

SUBMISSION TO THE
NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD
December 2020

FOR

Information: X

Decision:

Issue: Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada – Kivalliq Region Arctic Char Update

Fisheries Management Update:

- Within the Kivalliq region of Nunavut there are seven communities that are engaged in Arctic Char fisheries. Arviat, Whale Cove (Tikirarjuak), Rankin Inlet (Kangiqiniq), Chesterfield Inlet (Igluligaarjuk), Baker Lake (Qamanit'uak), Coral Harbour (Salliq) and Repulse Bay (Naujaat) have a long history of harvesting Arctic Char for a variety of purposes, including subsistence, recreational and commercial. Several of these communities are currently engaged in commercial fisheries.
- In February 2019 a workshop was held in Rankin Inlet in order to identify Arctic char research interests and commercial fisheries development priorities for each Kivalliq community. The workshop, attended by representatives from each Kivalliq HTO, the GN, NWMB and DFO, identified a desire by the communities to resolve Arctic Char diet from Kivalliq stocks. A community-based sampling program was proposed where funding from DFO would be provided to support 50 samples from selected waterbodies in each community. Additionally, the workshop participants were interested in further consideration of commercial fisheries development.
- Results from the 2019 assessment of diet suggest that Arctic char in the Kivalliq region are highly opportunistic feeders with over 90 different items identified among all samples assessed. The most common prey item found in the stomachs of Arctic char was the amphipod *Themisto libellula*. Arctic cod were also an important prey item contributing the most by weight to the diet of Arctic char in the region.
- Fisheries Management engaged with Kivalliq Arctic Foods, and met with stakeholders in Rankin Inlet, Chesterfield Inlet, Whale Cove where the fish plant is currently actively involved in commercial harvesting.
- A follow-up workshop was held in February 2020; diet and parasite assessments from Arctic char in the region were identified as priorities based on input from HTO representatives, as well as the potential of Naujaat harvesting for commercial purposes.

As such, efforts to advance both priorities involved, a second community-based sampling initiative was initiated for 2020 focusing on Naujaat and Rankin Inlet fisheries. Once again, rewards were offered for the collection of Arctic char samples including all viscera (guts), a piece of tissue and associated biological data.

- Fifty samples each from eight water bodies and 50 samples each from four waterbodies were collected from the Naujaat and Rankin Inlet areas respectively. Samples are awaiting shipment to Winnipeg and diet and parasite assessments will commence upon arrival.
- In 2020, approximately 8,100 lbs (3,700 kgs) of Arctic char were commercially harvested along the Kivalliq coast. The commercial harvest of Arctic char occurred at Fish Bay (Chesterfield Inlet area), Baker Foreland and Corbet Inlet (Rankin Inlet area) and Wilson Bay and Sandy Point (Whale Cove area).
- The Kivalliq Arctic Foods commercial plant sampling program (fishery-dependent sampling) entered its second year and was once again successful providing DFO with biological data and samples from Arctic char for each commercially fished waterbody.
- A Kivalliq region Arctic char workshop will be planned for 2021, if and when COVID-19 related travel restrictions have lifted. The intent of this workshop will be to disseminate results from the 2020 community-based sampling program and to identify research and management priorities for the upcoming fishing season.

Prepared by: DFO Winnipeg Office

Les Harris – Science

Tyler Jivan and Dylan Turchyn – Resource Management

Date: October 28, 2020