

SUBMISSION TO THE
NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD
December 2020

FOR

Information: X

Decision:

Issue: Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada – Operational Updates

Updates:

Arctic Region:

- There are three distinct sectors that have fully migrated to the Arctic Region: Fisheries Management, Marine Planning and Conservation, and Arctic Operations. All programs are looking to expand staffing within the new region.
- **Fisheries Management – Allison McPhee (A/Regional Director):**
 - The Fisheries Management (FM) program develops and implements plans, policies, and programs to sustainably manage fisheries. FM carries out this work through engagement with rights-holders, fishery stakeholders, provinces/territories, and Indigenous groups, within a framework of legislated land claims agreements.
 - Includes staff that were previously with FM- Northern Operations and the Resource Management staff in Winnipeg.
- **Arctic Operations – Kevin Bill (A/Director):**
 - The Arctic Operations program implements Arctic's regional and national policies, plans, and initiatives in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.
 - This includes Community Engagement Coordinators (shared with Coast Guard), Reconciliation Coordinators, Aboriginal Aquatic Resource and Oceans Management Program/Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy, Arctic Policy and Engagement, Indigenous Traditional Knowledge Coordinator, and Employment Coordinator.
- **Marine Planning and Conservation – Debbie Ming (A/Regional Director):**
 - The Marine Planning and Conservation (MPC) program protects oceans through marine conservation targets, bioregions and protected areas, network planning, and oceans management.
 - Position structures remain the same as under the Central & Arctic Region structure.

Marine Mammals:

1) Narwhal:

- All of the 2020/21 narwhal tags (including carry-over tags) and information packages have been distributed to all harvesting communities in coordination with the Regional Wildlife Organizations (RWOs).

- DFO has not yet received many reports from Hunters and Trappers Organizations (HTOs) on the 2020/21 harvest numbers. HTO support and reporting is very important to the effective sustainable co-management of narwhal.
- DFO Fisheries Management provided briefing notes to the Kivalliq Wildlife Board (KWB) and Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board (QWB) to be presented at their 2020 Annual General Meetings (AGM) on the available information for the 2020/21 narwhal harvest season and discussed planning for the 2021/22 season. The Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board (KRWB) decided not to hold an AGM in 2020, citing COVID-19 concerns.

2) Walrus:

- The total reported landings for walrus within the Nunavut Settlement area for the 2019/20 season was 213, with 198 being harvested for subsistence purposes and the remaining 15 being harvested by sport hunters. However, numerous communities did not report any subsistence harvest and DFO continues to follow up on the status of 15 licensed sport hunts. HTO support and reporting, as well as that of sport hunt outfitters, is very important to the effective sustainable co-management of walrus.
- Community-based catch monitoring programs for walrus are ongoing in the communities of Sanirajak and Coral Harbour. The program is in its third year in Sanirajak with the participation of the local HTO, and a Community Coordinator was hired for the 2020 harvest season. The Aiviit HTO in Coral Harbour is actively engaged in implementing the program but the Community Coordinator position was not filled as the HTO was not able to find an interested candidate.
- Due to COVID-19, no in-person meetings are planned at this time but a Nunavut Walrus Working Group meeting will be held in November via teleconference.
- The Minister of DFO approved a total of 78 walrus sport hunts for 2020. Several outfitters informed DFO that they would not be conducting sport hunts in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. At this time, no Walrus Sport Hunt licences have been issued by DFO for the 2020 season.

3) Beluga:

- The total reported landings for beluga within the Nunavut Settlement area for the 2019/20 season was 430.
- DFO has not yet received many reports from HTOs on the 2020/21 harvest numbers. HTO support and reporting is very important to the effective sustainable co-management of beluga.
- The Cumberland Sound Beluga Working Group was supposed to meet in May 2020 but due to COVID-19 this meeting was cancelled. The Working Group met via teleconference in September and October, 2020 to share updates from co-

management partners and continue discussions on sustainable co-management of this fishery. The next meeting will take place in December.

4) Bowhead

- DFO issued Marine Mammal Fishing Licenses to Coral Harbour on July 10th and Sanirajak on July 24th, for the 2020 bowhead harvest. Sanirajak successfully harvested a bowhead on August 1st and has forwarded hunt information and biological samples to DFO. The Aiviit HTO informed DFO on October 29th that Coral Harbour's 2020 hunt was unsuccessful.
- DFO has been advised that the host communities for the 2021 bowhead harvest in the Kivalliq Region will be Coral Harbour and Baker Lake.
- At this time, in-person meetings are not possible due to ongoing COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. If supported by co-management partners, DFO hopes to use virtual methods to resume Bowhead Working Group meetings on developing the Bowhead Integrated Fisheries Management Plan and obtaining community feedback.

5) Harvest Reporting:

- Iqaluit DFO office staff have been in recent contact with HTOs, requesting mid-season harvest updates for beluga, walrus, and narwhal. Reports of total marine mammal hunting mortality (landed + lost) are essential to develop reliable advice on sustainable harvests.
- DFO urges continued reporting of unusual marine mammal occurrences / events for follow up by co-management organizations, e.g. beached carcass, ice entrapments, etc.
- Timely and accurate reporting is required under the Fisheries Act, Marine Mammal Regulations, and the Nunavut Agreement. It is strongly recommended that co-management organizations emphasize the importance of harvest reporting and monitoring.

Arctic Char:

1) Reported harvest

- Last year for the 2019/20 Arctic char fishery, a total of approximately 67,850 kg was reported harvested to DFO from commercial and exploratory waterbodies in Nunavut. Of this total, approximately 23,500 kg was reported harvested in Pangnirtung, while Nunavut Country Foods reported approximately 2,600 kg as being purchased from Igloolik and Clyde River. The remainder of the total harvest was reported by Kitikmeot Foods Ltd. and Kivalliq Arctic Foods.

2) Pangnirtung fisheries

- This year for 2020/21, the Arctic char summer fishery in Cumberland Sound opened on August 3, 2020 and ran for about three weeks. Approximately 36 fishers participated in the summer fishery and fished 12 waterbodies.
- A total of 17,520 kg (38,625 lbs) round weight of char was landed at the Pangnirtung fish plant in the summer of 2020. Combining this with the approximately 200 kg round weight that was harvested in April 2020 during the

winter fishery, the total Arctic char harvest to date in Pangnirtung for 2020/21 is approximately 17,720 kg.

Greenland Halibut (Turbot):

1) Cumberland Sound Turbot Management Area (CSTMA)

- On July 7th, DFO approved a carry-forward of 70.37 t of unharvested 2019 turbot in the CSTMA into 2020. On October 1, 2020, DFO was contacted by a representative of Cumberland Sound Fisheries Limited (CSFL) stating that CSFL would be unable to fish the carry-over quota in 2020. There is still a possibility that some of the 70.37 t of 2019 carry-over quota may be harvested in 2020 by someone other than CSFL. However, capacity issues at the Pangnirtung fish plant suggest that harvest may be limited.

United States Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) Import Provisions

- On October 7, 2020, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) published the final List of Foreign Fisheries (LOFF) for 2020 as described in the U.S. MMPA, available here: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/foreign/international-affairs/list-foreign-fisheries>.
- Notice was provided to Inuit co-management partners and industry stakeholders via email on October 9, 2020.
- Regional U.S. MMPA “Two-Pagers” have been developed for each LOFF listed species. These summarize all information that may be provided to NOAA during the National Comparability Finding (CF) Application process.
- The regional Two-Pagers will be sent for comment/input by co-management partners and stakeholders prior to submitting the information to NOAA, and a regional conference call will be scheduled before the end of 2020 to discuss the LOFF, Two-Pagers, and CF Application process.

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Date: November 02, 2020