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## Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board

Discussion: Davis Strait Polar Bear Total Allowable Harvest Consideration

Thank you Mr Chairman for the opportunity to speak on behalf of Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board and as you all know, the topic of polar bear is sensitive and highly publicized species internationally.

.First of all, I'd like to begin by I'll be speaking as an Inuk, beneficiary of NTI as per the NLCA and I'll be presenting some Inuit terminology on polar bears, the same way, biologist present their scientific terminology when presenting reports, these Inuit terminology been in place prior to colonialism.

It is with great empathy, Inuit of Davis Strait Population (Iqaluit, Kimmirut & Pangnitung) had requested an increase with their polar bears TAH since the last MOU was signed, and now has another chance to voice their request. Recent polar bear survey had been published and made available for everyone to read, the report has provided three different populations estimates as mentioned by DOE, but we, as Inuit can give you one clear number, polar bears have increased.

Prior to quota system being established, Inuit harvested polar bears without restrictions, bears were scarce, than in 1970s, quota system implemented and it's been over 30 years of management system for Inuit to abide by, there has never been any attempts to lower the polar bear population cause of international pressure. Inuit can't enjoy hunting or camping as polar bears are being sighted everywhere, you can't leave your rifle unloaded or has to be in arms length in order to protect harvested meat, equipment and especially family. Having said this, your average Inuk will indicate polar bear population needs to be reduced for concerns of safety, I fear for younger generation hunters, our future, that they will become less respectful and less obedient of restrictions by any governing body as they are watching and learning from us now with our struggles our own government is placing, to please the international community.

Inuit are provided with ultimatum by our own government, reduce the number of polar bears and we receive reduced total allowable harvest or even moratorium and international community threatens us to impose export ban under CITIES, again, our great-grandfather's father and his family utilized the hide, not for monetary economic benefit, if we're serious about preservation than we could use the hides for clothing and other uses if ban is imposed. A good example is Greenland, utilizing the hide for traditional use instead of economical gain. There are local Nunavutmiut doing the same thing now and it's been revitalized even more now.

Hunters in Davis Strait populations and other populations in Nunavut are observing there are less seal pups and seals and other species that are prey to polar bears, if NWMB examines their previous harvest study data and compare today's data, you would notice in fluctuation in harvest as hunters are competing with polar bears and now, polar bears have the advantage as we all know the polar bear is a top predator then Inuit in Nunavut. It's been noted from biologist point of view, polar bears hunt for food & survival, but again, Inuit have observed a totally different predator, polar bears have just killed other species just to keep a keen hunting technique without eating.

Mr. Chairman, polar bear is, again, a great predator and it is widely know in Inuit custom, polar bears are like human, agile and can adapt to hunting techniques and its environment in order to survive. When we hear news or reports nationally or internationally about climate change and polar bears being species of concern due to Arctic becoming ice free, the older generation think this is a joke, meaning polar bears are well known to be more fat and healthier during the summer and fall seasons, this can be confirmed by any local hunter but this will be rebutted by any scientist or biologist looking at data/reports 10,000 miles away. Polar bears are more successful with their natural color as Inuit know, seals (ringed, bearded and harp) are attracted to ice which they tend to approach polar bears, by mistake for being an ice than they become easy prey. This is only one example Inuit know of but again, any biologist will deny as it's never been observed or reported on hard copy.

The tourism business has increased in the last 20 years especially the 3 communities in Davis Strait Population, polar bears encounter increases also. There has been 2 highly publicized cases in the last 10 years, an Inuk was attacked and survived and another one involving a tourist, he was luck to have a friend and survived. Where do we draw the line? Are we going to be re-active once a tourist is killed or a guide?

In order to be pro-active, you as Board of NWMB should accept an increase of TAH in Davis Strait population and listen to the residents whom travel and hunt in their respective area.

As mentioned at the beginning of my presentation, I have couple of words that are Inuit terminology on polar bears and you as members of NWMB should be able to understand; 1. Tukisiniit, 2. mamisimajuq and avasingajuq and 3. katalungajuq; these have been used by Inuit for generations prior to colonialism

Last November, Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board passed a resolution at their AGM here in Iqaluit this resolution was to support 3 communities receive additional 10 tags each from their current allowable catch, we at QWB had listen to the communities and the feedback received from some biologists (biologist meeting happened the same time) that an increase of 30 per year was sustainable and conservative. Much to our surprise, the support letter along with the resolution weren't included when NWMB had made a public hearing invitation call to all parties. QWB is supporting the 3 communities to have their total allowable harvest increased.

Thank you Mr Chairman for the time you have given me to speak on behalf of Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board.