



SUBMISSION TO THE

NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD

FOR

Information:

Decision: X

Issue: Administration of the Polar Bear Harvest at an up to 1:1 female to male sex ratio, along with an adjusted Credit Calculation and Credit Request system.

Background:

- The Department of Environment (DOE) participated in the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) public hearing for the Nunavut Polar Bear Co-Management Plan in Iqaluit from November 13-16, 2018.
- The specific components of polar bear management that were criticized the most were the current practice, for all but one subpopulation, of a 2:1 harvest sex ratio (two males harvested for every female) and the flexible quota system, which was perceived to be complicated and overly punitive in response to overharvest situations.
- DOE recommended that for all polar bear subpopulations in Nunavut, a harvest sex ratio of up to 50% females should be adopted and communities could use up to 50% of their annual allocation to harvest female bears. Along with this recommendation came a simplified administrative and credit calculation system.
- The NWMB decided to approve the recommended harvest sex ratio of up to 50% female bears and the Minister of Environment accepted that decision in August 2019.
- The NWMB made an interim decision to approve the Administrative system in September 2019 and requested that the DOE consult with co-management partners to obtain feedback and re-submit to the Board once feedback was incorporated into the document.

Current Status:

- Through external and internal feedback it became clear there was confusion around the exchange and request process for credits.

- In response to this feedback, up-dates were made to the administrative system so that the process could be made clearer.
- Updates were made to the section on credit use and accumulation (Section 5) to ensure harvesters are able to utilize available credits sooner, such as the following harvest season, should they reach a specific level of accumulated credits. This change helps to prevent potential conservation concerns due to high accumulation of credits over many years and attempts to use a large number of credits in one harvest season to avoid losing them when a new Total Allowable Harvest is set.
- Clarification was added to identify when a credit request would go to the NWMB for decision due to a potential conservation concern.
- Additional clarification was added to address the situation where a mother with offspring is killed, but the offspring (cubs-of-the-year, yearlings, juveniles) run away (Section 4.5.2.2).
- The updates to the credit request sections will permit more hunting opportunities for communities that have managed and monitored their harvest well.

Consultations:

In October 2019, the DOE provided a letter, the interim Harvest Administration and Credit Calculation document, and a summarized, plain language document on the changes to the Administration of the Harvest and Credit Calculation system to Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., and all the Regional Wildlife Organizations (to then be shared with their respective Hunters and Trappers Organizations). The DOE requested that the co-management partners have their technical staff review the documents and provide any comments and feedback to the DOE by January 2020. Based on internal and external feedback, the DOE made relevant changes to the submitted document to improve the administrative process and provide clarity.

Recommendations:

1. DOE recommends that the NWMB approve the revised Administration and Credit Calculation system so it can be implemented effectively for the 2020/2021 harvest season.