

SUBMISSION TO THE NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD

March 2021

FOR

Information: X

Decision:

Issue: Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada – Operational Updates

Updates:

Marine Mammals:

1) Narwhal:

- In October 2020, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) published a Science Advisory Report (SAR) on the delineation of the Eclipse Sound and Admiralty Inlet narwhal stocks, which can be found at the following link: https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/csas-sccs/Publications/SAR-AS/2020/2020_048-eng.html.
- DFO is proposing a virtual meeting for the Nunavut Narwhal Working Group in late February 2021 to: 1) Provide an update on recently published Science advice and discuss and develop a community consultation plan, and 2) Initiate the development of a plan for the review of the Integrated Fisheries Management Plan for Narwhal in the Nunavut Settlement Area.
- Narwhal harvest tag returns and harvest numbers must be submitted to DFO by Hunters and Trappers Organizations/Associations (HTOs/HTAs) by the end of the harvest season, March 31, 2021. Prior to distributing the 2021 harvest tags, 2020 harvest data will be reconciled, carry-over allocations will be calculated, and community allocations will be sought from Regional Wildlife Organizations (RWOs).

2) Walrus:

- A Ministerial decision is expected by February 7, 2021 on the NWMB's approval of 21 walrus sport hunts for 2021.
- In partnership with the Sanirajak and Aiviit HTOs, the community-based catch monitoring programs for walrus in Sanirajak and Coral Harbour are expected to continue in 2021.

3) Beluga:

- The Cumberland Sound Beluga Working Group continues to meet virtually while COVID-19 restrictions limit in-person meetings. In 2020, teleconferences were held in September, October, and December to share updates from co-management partners and continue discussions on sustainable co-management of this fishery. The next Working Group meeting is currently scheduled for January 25, 2021.
- The Sanikiluaq HTO contacted DFO Science on January 20, 2021 to share a local hunter's observation that several belugas appear to have been killed by polar bears in the Belcher Islands. DFO and the Sanikiluaq HTO are working together

to document this event, and collect biological samples if possible.

4) Bowhead:

- DFO has been advised of the host communities for the 2021 bowhead harvest in the Kivalliq Region and is awaiting formal advisory letters for the Qikiqtaaluk and Kitikmeot Regions (the Department received informal update by email that Igloolik will host a bowhead hunt in 2021).
- In collaboration with the HTOs in Taloyoak and Kugaaruk, documentation and samples are now available from all of the nine bowhead carcasses discovered by local hunters this winter. These include one bowhead reported by Taloyoak hunters at Gulf of Boothia, and two separate groups of four bowheads reported by Kugaaruk hunters (Gulf of Boothia, Committee Bay). DFO Science has received the sample shipments and will begin to process them as soon as possible.

5) Harvest Reporting:

- DFO will soon be requesting harvest updates from HTOs/HTAs for beluga, walrus, bowhead, and narwhal for the 2020/21 harvest season. Information provided by the HTOs will be used to finalize harvest data by the end of this season. Reports of total marine mammal hunting mortality (landed and lost) are essential to develop reliable advice on sustainable harvests.
- DFO urges continued reporting of unusual marine mammal occurrences and events 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) Pangnirtung:

- DFO is working with the Pangnirtung HTA on plans to begin issuing licences for the 2020-21 winter Arctic char fishery.

Greenland Halibut (Turbot):

1) Cumberland Sound Greenland halibut Fishery:

- The on-ice Greenland Halibut fishery in the Cumberland Sound Turbot Management Area is expected to start in January 2021. DFO is working with the Pangnirtung HTA, Pangnirtung Fisheries Ltd., and Cumberland Sound Fisheries Ltd. on plans to officially open the fishery. Due to COVID-19 restricting the ability to hold an in-person pre-season meeting in Pangnirtung, the fishery will instead be opened via radio announcements.

2) 2021 Offshore Greenland halibut Fishery

- The 2021 Greenland halibut fishery in 0A and 0B started on January 01, 2021 and opened to fishing in 0B on January 01. 0A will open to fishing on June 01.
- The 2021 Greenland halibut Subarea 0 Total Allowable Catch (TAC) has been set. Allocations to Nunavut Enterprises are currently pending.

Northern and Striped Shrimp:

- The 2021 Northern shrimp fisheries in Shrimp Fishing Area (SFA) 0 and SFA 1 started January 01, 2021 and opened to fishing on January 01.
- The 2021/22 Northern and Striped shrimp fisheries in the Eastern Assessment Zone (EAZ) and Western Assessment Zone (WAZ) start April 01 2021 and open to fishing on April 01.
- The 2021 and 2021/22 Northern and Striped Shrimp TACs for SFA 0, 1, EAZ and WAZ are pending. Allocations to Nunavut Enterprises are currently pending.

Prepared by: Fisheries Management, Arctic Region – Fisheries and Oceans Canada

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