

**SUBMISSION TO THE**  
**NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD**  
**September 2019**

**FOR**

**Information: X**

**Decision:**

**Issue:** Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) Update – Marine conservation initiatives

**Background**

DFO Oceans Program focuses on implementation of responsibilities within the *Oceans Act*, using integrated oceans management and marine conservation tools. DFO - Central and Arctic Region, is working with Inuit partners on a number of marine conservation initiatives within and adjacent to Nunavut. These activities include advancement of marine protection measures in Tuvaijuittuq and around Southampton Island and management of marine refuges. DFO is also advancing marine environmental quality guidelines in support of sustainable development and integrated management, and supporting implementation of recommendations from the Pikialasorsuaq Commission.

**Current Status**

**Southampton Island Area of Interest**

- In fall 2018, DFO visited communities of Coral Harbour, Chesterfield Inlet and Nauyasat to confirm support for pursuing marine protection around Southampton Island. Communities were supportive and identified additional adjacent areas that warrant protection.
- Since the last briefing to the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (December 2018), the Kivalliq Inuit Association (KIA) Board of Directors approved a resolution in February 2019 endorsing an Area of Interest (AOI) for consideration as an *Oceans Act* Marine Protected Area (MPA). The AOI is around Southampton Island and Chesterfield Inlet (see attached map). The final boundary of a potential future MPA will be based on future assessments.
- An AOI Co-development Committee comprising representation from Aiviit and Aqigiq Hunters and Trappers Organizations, Irniurviit Co-management Committee, Government of Nunavut, KIA and DFO, will hold its first meeting in August 2019 in Rankin Inlet. The Committee will provide advice on the AOI development process.
- The next step is to complete detailed assessments of the AOI: ecological, socio-economic, Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and resource potential.
- DFO will continue engaging with partners and stakeholders throughout the MPA development process.

### Tuvaijuittuq Marine Protected Area

- On July 4, 2019, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board provided a decision to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard regarding the proposal to protect Tuvaijuittuq through ministerial order and requesting to be notified of any changes resulting to the proposal as a result of the Canada Gazette, Part I, 30-day public comment period. The 30-day comment period for *Canada Gazette*, Part 1 concluded on July 22, 2019 with no comments submitted.
- On June 21, 2019, the proposal to establish Tuvaijuittuq MPA through ministerial order was published in Canada Gazette, Part I, for a 30-day public comment period. The 30-day comment period for *Canada Gazette*, Part 1 concluded on July 22, 2019 with no comments submitted.
- On August 1, 2019 an Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement (IIBA) was signed by the Government of Canada and the Qikiqtani Inuit Association for the Talluruiup Imanga National Marine Conservation Area, which also covers the IIBA requirements for any protected areas established within Tuvaijuittuq.
- By August 1, 2019 the Tuvaijuittuq MPA by ministerial order was signed and announced by the Prime Minister including achievement of Canada's 10% marine conservation by 2020 in Arctic Bay during a community feast held to celebrate the event.
- The Tuvaijuittuq MPA will be cooperatively managed based upon direction within the IIBA.
- With interim protection in place, DFO will continue to work with Parks Canada, Qikiqtani Inuit Association and Government of Nunavut to collect information and assess long term protection options.

### Eastern Arctic Marine Refuges

- With the support of co-management partners, fishing industry, and environmental organizations, three eastern Arctic Marine Refuges, fisheries closures under the *Fisheries Act* were implemented in 2017 also contributing 1.17% to marine conservation.
- DFO monitors compliance with these fishery closures by conducting at-sea patrols and aerial surveillance as well as using vessel monitoring systems. Since the Marine Refuges were established in C&A Region, DFO has investigated one violation and detected several potential violations.
- Research projects such as electronic tagging and monitoring of Greenland Halibut, Greenland Shark and skates as well as fisheries surveys continue in and around these Marine Refuges.
- DFO was thrilled to be a partner in the public outreach project 'Guardians of Tariuq' which highlights the eastern Arctic Marine Refuges.

## Pikialasorsuaq

- The Pikialasorsuaq Commission (PC) was established by the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) to explore management options for a large, international Northwater Polynya marine area. The PC report contains three recommendations, two of which related to DFO mandate: The establishment of a management regime, including an Inuit-led management authority; and The identification of a protected area comprised of the polynya and including a larger management zone.
- The Inuit-Crown Partnership Committee released a joint statement in March 2019 that committed the Leaders to working together, and with the governments of Greenland and Denmark, on implementing an approach to address the concerns expressed by the Pikialasorsuaq Commission.
- Discussions with Inuit partners are ongoing to identify opportunities to provide support and build capacity within Inuit organizations to promote leadership on this initiative. A fall meeting of the Pikialasorsuaq Implementation Committee will help to identify objectives and direction on how best to support implementation of the Recommendations.
- Initial discussions have occurred with Greenland and the Kingdom of Denmark on development of a framework for implementing ocean management across the Pikialasorsuaq. DFO will also work with Canadian Inuit organizations and other key partners to inform international discussions.
- A DFO Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat (CSAS) meeting will be held Sept 18-19, 2019 in Winnipeg with international experts and scientists to review the existing body of information relevant to the Northwater Polynya.

## Marine Environmental Quality

- Recent Oceans Protection Plan (OPP) investments are supporting Marine Environmental Quality (MEQ) programs under the *Oceans Act*. A commitment under OPP is to focus on mitigating the risk of human caused stressors on the marine environment, including impacts of underwater noise from ships.
- In collaboration with partners, the national MEQ program is working towards developing integrated and evidenced-based tools and strategies to better manage and maintain healthy and sustainable marine, coastal and estuarine ecosystems.
- Within Nunavut, DFO is working with partners to establish underwater noise baseline data within Frobisher Bay and the Southampton Island Area of Interest.
- Development of Arctic Pile Driving Protocol currently being evaluated as part of the Iqaluit Deep Sea Port development.

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