

SUBMISSION TO THE
NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD
December 2020

FOR

Information: X

Decision:

Issue: Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada – Cambridge Bay Arctic Char Update

Fisheries Management Update:

- Commercial harvesting of Arctic char occurred at 4 four sites [Ekalluktok, Paliryuak (Surrey), Halokvik (Thirty-Mile) and Jayko] in 2020. Lauchlan River, which has being managed in recent years with a targeted, reduced, quota to better assess stock health and sustainability, was not harvested during the spring fishery.
- As per the management measures outlined in the Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (approved in 2014), daily reporting and quota management was conducted by Kitikmeot Foods to ensure there was no over-harvest.
- With support from the Ekaluktutiak HTO and Kitikmeot Foods Ltd., a gear-tagging protocol was added to the supplemental licence conditions for the commercial Arctic Char fishery during the 2020 fishing season. The licence conditions require fishers to have approved gear tags attached to their nets, consistent with the current NWT Fishery Regulations used to manage the commercial fishery. This new protocol will help track lost and/or found nets in the commercial fishery.

2020 Commercial Harvest Summary

Fishery Site (Common Name)	Commercial Quota Kg, round weight	Targeted Commercial Quota Kg, Round weight	2020 Commercial Harvest Kg, round weight	2020 % Landed vs. Quota	2020 % Landed vs. Target Quota
Ekalluktok (Ekalluk River)	20,000	17,418	14,496.63	73	83
Halokvik (30 Mile)	5,000	4,899	4,917.58	98	100
Jayko	17,000	13,063	11,133.61	66	85
Paliryuak (Surrey River)	9,100	8,709	7,826.65	86	90
Lauchlan R. (Byron Bay)	9,100 (*5,000)	Not fished	Not fished	-	-
Grand Total	56,100	44,089	38,374	81	90

**Targeted Quota*

- For 2020, Kitikmeot Foods Ltd. has intentionally reduced the targeted harvest at Ekalluk and Jayko given storage capacity at the fish plant. This ensures the fish plant does not exceed its processing capacity.
- The Cambridge Bay IFMP (Integrated Fisheries Management Plan) was first implemented in 2014 for commercially harvested Arctic Char, making it the first for this species in Canada. An IFMP is intended to be reviewed and updated every 5 to reflect and address current developments and new information from a biological and fishery standpoint. Work is currently being done by the Cambridge Bay Arctic Char IFMP Working Group to renew and update the previous IFMP, and will be presented to the NWMB for review and approval prior to being implemented in advance of the 2021 commercial fishing season.

Science:

- The Cambridge Bay commercial plant sampling program (fishery-dependent sampling) was once again successful providing DFO with biological data and samples from 200 Arctic char for each commercially fished waterbody.
- As a result of travel restrictions due to COVID-19, DFO did not conduct field-based research this year.
- DFO had planned to continue the Lauchlan River sampling (year 3 of 5) in 2020, collecting biological data which will be vital for an assessment of the health of the Lauchlan River fishery planned for 2024 (requires minimum of 5 years of data collection). Additionally, DFO had planned to continue the long-term acoustic tagging/monitoring of Arctic char (year 8) in the region. The intent is to continue both of these programs in 2021.
- Because of the COVID travel restrictions, DFO initiated a community-based sampling program at the area locally known as Gravel Pit in 2020. Local field assistants hired through the Ekaluktutiak HTO fished for Arctic char and biologically sampled them throughout the summer. The primary objective was to assess how char diet might change throughout the marine feeding season and to collect samples for contaminants and marine microplastics work. The number of samples collected during the summer is still being determined.

Community engagement and communication (Science/Resource Management):

- Given COVID travel restriction, community engagement was limited this year.

- The annual post-season (from the 2019 fishing season) commercial fishery review and Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP) Working Group meeting that included the EHTO, DFO, Kitikmeot Foods, commercial fishers, elders and other resource users took place in early March 2020, prior to COVID restrictions.
- Resource Management and Science updates were presented at a community event organized by Polar Knowledge Canada (March 2020).
- DFO research was highlighted through presentations and demonstrations at the Kiilinik High School (March 2020).
- Countless emails and phone calls were exchanged between DFO and the Ekaluktutiak HTO in relation to planning for the community-based sampling initiative at Gravel Pit.

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