

SUBMISSION TO THE NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD

FOR

Information:

Decision: X

Issue: A decision is needed to approve/not approve adding Bowhead Whale (Eastern Canada – West Greenland population) to Schedule 1 of the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) as a species of Special Concern.

Background:

The Bowhead Whale (Eastern Canada – West Greenland population) was assessed by the Committee of the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) as a species of Special Concern in 2009.

Article 5.2.34 (d) (i) of the Nunavut Agreement states that the NWMB shall, at its discretion, approve SARA listing recommendations for species found within their area of responsibility. This process is detailed in the 2008 *“A memorandum of understanding to harmonize the designation of rare, threatened and endangered species under the Nunavut Land Claim Agreement and the listing of wildlife species under the Species of Risk Act.”*

The best available information for listing for Bowhead Whale (Eastern Canada – West Greenland population) as Special Concern under SARA has already been shared with the Board. This package for Bowhead Whale (Eastern Canada – West Greenland population) includes the communication pieces used during community consultations, a summary of the consultations that took place within the Nunavut Settlement Area, the COSEWIC Executive Summary for Bowhead Whale, the Cost Benefit Analysis of listing Bowhead Whale (Eastern Canada – West Greenland population) as a species of Special Concern and the Response Statement from the Minister of the Environment on the COSEWIC assessment.

The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) is an independent advisory panel to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada that meets twice a year to assess the status of wildlife species at risk of extinction. Their criteria for the Special Concern designation can be found here in subsection Special Concern (following Section E): <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/species-risk-act-accord-funding/listing-process/quantitative-criteria-guidelines-status-table-2.html>

Under SARA there are some requirements for species of Special Concern. A species of Special Concern is a wildlife species that may become Threatened or Endangered because of a combination of biological characteristics and identified threats. Species listed as Special Concern are not subject to SARA prohibitions, and there is no requirement to identify or protect critical habitat; however, a SARA management plan must be prepared within three years of listing. A management plan is a planning document that identifies the conservation activities

and other measures needed to ensure that a species of special concern does not become Threatened or Endangered.

For species listed as Endangered, Threatened or Extirpated (but not Special Concern), SARA contains general prohibitions that make it an offence to:

- kill, harm, harass, capture, or take an individual of a species listed as endangered, threatened or extirpated;
- possess, collect, buy, sell or trade an individual of a species listed as endangered, threatened or extirpated; or,
- damage or destroy the residence (e.g. nest or den) of one or more individuals of a species listed as Endangered, Threatened or Extirpated, if a recovery strategy has recommended the reintroduction of that extirpated species.

Recommendation:

The NWMB approve adding Bowhead Whale (Eastern Canada – West Greenland population) to Schedule 1 of the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) as a species of Special Concern.

Prepared by:

Erika Thorleifson, Species at Risk Biologist, DFO, National Capitol Region, Ottawa.

Date:

July 2, 2021.