



**Summary of QWB-HTO-Government Discussions and Communications
Regarding NWMB Briefing Notes for
NWMB Regular Meeting No. RM 002-2020**

1. Advise GN to Follow Approved Procedures on Polar Bear Credit Tags

1.1 During the QWB AGM in November 2019, QWB staff advised the delegates from the HTOs that, according to current policies approved by the NWMB, all accumulated polar bear credits are changed to zero whenever the TAH for their community's sub-population is reset, even if the TAH is increased. Most HTOs were not aware of this. Attention was drawn to three sub-populations in Qikiqtaaluk region: a) Southern Hudson Bay because a survey was completed and a new draft harvest risk assessment was being prepared, although no consultation had been done with the QWB or HTO at that time, b) Davis Strait because the field survey for that sub-population was in its final stages and a harvest risk assessment could be produced in a year or two, and c) Lancaster Sound because field work is expected to begin in 2020 or 2021.

As happened with Baffin Bay, the HTOs were advised that it is unlikely that either the GN or the NWMB will inform the QWB and HTOs when harvest credits are likely to be zeroed with sufficient notice for communities to utilize those credits before they are zeroed.

1.2 Reportedly, on January 14, 2020 the GN confirmed to the Sanikiluaq HTO that the community had 16.03 male and 14.97 female polar bear credits available. The QWB was not copied on this confirmation; however, QWB staff had found the same information in the GN's Summary of Polar Bear Harvest Credits after the 2018/2019 Season, dated October 11, 2019.

1.3. On March 3, 2020, the Sanikiluaq HTO sent their motion of March 2 (motion attached) to request that the QWB approve the community to utilize 16 male and 13 female polar bear credits. This was 1.97 female credits less than were available.

1.4. On March 16, 2020, the QWB Executive approved the Sanikiluaq HTO's request to utilize their 16 male and 13 female polar bear credits (motion attached). On

March 30, 2020, QWB staff sent this motion to the GN, along with approved credit transfers and requests from other communities, and requested that the GN promptly issue the requested and approved tags to Sanikiluaq (email attached).

1.5. On April 7, 2020, the GN Polar Bear Biologist I sent a letter to the QWB and HTO requesting that the community reduce their requested number of tags this year "... spreading the request for this amount of credits over 2-3 harvest years." (letter attached) This letter prompted multiple telephone conversations between the QWB staff and the HTO Manager over the ensuing days and weeks to ensure that QWB staff were properly reflecting the views of the HTO.

1.6 On April 7, 2020, QWB staff responded to the GN Polar Bear Biologist I making the following key points (see attached email.):

- a) The HTO and QWB had followed all steps required for issuance of the tags as duly requested and approved, and a role for the NWMB in the issuance of credit tags does not appear in the procedures approved by the NWMB.
- b) The use of the tags does not violate the principles of conservation as these were bears that could have been harvested in the past, according to previous NWMB- and GN-approved sustainable TAHs, as per the principles of conservation in the Nunavut Agreement.
- c) The following question was asked: "Is your (the Biologist I's) offer to allow the HTO to use the accumulated credits over the next three years binding on the Minister of the Environment and the NWMB?", given that the GN could otherwise request that the TAH be reset and any unused credits zeroed.

Note: This question was not answered by the GN.

- d) The GN did not recognize Sanikiluaq's restraint and voluntary harvest reductions for several years.
- e) Once again, the QWB requested that the GN to follow established procedures and promptly issue the 29 credit tags to Sanikiluaq as requested. Then, based on the trust that that may engender, the QWB and HTO will then cooperate with the GN and the NWMB and begin discussions on how to avoid zeroing unused credits for at least three years, in order to allow Sanikiluaq to use of credit tags over 2-3 years and perhaps longer.

Note: The GN did not respond to this offer to begin these discussions.

1.7 On April 13, 2020, the HTO Manager responded to the GN reiterating and resending the HTO original request to use the 16 male and 13 female polar bear credits, and the QWB's motion approving that request. In addition, the HTO Manager invited the GN to talk about extending the harvesting of these bears over the next 5 years at about 5 or 6 bears per year.

Note: To our knowledge, the GN did not respond to this invitation, even though the idea of spreading the harvest of these credits over time was raised by the GN.

The HTO Manager also emphasized the past efforts of the community to manage its harvest carefully. (email attached)

1.8 On April 17, 2020, the GN Polar Bear Biologist II sent an email listing 9 tag numbers based on credits, and a letter explaining that he was supporting only 9 of the 29 duly requested, confirmed and approved credit tags, and asking the

NWMB to decide about the use of the remaining 20 credits (email and letter attached).

- 1.9 On May 7, 2020, the QWB Executive Committee passed a motion approving the submission to NWMB of the briefing note for decision, sent to the NWMB on May 8, 2020. The motion was moved by Adamie Nuna, seconded by Philip Manik, Sr., and approved with all in favor. (The motion will be included in the meeting, minutes which have not been approved and printed at this time.)

2. No Reset of TAH for Southern Hudson Bay Polar Bear Sub-population, 2020

- 2.1. On March 12, 2019 in correspondence with the Canadian Wildlife Service, the QWB applied to become a member of the Southern Hudson Bay Polar Bear Harvest Working Group. This membership would have facilitated communications and consultations between the Working Group, the GN and the QWB. The QWB could have ensured communications with the HTO, to foster community understanding of technical aspects of the assessment and to suggest information based on Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit that might be incorporated into the modelling. On March 29, 2019, the QWB was informed that the Advisory Committee overseeing the Working Group had rejected the QWB's application to join.
- 2.2. At the QWB AGM in November 2019, QWB staff informed the delegate representing the Sanikiluaq HTO that the GN may soon request the NWMB to reset the TAH for this sub-population based on a harvest risk assessment that was being done, but had not been released yet. Privately, Drikus Gissing of the GN informed M. Ferguson of QWB that he hoped that the TAH could be reset as of July 1, 2020, but this was not certain.
- 2.3. Subsequently, QWB and HTO staff discussed this issue on several occasions by telephone and email, in consultation with David Lee of NTI.
- 2.4. In November 2019, the GN submitted 3 documents to the NWMB for the NWMB's Regular Meeting held in December 2019. These documents had not been shared or discussed directly by the GN with either the QWB or the HTO. These documents included (not attached herein. The QWB obtained them from the NWMB web site, as they were not provided by the GN.):
 - a) Update on Southern Hudson Bay Polar Bear Subpopulation Harvest Risk Assessment and Consultation Plan.
Note: This information briefing note included a recommendation to hold a joint Wildlife Management Board hearing, and the announcement that the GN intended to consult with the HTO following a User-to-User meeting to be held early in 2020.
 - b) Executive Summary: Harvest Risk Assessment for the Southern Hudson Bay Polar Bear Subpopulation, 07 June 2019.
 - c) Executive Summary: Re-Assessment of the Southern Hudson Bay Polar Bear Subpopulation, 11 September 2019.

To our knowledge, **no** community or regional consultation on these documents or their contents had yet been completed by the GN before presenting them to the NWMB.

- 2.5. On February 11, 2020, the GN made a consultation presentation on the survey and risk assessment models to the HTO in Sanikiluaq. James Qillaq attended on behalf of the QWB. Via telephone with QWB staff, the HTO Manager informed us that he understood the GN to say that the sub-population was declining and would continue to decline in future, and that the GN directed the HTO to chose one of the risk models that they had presented to the HTO. The HTO Manager said that the models were not understandable to him or the HTO Board as presented by the GN. Also, the HTO could not accept any of the GN's conclusions because the polar bear population is increasing according to Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, not decreasing. The GN did not hold a public meeting on the issue in Sanikiluaq.
- 2.6. In preparation for the User-to-User Meeting in Montreal later in February, the HTO held both public and Board meetings to ensure that they understood the community's knowledge and views on the population's status and trends, and their understanding of possible future trends and harvesting. The HTO delegates at the User-to User Meeting in Montreal clearly expressed that information and views from Sanikiluaq to all community, government and management board representatives attending the User-to-User Meeting. This information and that learned by QWB and HTO delegates from other parties are briefly summarized in the briefing note submitted by the QWB to the NWMB on May 8, 2020.
- 2.7. On March 3, 2020, the HTO sent a March 2 motion (attached) to the QWB requesting support that their credits should be carried forward at least one more year because the Southern Hudson Bay polar bear population is increasing. Via telephone, QWB staff clarified the HTO's intent, which included no reset of the TAH and zeroing of credits until after a better survey is conducted with more planning input and active participation by all Inuit and Cree communities.
- 2.8. On March 26, 2020, the QWB Executive passed a motion of support, moved by Adamie Nuna, seconded by Jawlie Akavak, with all in favor, stating the following: The Executive of the Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board requests that the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) does not reset the TAH for Southern Hudson Bay polar bears at least until the results of the next survey become available; and that the NWMB ensure that any of Sanikiluaq's harvest credits that may be unused as of June 30, 2020 shall be carried forward for future use. It was agreed that this motion would be put in the form of a briefing note for decision to the NWMB at a subsequent Executive meeting.
- 2.9. On May 7, 20020, the QWB Executive Committee passed a motion moved by Adamie Nuna and seconded by Philip Manik, Sr., with all in favor, to approve the briefing note for decision for submission to NWMB. This briefing note was sent to the NWMB on May 8, 2020. (Motion will be included in the meeting minutes, which have not been approved and printed at this time.)

3. Baffin Island Caribou TAH Amendment, 2020

- 3.1. During the GN's consultation tour in January 2019, all HTOs that traditionally harvest Baffin Island caribou expressed their concerns about the current TAH, Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit regarding increases in caribou abundance on Baffin Island, and concerns related to the male-only harvest. These issues were not specifically on the GN's agenda for the consultations, but these issues are so important to Inuit that they were voiced repeatedly.
- 3.2. During the QWB AGM in 2019, all HTO delegates from communities that harvest Baffin Island caribou again expressed concerns that the TAH should be increased in the presence of multiple GN delegates, and at other points during the AGM. The QWB Executive accepted the general direction from the AGM to continue to work to have the TAH increased as soon as possible, including increased harvesting of female caribou. The distribution of caribou is expanding in the hunting areas on almost all communities. No communities reported any decrease in the local abundance of caribou. Although caribou remain a long distance from Qikiqtarjuaq, this has been the normal situation for this community for several decades.

During the QWB AGM, the GN biologist was asked the following question: "Can the DOE support an increase of TAH in the communities that have more caribou?" The GN responded as follows: "The GN needs an abundance survey completed before that could happen. As of now, the whole island is managed as one unit. The predicted date of the abundance survey is in 2024." Contrary to clause 5.1.2(e) and others of the Nunavut Agreement, it appears that the GN will not willingly incorporate current Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and values, and Inuit systems (e.g., on-going monitoring) to conserve and manage Baffin Island caribou.

- 3.3. The Baffin Island caribou TAH has been discussed many times throughout 2019 and 2020 during many QWB and HTO meetings and telephone calls.
- 3.4. Specifically, during the QWB Executive meeting of March 26, 2020, the Executive Director reviewed the history of the TAH for Baffin Island Caribou, noting that the QWB has been questioning the TAH since it was implemented in 2015. The Executive Director requested feedback and direction from the Executive regarding potential submission of another request to the NWMB for an increase in the TAH. After some discussion among the Executive and staff, the QWB Executive passed a motion, moved by Phillip Manik Sr. and seconded by Adamie Nuna with all in favor, giving their full support for development of a submission to the NWMB requesting that the TAH for Baffin Island caribou increase to between 325 and 375, of which 35 would be open to females.
- 3.5. On May 7, 2020, the QWB Executive Committee passed a motion moved by Philip Manik, Sr and seconded by Adamie Nuna, with all in favor, to approve the briefing note for decision for submission to NWMB. This briefing note was sent to

the NWMB on May 8, 2020. (Motion will be included in the meeting minutes, which have not been approved and printed at this time.)

4. Amendment of Narwhal Summer Stock Management 2020

4.1 The HTOs and the QWB have questioned summer-stock narwhal management along Baffin Island several times since 2017. They have questioned the lack of scientific data to support it. They have called for the amalgamation of the Admiralty and Eclipse areas. They have asked for the elimination of summer and migratory seasons in several areas. They have asked to harvest narwhals in the three different areas using tags from any of the 6 communities. These concerns have been expressed in writing and orally directly to DFO and through the NWMB. The QWB believes that the proposal should not be a surprise to either the NWMB or DFO.

4.2 QWB AGM 2019 resolution to eliminate seasonal harvest management for Arctic Bay, and to allow Pond Inlet and Arctic Bay to harvest narwhal in each other's areas (attached). This idea led to extensive discussion among the six HTO representatives at the narwhal survey meeting in Winnipeg in January 2020, and among the QWB and HTOs subsequently. These discussions lead to the current proposal, reflecting the position of the six HTOs and the QWB. Via email, written support has been received from Nativak HTO, Qikiqtarjuaq, Nangmautang HTO, Clyde river, Mittimatilik HTO, Pond Inlet,

4.3 During the meeting in Winnipeg, M. Ferguson pointed out that to demonstrate that summer stock management is valid, DFO should have evidence that individual or groups of narwhal show fidelity to specific summering areas over multiple years.

During the meeting, "C. Watt of DFO was asked if DFO had plans for a study to show whether or not narwhal may return to same summering area year after year. She replied that although DFO has many satellite tagging studies with the hopes of gathering data on whether narwhal return to the same summering area, tag retention time is typically shorter than one year, no other tag attachment technology exists for increasing tag retention time that she is aware of." (The above quotation is from an email reply sent by C. Watt to M Ferguson on May 12, 2020, with the specific intent to accurately reflect C. Watt's response in January 2020, with her knowledge.)

4.4 QWB Executive Committee Motion, May 7, 2020: Approval of submission to NWMB for briefing note for decision; Moved by Philip Manik, Sr. Seconded by Adamie Nuna. Approved all in favour.