



Fisheries and Oceans
Canada

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MAY 29 2017

Mr. Daniel Shewchuk
A/Chairperson
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board
c/o Ms. Taqialoo Sataa
< tsataa@nwmb.com >

Dear Mr. Shewchuk:

Thank you for your correspondence of May 17, 2017 (attached). The Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB or Board) is currently considering a request from the Ekaluktutiaq Hunters and Trappers Organization (EHTO) for an increase to the arctic char commercial quota on Lauchlan River. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) has been requested by the Board to provide additional information on the Lauchlan River commercial fishery operation to assist with the Board's decision-making process.

In 1993, when the Nunavut Agreement came into force, the arctic char commercial quota for Lauchlan River was 9100 kg. The quota was varied by DFO to 2400 kg in 1995 based on DFO science advice, and consultation and support from the EHTO. DFO could not identify any documentation by DFO or the NWMB that indicates the quota was varied using the formal decision-making process as set out in Article 5 of the Nunavut Agreement. This was likely due to the newness of the Nunavut Agreement, the direction provided by the Board to work directly with HTOs in making quota variation decisions,, and that until the Nunavut Wildlife Harvest Study was completed, the Board was not in a position to establish total allowable harvest levels (see attached DFO letter to Kivalliq HTOs and NWMB minutes, regular meeting no. 7, April 1995, pg 10).

The 2400 kg Lauchlan River commercial quota identified in the 2014 Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP) for Cambridge Bay Commercial Fisheries was considered by the co-management organizations that developed the IFMP to be the current quota. No changes to the existing management regime were being proposed by DFO when the IFMP was submitted to the Board for approval. DFO does not, therefore, take the position that the NWMB's approval and the Minister's subsequent acceptance of the IFMP included approval/acceptance of the 2400 kg Lauchlan River char commercial quota.

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In absence of information indicating that the commercial quota for Lauchlan River was modified in accordance with the Nunavut Agreement, it would be DFO's position that the quota is 9100 kg. However, in 1995, DFO science recommended that the commercial arctic char quota at the Lauchlan River be reduced to 2400 kg due to concerns with the sustainability of commercial harvesting at 9100 kg. This continues to be the best available information DFO can provide to the Board at this time. Therefore, in keeping with the principles of conservation, DFO would like to provide the Board with the following recommendation:

The NWMB approve the request by the EHTO, which includes a proposed 5-year fishery-dependent and fishery-independent sampling program by the EHTO, the Kitikmeot Foods, and DFO, on an interim basis. This will enable the necessary information to be collected to complete a stock assessment of the Lauchlan River. This information can then be used in the decision-making process as per the Nunavut Agreement to determine if modifications to the existing quota (9100 kg) are required.

I hope this additional information will prove useful to the Board.

Yours sincerely,



Dale Nicholson
A/Regional Director General
Central and Arctic Region
Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Attachments: (3)

- (1) Invitation for replies to written submissions filed at the public hearing of the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board concerning the proposed increase to the commercial quota for Arctic char at Lauchlan River (Byron Bay)
- (2) 1995 DFO letter to Kivalliq HTOs
- (3) NWMB minutes, regular meeting no. 7, April 1995

Cc:

Bobby Greenley, Chairperson Ekaluktutiaq HTO
Paul Imgaut, Director of Wildlife and Environment, NTI
Scott Gilbert, Regional Director, DFO
Larry Dow, Director, Northern Operation, DFO
Allison McPhee, Division Manager, DFO