might be some links (share environmental conditions on Victoria Island can impact both ungulate species).

3.2.1 Face-to-Face meeting with co-management partners, Consultation Summary-2018

Issues: Proposed management recommendations derived from the 2015-2017 Dolphin and Union caribou herd research program results.

Purpose of the Consultations:

A consultation was organized in Cambridge Bay on September 28, 2018. The primary purpose of the meeting was to engage the HTO in an ongoing dialogue on the Dolphin and Union caribou herd future management recommendations. The meeting was an opportunity to inform the audience that the DOE does not recommend a TAH based on the available information.

Date: September 28, 2018

Representatives:

Beverly Maksagak (HTO manager)
Bobby Greenly (HTO chair)
Jame Panoyak (HTO member)
Larry Adjun (HTO chair)
Sam Kapulak (HTO chair)
Peter Kapulak (HTO chair)
Ema Qaqqutaq (KRWB manager)
Joe Ashevak (KRWB chair)
Attima Hadlari (KIA, wildlife)
David Lee (NTI)
Jorgen Bolt (NWMB, observer)
Lisa-Marie Leclerc (DOE, Regional Wildlife Biologist)

Summary of the Discussion:

The presentation was made to the co-management partners. Part of this presentation provided clarification on the survey methodology, as to why we do not perform a classic calving ground survey in June to estimate the number of DUC. Additional information was given to show the extent of the reconnaissance survey effort done in 2015, and explanations were provided as to why there was no final visual strata to the east side of Victoria Island.

Since 2015, there have been numerous meetings to engage, report, and discuss management recommendations for the DUC. However, it has been challenged that not all of these meetings could be considered as formal “consultation”. There is a need to clarify what can be called a “consultation”. There is a duty to consult for different reasons. To engage and report progress at different parts of the research program or to report back the final results. There is also a duty to form management recommendations with co-management partners. Thus, there was a feeling that “consultation” should only be applied to meetings where management recommendations are discussed.

During the meeting, the HTOs shared what actions their respective community have been doing to remove pressure on the DUC and promote their recovery. For example, the Kugluktuk HTO has been working to educate people, does not support sport harvesting, participates in collecting health sample kits for

caribou, and encourages their members to harvest alternative species. The Cambridge Bay HTO are also doing their part by progressively reducing the number of non-resident sport hunt tags and shifting their economic interests. It was suggested that the HTOs capture their conservative measures under a small community-based management plan, and present it themselves to the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board.

Recommendation to the GN:

From the meeting a series of suggestions and modifications were provided for the report and management recommendations. These can be summarize as follow:

- 1) Although, there is a consensus among the management partners that the DUC is declining, it was recommended that the “management section” of the scientific report be removed. This brought confusion as there was no flexibility to accept the report without providing changes in the management recommendations.
- 2) There was no support to start developing a harvest model for the DUC, as there are too many assumptions to be made in such a model. Thus, this recommendation should be removed.
- 3) The HTOs have already implemented management actions, but would like to have more time to consult with the communities in the next months to increase the community participation and review/improve their current conservation measures.

In view of the next population survey, suggestions were provided. Even if there is currently no 2018 collars on the east side of Victoria Island, the HTO of Cambridge Bay has seen some caribou at this location and would like to have a survey block there. This will be accommodated in having a large reconnaissance survey block covering the area where previous collar tracks (1987-2017) were known to be found. If the collars do not cross back to the mainland or more collar are staying in land, the transect lines will be extended inland.

Comments and questions:

The DUC herd has changed their movement pattern in recent year, and the HTOs are wondering if some caribou are summering on the mainland or if animals are now starting to winter on Victoria Island. Although, collared caribou that were found calving on the mainland were all genetically confirmed as barren-ground, the possibility of some Dolphin and Union wintering on Victoria remains a possibility. Therefore, special attention will be given to the wintering location of the 2018 collars.

4.0 Conclusion- Next Steps

Since 2016, the DUC population survey results have been discussed on numerous occasions with the HTOs and other co-management partners. The DOE has committed to increasing the frequency of community and HTOs meetings to communicate key information as the research program progresses. The DOE has also committed to increase the monitoring of DUC through the deployment of 50 additional collars in Spring 2018 and by planning a new population survey in Fall 2018.

In addition to increased monitoring, DOE recommendations were already made to the NWMB for the limitation of sport hunting for non-residents and non-resident foreigners on the Dolphin and Union herd. The consultation process for this management recommendation was a separate process from the meetings summarized in this report. In June 2018, the Minister accepted a decision to limit the non-residents and non-resident foreigners hunting of the Dolphin and Union caribou to thirty-five (35) tags.

The current DOE management recommendations are consistent with what is recommended in the approved Dolphin and Union management plan, as an appropriate response to a “Declining Status”. The next steps will be to share the final recommendations with NWMB to assure that effective conservation measures are currently in place by the community, HTO, and Government level to address the current declining trend of the DUC. By working together, it could be possible to help the DUC to recover.

5.0 Dolphin and Union Management Recommendation minutes

Kugluktuk HTO

July 18, 2018,

4 board members present, HTO manager, Biologist and Conservation Officer.

Page 40 to 42 of the DUC report were presented to the HTO and the section of the DUC management plan referring to the management recommendations under a “declining status”:

NTI allocated Cheryl Wray to provide technical help and expertise.

There is now 35 DUC sport tags. Kugluktuk did not want any allocated to them as they do not support sport harvest. Cambridge Bay has them all: 10 EHTO own sport hunt, 5 for local sport hunt, and 20 in reserve.

According to IQ, predators are the primary cause of caribou decline. Wolf litters are high with 7 to 8 pups this year. Grizzly bear has also increased in number on Victoria Island.

Sport hunt are killing the bulls. There is a need to keep the strong bulls alive. If all the strong bulls are killed, the herd will be weaker and there will be a reduction in pregnancy rate.

In addition to not supporting sport hunts, the HTO would like to see a decrease in the number of predators. Having no limit or season on wolf harvest as well as increasing the number of tags for Grizzly bear is a start. The HTO is working to have a pilot project: wolf samples collection programs. In addition to the price of pelt, hunters could then be compensated to provide samples (i.e. \$300 for wolf skull). These wolf collection sample kits could increase our understanding of wolf.

In Contwoyto Lake last winter there were caribou and they were attracting wolves. We should send some hunters south to kill the wolves.

The decline could be caused by climate change. The DUC are always in a rush to cross the Coronation Gulf. 2 years ago and 15-20 years ago, there were a lot of reports of caribou drowning. The bulls are the ones that are mostly killed, because they lead the way and they are most likely to fall through the ice first.

The Kugluktuk HTO also increased the number of Grizzly bear sport tags.

Cambridge Bay is doing research on Grizzly bear to try to know how many there are on Victoria Island. The first bear was seen at Read Island in 1979, but now the Grizzly bear sighting are more frequent.

Appendix I

Timeline of the Consultations

The first series of meetings in 2015 to 2016 aimed to inform the progression of the research and to develop a set of harvest management recommendations for the Dolphin and Union management plan, by establishing different recommendations under set population status.

- KRWB AGM, 2015: Progress report on fall population surveys
- January 11-13, 2016: Second Joint Meeting in Cambridge Bay (NU), progress report on fall population surveys
- April 19, 2016: Draft Consultation with the Cambridge Bay HTO and Community of Cambridge Bay, progress report on fall population surveys and discussion on the harvest management plan recommendations
- April 28, 2016: Draft Consultation with the Kugluktuk HTO and Community of Kugluktuk, progress report on fall population surveys and discussion on the harvest management plan recommendations
- KRWB AGM, 2016: Final result on fall 2015 population survey and progress report on the fall 2016 composition survey

The second series of meetings in 2017-2018 were to inform the HTOs and the community on the final research results. The demographics indicators pregnancy rate, genetics results were only available in 2017. Thus, presentations were made to inform the public and co-management partners on the findings.

- May 25, 2017: Consultation with the Cambridge Bay HTO. Final result on fall 2015 population survey and final results on the fall 2016 composition survey and progress report on the spring composition surveys
- KRWB AGM, 2017: Final results on the demographics indicators: pregnancy rate, fall and spring composition surveys, and sex ratio
- January 24, 2018: Consultation with the Kugluktuk HTO, final results on the research program on the Dolphin and Union Caribou herd (2015-2017 population estimate and demographics indicators) and future 2018 monitoring programs.
- February 1, 2018: Consultation with the Cambridge Bay HTO, final results on the research program on the Dolphin and Union Caribou herd (2015-2017 population estimate and demographics indicators) and future 2018 monitoring program.
- February 22, 2018: Consultation with the Cambridge Bay Community, final results on the research program on the Dolphin and Union Caribou herd (2015-2017 population estimate and demographics indicators) and future 2018 monitoring program.

A third series of meetings in summer and fall 2018 took place to review the report, propose management recommendations, seek the co-management partners' feedback, and allow for accommodation of the recommendations where possible. These meetings took place:

- July 18, 2018: Consultation with the Kugluktuk HTO, Dolphin and Union caribou herd management recommendations base on the report finding.
- September 28, 2018: Consultation with the co-management partners on the report, bring additional clarification, and discuss the management recommendation.