

**SUBMISSION TO THE**  
**NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD**  
**FOR**

**Information: X**

**Decision:**

**Issue: Additional information concerning the adequacy of consultations conducted by DFO on the request for decision to establish a management unit boundary and total allowable harvest for Foxe Basin walrus**

Please find the following summary to further support the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada's (DFO) view that adequate consultation has taken place on the decision currently before the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB). This summary is based on information previously submitted to the NWMB in DFO's original request for decision (TAB 2, TAB 7, TAB 15). In addition, information related to meetings held by DFO Science with Hall Beach and Igloolik Hunters and Trappers Organizations (HTO), as well as information from the 2013 Walrus Working Group meeting (document attached), have been included

**Key consultation elements related to Foxe Basin walrus:**

- February 2007: The Foxe Basin Walrus Working Group was established to begin the development of an Integrated Fisheries Management Plan for Atlantic walrus. The working group is comprised of members from Hall Beach and Igloolik HTOs, the QWB, NTI, NWMB, and DFO. It was recognized that the management plan needs to be developed in a fully consultative and collaborative way;
- Summer 2008: In-person presentation by DFO Science to Hall Beach and Igloolik HTOs on the proposed walrus survey design. Discussed options and obtained information to improve survey (including information on current and historic walrus distribution);
- June 2009: A terms of reference was drafted to direct the development of the management plan and outlined what would be included, the format, guiding principles, and the roles and responsibilities of working group members, including the important role of communicating information within and between organizations;
- December 2009: Project undertaken by DFO to extract all relevant information on walrus from the Igloolik Oral History Database. Researcher met with the Igloolik

HTO to discuss project and that information collected would be used in developing the management plan.

- February 2010 and December 2010: two walrus working group meetings- preliminary science survey results presented and discussed; prioritized the management goals and objectives, discussed the NLCA process for establishing TAH/BNL, and how information (Inuit knowledge/science) will be used in that process;
- September 2010 and 2011: DFO Science met with Hall Beach and Igloolik HTOs to discuss the walrus survey to ensure appropriate design and local involvement;
- February 2011 community consultations with Hall Beach and Igloolik: ensure the important management issues were included; reviewed the traditional ecological maps; and discussed the aerial surveys and preliminary results.
- February 2012: DFO held a Pre-COSEWIC peer-review meeting to discuss a number of walrus management issues, including walrus distribution, movements, and numbers. Preliminary survey results for Foxe Basin were presented. Representatives (and walrus working group members) from Hall Beach HTO, Igloolik HTO, NTI and QWB were in attendance.
- 2012- DFO Science provided preliminary survey results to Hall Beach and Igloolik HTO by email and fax, followed by conference call.
- November 2013- Walrus Working Group meeting (*see meeting minutes for full summary*):
  - Draft Management Plan reviewed and discussed;
  - Newly published Science Advisory Report identifying estimates of abundance and total allowable removals for Atlantic walrus were provided, reviewed, and discussed in detail;
  - Discussed struck and lost rates;
  - DFO presented its recommended sustainable harvest levels;
  - Discussed how the science would be used in recommending harvest levels to the NWMB for establishing TAH/BNL;
  - Discussed the NLCA decision-making process and the importance of providing the NWMB with the best available information (TEK/IQ/Science);
  - Agreed that in-person community consultations should take place in the spring of 2014.

- May 2014- community meetings in Igloolik and Hall Beach and with the respective HTOs.
  - Reviewed proposed changes to the walrus management regime, including: management unit boundaries; TAH recommendations; struck and lost rates; allocation of BNL; walrus harvest tags; and reporting and monitoring requirements. *See community consultation document for full summary.*

**Submitted by:**

Resource Management  
Central & Arctic Region  
Fisheries & Oceans Canada  
**Date:** March 09, 2015

## **Foxe Basin Walrus Working Group**

**Meeting Minutes, November 6-7, 2013**

Iqaluit, Nunavut

### Participants:

Joshua Kango- QWB- Working Group Co-Chair

Allison McPhee- DFO Fisheries Management- Working Group Co-Chair

David Irngaut- Igloodik HTO

Peter Siakuluk- Hall Beach HTO

Karla Letto- NWMB

Sheila Oolayou- NWMB

Paul Irngaut- NTI

Richard Moore- DFO Fisheries Management

Chris Lewis- DFO Fisheries Management

Jenna Kayakjuak- DFO

Rob Stewart- DFO Science (on phone part of Day 1)

### **1. Opening Prayer- David Irngaut**

### **2. Introductions- Allison McPhee**

### **3. History of Working Group**

- Established to develop a management plan for walrus in the Nunavut Settlement Area with stock-specific information.
- Changes to DFO Membership on the Working Group: Amanda Currie has been replaced by Richard Moore; Rob Stewart and Jason Hamilton from Science have retired/taken another position.
- 1 meeting in 2007; one meeting in 2009, 2 meetings in 2010; Community consultations in 2011.
- Since 2007, the working group has discussed the main issues affecting walrus habitat and management. The working group has had participation from elders, local hunters and industry. Maps identifying important walrus areas in Foxe Basin have been produced.
- The management issues identified in the Draft Management Plan were supported during community consultations, with the most important issues being increased ship traffic, industrial development, and impacts from tourism (haul-out disturbances).

### **4. Purpose of meeting**

- Review recent science advice
- Review Draft Management Plan
- Determine next steps and timelines

### **5. Roundtable**

- Igloodik- walrus meat has been a preference for a long time; it's difficult to get harvest reports, some harvesters don't want to report as it's seen as boastful; there were harvest report books with pictures that were good- better than the current harvest report books; concerned with harvest limits being put on walrus- it will cause

competition among harvesters, even non-harvesters, and people will rush to fill the quota; will seek further direction from the HTO membership on whether a quota system is good; some traditional haul-out sites that were abandoned are being used again, while others are now being abandoned; IQ needs to be incorporated in all management decisions; sport hunt provides employment opportunities; need proper authority and enforcement abilities- Conservation Officers need to be aware of the issues, such as only retaining tusks and discarding the meat; community does not identify concerns with population size.

- Hall Beach- walrus haul-out before freeze-up around end of August. Move and migrate back and forth.
- Discussed sonar devices that were put in Foxe Basin along proposed shipping route- probably used to guide ships and/or keep animals out of the way- R. Stewart will make inquiries and respond to the Working Group

## **6. Walrus Management Discussion**

- Increased national and international interest in how the walrus fishery is managed
- Need to strengthen walrus management consistent with the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement
- Establish Total Allowable Harvest/Basic Needs Levels
- Increased role for HTOs/RWOs
- Incorporate best available information
- Continued trade/export of walrus products from Canada was identified as important
- Potential proposal by the United States to up-list walrus to Appendix II of Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) was discussed. Igloodik- concerned with organizations outside the area making these kinds of decisions.
  - i. In 2009 and 2012, the United States considered submitting a proposal to up-list walrus to Appendix II of CITES. If listed on Appendix II, the Government of Canada would be required to issue Non-Detrimental Findings before export of walrus products outside of Canada could continue. Non-detrimental findings require the government to advise that such export will not be detrimental to the survival of that species. Information on population abundance (how many are there) and sustainable harvest levels form part of the analysis. It is likely that the United States will again consider a proposal to up-list walrus at the next CITES Conference of Parties (March 2016).
  - ii. Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC): Re-assessing Atlantic Walrus- new assessment by November 2014; currently designated as a species of Special Concern.
- Two missing pieces; a formal Management Plan and sustainable harvest levels
- Discussed current management structure: Marine Mammal Regulations, Nunavut Land Claims Agreement.

## 7. Recent Science Advice

- The NWMB requested information to use in the establishment of total allowable harvest (TAH) and basic needs levels (BNL) for walrus in the Nunavut Settlement Area.
- Related to section 5.6.25 of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement.
- Advanced copies of newly published science advice were provided to working group members prior to the meeting.
- Based on surveys conducted by DFO, population abundance estimates and Total Allowable Removal levels were produced for 4 of the 6 stocks/management units.
- Foxe Basin is considered one Management Unit. Although there is evidence to suggest two separate stocks, they breed as a single unit and are indistinguishable visually unless very close, and they move around the same area.
- The surveys were designed with the input from the HTOs, including information on past and present walrus movements, haul-outs locations, feeding areas etc.
- DFO uses the Potential Biological Removal method to estimate Total Allowable Removal levels; this provides an estimate of the total number of walrus that can be sustainably removed from a stock/population from all combined human activities (harvested, struck and lost, ship strike, net entanglements, etc).
- The science advice was reviewed and the working group discussed how to use the information in recommending harvest levels to the NWMB.
- For the Foxe Basin Management Unit, the 25-year average harvest level is 185 animals per year. The Total Allowable Removal estimate is 135 (or 166).
- The Total Allowable Removal levels that will be presented during community consultation for their input will be: 135-166.
- Discussed that these numbers are lower than what people might want, but they are based on the best available scientific information.
- The Total Allowable Removal levels do not include struck and lost rates. In recommending sustainable harvest levels to the NWMB for the establishment of TAH, the Department subtracts any known human caused removals from the Total Allowable Removal estimate. This results in a “Total Allowable Landed Catch” value (similar to what was used for narwhal). Other removals could include struck and lost, ship strikes, or net entanglements. Currently there are no Canadian stock-specific struck and lost rates, and appropriate struck and lost rates to use for the stock would need to be determined. Documented struck and lost rates used by other areas were discussed:
  - i. DFO has documented struck and lost rates from the mid-1980s in Foxe Basin at 30-32%.
  - ii. The North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission uses a 30% struck and lost rate where stock-specific rates are unknown.

- iii. Greenland uses a range of struck and lost rates (0-15%), but has a number of regulatory management measures in place to reduce struck and lost rates (harvesters must harpoon first; conditions on who can hunt, when, under what conditions, and where; and quotas are in place).
- The Working Group did not agree on struck and lost rates- members believed it to be much lower than 30%; Igloodik- harvested 107 last year and lost 7; NTI: does not think struck and lost rates are as high as 30%;
- DFO recommended that a range of struck and lost rates be provided during community consultations to obtain views. This will be considered in recommending sustainable harvest levels to the NWMB to establish TAH/BNL.
- Igloodik- they are getting more requests from other communities for walrus meat. Walrus calves are not reported when harvested.
- QWB- more Inuit researchers are needed.
- The NWMB will decide on the process they will use to approve the Management Plan and establish TAH/BNL or non-quota limitations (e.g. public hearing, regular meeting, etc.) once the Management Plan is finalized. The NWMB will use the best available information (TEK, IQ, Science, other) in making its decisions. The process is outlined in the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, and the NWMB's Governance Manual. Communities, HTOs, RWOs, NTI, individuals can make submissions to the NWMB during the process. The NWMB will provide the Working Group with information on this.
- Discussed that with better harvest data (timely and accurate data including struck and lost rates) and future surveys, TAH and BNLs can be adjusted.
- QWB: the community consultations will be difficult- there will be upset people. The same thing happened with narwhal; after community consultations, things settled down and now there is a management plan in place.

## **8. NTI Proposal**

Hunter Training for walrus: a proposal was submitted by NTI to make a video demonstrating the best practices for harvesting walrus; an elder taking a youth out to hunt walrus. This will include interviews with elders, preparing for the hunt (equipment needed, what kind of weather conditions), the hunt, how to reduce struck and lost rates, preparing the walrus after harvesting, reporting the harvest, etc. This video can be provided to HTOs/RWOs to use in hunter training seminars, and could be provided on community channels. NTI will update the working group if the project will go through.

## **9. Review Draft Management Plan**

The draft Management Plan was reviewed, with a focus on Sections 4-8

### Section 4: "Management Issues"

- 4.1: include 'sonar impacts' under ship traffic/development/tourism, as an issue affecting the walrus fishery.

- 4.3: add a link to the Government of Nunavut's website related to "Food Safety" for how to get information on the Trichinosis Prevention Program. Both Igloolik and Hall Beach residents like to eat fresh walrus- the testing takes too long. They can generally tell by looking at the walrus if it's healthy or not. Questionable meat is given to dog teams.

#### Section 5, "Objectives":

- Some changes are required to Table 3- formatting; include invasive species and sonar impacts; include the development of tourism guidelines as an objective; include IQ in the objectives; include an objective that HTOs should develop appropriate by-laws, if necessary.
- NWMB suggested the working group develop an implementation plan.
- Important walrus areas need to be protected, e.g. calving areas and haul-out sites. Can this be done by HTOs developing guidelines and/or by-laws?
- There are fewer full-time hunters and there is a need for hunter training. The skills and knowledge are slowly eroding- there is a need to pass down the knowledge to young harvesters.

#### Section 6, "Access and Allocation":

- Include Sport Hunt/Assignment;
- Discussion that given we are in a global community, what is the best way to proceed? If there is a desire for continued trade, our goal of the group should remain: the sustainable management of walrus consistent with the harvesting provisions of the NLCA. That means developing a plan with harvest limits. There is a process for establishing TAH/BNLs. There are both positives and negatives with this.
- How will HTOs/RWO allocate and monitor harvest once TAH/BNL established? Discussion: what is used with other species? What works well, what doesn't.
- For polar bear, a tagging system is used; same for narwhal, caribou, and muskox. This system seems to work. Could see a similar system for walrus. This would be less of a headache in the long run. This should be discussed during community consultations to get hunters/community views.
- Would be up to the RWO/HTOs to allocate the BNL as they see fit- to harvesters (draw?) and to what purpose (e.g. a certain number to sport hunt, some for training); Sport Hunt- once a plan is in place and TAH/BNL established, HTOs will be able to approve sport hunts (assignment of the TAH/BNL) without going through the NWMB-application process.
- Igloolik has a hunt plan in place for walrus sport hunts. HTOs that have sport hunts should be encouraged to develop one, or a set of Best Management Practices (e.g. what kind of gun to use, where to shoot, how to harpoon, when to harpoon first, how



- to hunt on ice versus in water, traditional practises to minimize losses and maximize harvests, etc.)
- Concerns with setting a TAH/BNL: harvesters may try to quickly reach the quota for walrus once established, especially if it's a low number; communities will not like a low number. Discussed that TAH/BNLs can be adjusted with new information.
  - Hunter Reporting Books- what works, what doesn't? The new books are too tedious and ask for too much information. The old book with pictures of the animals were better.
  - Perhaps consider sample kits going out with each tag- there could be a financial reward with returning the information. Some hunters don't want to take the time to get the information required; weather can be an issues.
  - QIA is working with Baffinland on an 'Inuit impact and benefit agreement', which will include compensation options for accidental killings of wildlife. Considerations will need to be given to how any walrus killed by ship traffic will be compensated for once a TAH/BNL is established. Any losses will need to be removed from the TAH/BNL. How will this be compensated/ accounted for? There may be a number of options: compensation funding; if animal is salvageable. HTOs will need to be brought into the discussion with QIA. NTI will follow up with QIA.

#### Section 7, "Management Measures" and "Appendix 2"

- Management measures included in Appendix 2 are measures that are already in place (Marine Mammal Regulations/ NLCA).
- Any additional management measures that are non-quota limitations would need to go through the NLCA decision process (approved by the NWMB/DFO Minister). These would be highlighted during the Management Plan public hearing (if that is the process proposed by the NWMB). E.g. new allocation system (tags or others proposed during community consultation).
- DFO should consider amendments to section 25 of the Marine Mammal Regulation related to firearm requirements.
- Outline administrative steps for sport hunts

#### Section 9: "Compliance Plan":

- There are no proposed changes; the information listed is the existing compliance regime in place. Any changes would be discussed by the working group and communities.

### **10. Next Steps:**

- Members agreed to combine the Foxe Basin Walrus Working Group and the Baffin Bay-High Arctic Walrus Working Group into one Walrus Working Group.
- Working towards a final Management Plan before the next CITES Conference of Parties in March 2016. Working backwards, a draft timeline was discussed.

- Members discuss the meetings with their HTO/RWO/Organization
- Review/comment on Draft Management Plan again
- Develop a consultation plan: review by working group
- Community Consultations
- Working Group Conference call before community consultations

#### **ACTION ITEMS:**

1. ALL: Review Meeting Minutes and provide comments to DFO (Allison) **by Feb. 14, 2014.**
2. ALL: HTO Board Meeting: discuss the Working Group meeting, the Draft Management Plan, Consultation Plan, and next steps (other organizations review/discuss internally). **IMMEDIATE NEED.**
3. ALL: Response to proposed community consultation dates (*May 26-June 4, 2014*): **by Feb. 14, 2014.**
4. ALL: Provide any additional comments on draft Management Plan, community consultation plan and next steps to DFO (Allison) **by March 14, 2014.**
5. ALL: Working Group Conference Call to discuss community consultation plan. **March 14, 2014.**
6. DFO: Revise all documents based on comments from the Working Group. **April 1, 2014.**
7. NTI: contact Nunavut Tourism and/or Inuit Heritage Trust to see how or if guidelines to reduce disturbance to walrus related to tourism could be developed, what permits are needed and how they could be implemented.
8. DFO: let the working group know about any development on the proposed amendments to the Marine Mammal Regulations; there are amendments that would affect tourism and walrus approach distances that will be important for the HTOs to know about.