

Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board

Annual Report for the 2016-2017 fiscal year
(April 1st 2016 – March 31st, 2017)



In accordance with Funding Arrangement # 1617-HQ-000215 / Amendment No. 0001

Between DIAND and the Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board

Introduction from the Chairperson

A large focus for the Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board (NMRWB) in 2016-2017 was beluga management in the Nunavik Marine Region (NMR), as this fiscal year marked the end of the 2014-17 Beluga Management Plan. Although the plan was due to expire in January 2017, harvest ended early, in August, when harvesters reached the Total Allowable Take of 162 EHB was. However, there were several communities that expressed their need to harvest since they did not have a chance to meet their community's allocation, due to conditions beyond their control, including the over-harvesting of some other communities. These and other issues were brought up during the Beluga Management Workshop, held in Inukjuak in September. A request to open a limited beluga hunt was made to the Board. The NMRWB decided to borrow a limited number of EHB from the next Total Allowable Take, to allow for a fall hunt for those communities that were most affected by the early closure. The Ministers of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) approved this decision.

With the expiration of the 2014-17 Beluga Management Plan, and the pending decision for future beluga harvest, the NMRWB held a multi-phased written hearing in order to consult with affected parties, and gather the concerns related to the previous management plan from all co-management partners. Based on all of the evidence, the Board made an initial decision, which was submitted to the DFO Minister in March. The board expects an answer in May 2017.

This fiscal year marked the first turnover of the Makivik-appointed board members. The previous members, Johnny Peters, Robbie Tookaluk, and Quitsaq Tarriasuk, finished their term after eight years of excellent service. The new members, Salamiva Weetaltuk, Allen Gordon, and Harry Okpik, have begun their terms providing unique and valuable insight into the NMRWB processes. The NMRWB also hired three new staff members. The Executive Director position was filled in August, after being vacant for over half the year. The Administrative Assistant and the Wildlife Liaison Officer positions were also filled as they were both vacant at different points during this fiscal year.

In accordance with the funding agreement between the NMRWB and Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (AANDC), the following report has been prepared to provide insights about the NMRWB's activities between April 1st, 2016 and March 31st, 2017.

Although the past year has been very busy for everyone at the NMRWB, we expect the coming year to be equally demanding and I look forward to the opportunity to guide the NMRWB in attaining its objectives.

Sincerely,



Josepi Padlayat
Chairperson – NMRWB

The Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board

The Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board (NMRWB or “the Board”) is an independent institution of public government established under the *Agreement between Nunavik Inuit and Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada Concerning the Nunavik Inuit Lands* (commonly referred to as the Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement – NILCA). The NMRWB is the main regulator of access to wildlife and has the primary responsibility for wildlife management in the Nunavik Marine Region (NMR). This includes responsibilities such as regulating levels of total allowable take, creating non-quota regulations, setting trophy fees and funding/directing research. A full list of the NMRWB’s responsibilities is given in sections 5.2.3 and 5.2.4 of the NILCA.

In fulfilling its mandate, the NMRWB strives to ensure that *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* and western science are given equal weight in all decisions taken. It is the NMRWB’s responsibility to ensure that populations of wildlife in Nunavik are healthy and that they are harvested sustainably. In doing so, the Board must ensure that the Inuit of Nunavik retain their harvesting rights and that their concerns, principles and knowledge are reflected in its wildlife management regime. To strike this balance, the NMRWB depends on the active participation of Nunavimmiut in the management process. It is thus crucial that the NMRWB work closely in collaboration with the Regional Nunavimmi Umajulirijiit Katujjiqatigiinninga (RNUK) and Local Nunavimmi Umajulirijiit Katujjiqatigiinninga (LNUK), who represent Nunavik Inuit resource users and bring to the Board the wildlife knowledge they have acquired from their elders and through personal experience.

How the Board Operates

As an institution of public governance, the NMRWB is an independent decision-making body. Members of the NMRWB, while appointed by governments and the Makivik Corporation, act independently and must base their decisions on the information presented during meetings, combined with their expertise of wildlife management, and absent from political motivations. This expertise, along with input received from LNUKs and the RNUK, is also reflected in the advice provided by the NMRWB to other institutions and in other day-to-day operations of the NMRWB.

All decisions of the NMRWB are voted upon, during Board meetings or conference calls (quorum is reached when at least four members are present). In the case of a tie, the chairman casts the deciding vote. It should be noted that under the NILCA agreement decisions taken by the NMRWB are subject to the Ministerial approval process described in sections 5.5.6 to 5.5.21.

Structure of the NMRWB

NMRWB Board Members

Josepi Padlayat:	Chairperson
Robbie Tookalak:	Board Member (Appointed by Makivik since August 14 th , 2008, until November 19 th , 2016)
Salamiva Weetaltuk:	Board Member (Newly appointed by Makivik since November 20 th , 2016)
Johnny Peters:	Board Member (Appointed by Makivik since August 14 th , 2008, until November 19 th , 2016)
Allen Gordon:	Board Member (Newly appointed by Makivik since November 20 th , 2016)
Quitsaq Tarriasuk:	Board Member (Appointed by Makivik since August 14 th , 2008, until November 19 th , 2016)
Harry Okpik:	Board Member (Newly appointed by Makivik since November 20 th , 2016)
Sandy Akavak:	Board Member (Appointed by Nunavut Government since September 16 th , 2008 and reappointed for another 3 years as of August 18 th , 2016)
Jean-Pierre Savard:	Board Member (Appointed by Minister responsible for Canadian Wildlife Service since July 9 th , 2013)
Robert Moshenko:	Board Member (Appointed by Minister responsible for fish and marine mammals since November 23 rd , 2011, appointed Vice Chairperson by the board on December 12 th , 2016)

NMRWB Staff

<i>Executive Director:</i>	Kaitlin Breton-Honeyman (Acting until August 15 th , 2016)
<i>Executive Director:</i>	Tommy Palliser (As of August 15 th , 2016)
<i>Director of Wildlife Management:</i>	Kaitlin Breton-Honeyman
<i>Wildlife Biologist:</i>	Mark Basterfield
<i>Wildlife Liaison Officer:</i>	Bobby Epoo (Until December 2 nd , 2016)
<i>Wildlife Liaison Officer:</i>	Annie Weetaluktuk Rousseau (As of February 23 rd , 2017)
<i>Secretary/Receptionist:</i>	Lucy Nowra (Permanently as of September 1 st , 2016)

NMRWB Legal Counsel

The NMRWB is represented by a legal team from Borden Ladner Gervais that is headed by Yvan Houle, though the primary counsel to the NMRWB is now James Woods.

NWMB Accountant and Auditor

Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton, of Montreal, oversees the NMRWB's complete day-to-day accounting services and prepares its annual audited financial statement.

Other Services

The NMRWB regularly requires translation and interpretation services to ensure that its meetings (and the documents required in preparation for them) are available in English and Inuktitut.

Other consultants may be contracted to address any specific needs identified by Board members.

Regional Nunavimmi Umajulirijiit Katujjiqatigiinninga (RNUK)

The RNUK is a key partner to the NMRWB and, in accordance with its mandate under the NILCA, is the consultative body for the LNUKs to the NMRWB. The RNUK Executive Committee is currently as follows:

<i>President:</i>	Paulusie Novalinga (Puvirnituaq)
<i>Vice-President:</i>	Johnny Arnaituk Jr. (Kangijsujuaq)
<i>Secretary:</i>	Jimmy Johannes (Kuujjuaq)
<i>Treasurer:</i>	Putulik Papigatuk (Salluit)

NMRWB Administration

NMRWB membership

There were notable changes in the board's membership during this fiscal year. The three new Makivik appointees started their mandate in November and were sworn in during the December meeting, replacing the previously appointed members. The Nunavut government appointee was reappointed for another 3-year term, while the federal Minister responsible for fish and marine mammals appointed board member became the new Vice Chairperson during the December board meeting. The board's membership is filled although the term for the member appointed by the federal Minister responsible for Canadian Wildlife Service expires in July 2017 and the Chairperson in March 2018.

NMRWB staff

The staff also underwent significant changes. The acting Executive Director was restored to her previous position of Director of Wildlife Management after a full-time Executive Director was hired. After being hired on a contractual basis, the Administrative Assistant was hired on a permanent basis and the Wildlife Liaison Officer was replaced during this fiscal year. As expected, this fiscal year included a large amount of staff training for the new Executive Director, Administrative Assistant, and Wildlife Liaison Officer. A mixture of formal training and applied training was used, with the Director of Wildlife Management sharing the role of Executive Director in an advisory capacity for the first three months. The Wildlife Liaison Officer will also participate in training for her position in the new fiscal year. The staff have been filled to capacity and the work of the NMRWB has continued effectively.

The new Administrative Assistant participated in a Minute Taking Workshop in November and will be taking on a more participative role in minute taking during the NMRWB meetings. The Wildlife Liaison Officer, at the time, also participated in the minute taking training as part of his development, but later resigned from his position in December.

NMRWB office

The NMRWB head office continues to be located in Inukjuak's Alakkariallak business complex. The office space provides for a healthy work environment within which employees can carry out their duties. The high cost of rent remains a concern for the NMRWB and has required budgetary adjustments, as annual costs are much higher than estimated during NILCA Implementation.

Other NMRWB administrative matters

The employee evaluation system will be conducted during the next fiscal year for all employees, by the Executive Director, following a short review of the system with the board. The Executive Director will also undergo an evaluation by the board members and senior staff. Each employee will undergo an annual review, to fulfill the evaluation process of the employees.

The NMRWB finalized its 10-year Projection Proposal for the renewal of the NILCA funding. The proposal is now under review. Once approved, the new block funding for the next 10 years will be secured.

NMRWB Meetings

Regular Board Meetings

The NMRWB held four regular board meetings in the current fiscal year. Specifically, Board members gathered in Ottawa (June 13th to 16th, 2016), Kuujuaq (October 10th to 14th, 2016), Montreal (December 13th to 15th 2016), and in Kuujuaaraapik (February 27th to March 2nd, 2017). Additional conference calls were needed to finalize several items, including the Beluga Management Plan 2017-20 Proposal.

Conference calls

The NMRWB regularly makes use of conferences calls to address matters that must be dealt with between regular meetings. The following table lists conference calls held by the NMRWB between April 1st, 2016 and March 31st, 2017:

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|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1) April 19 th , 2016 | 2) April 25 th , 2016 |
| 3) May 26 th , 2016 | 4) June 27 th , 2016 |
| 5) June 29 th , 2016 | 6) August 10 th , 2016 |
| 7) August 18 th , 2016 | 8) August 22 nd to 24 th , 2016 (EC) |
| 9) September 15 th , 2016 | 10) September 18 th , 2016 |
| 11) November 4 th , 2016 | 12) November 7 th , 2016 |
| 13) January 23 rd , 2017 | 14) January 26 th , 2017 |
| 15) March 6 th , 2017 | 16) March 8 th , 2017 |
| 17) March 9 th , 2017 | |

Wildlife Management

Throughout the year NMRWB staff and board members have been involved in a number of wildlife related issues. The following information is intended to provide a relatively detailed look at the undertakings of the NMRWB during the course of the 2016-2017 fiscal year. It should be noted that these descriptions are intended only to provide an overview of our involvement and are not necessarily representative of the requirements (in time, cost or effort) that each item entails. Many of these undertakings are ongoing projects, others are recurrent issues that require the Board's involvement on a regular basis, and several were initiated prior to this year. The Board's activities are grouped by wildlife classification, and then by species in order to paint a clear picture of our involvement with each.

Mammals

Polar Bear

The NMRWB continues to be an active member of the Polar Bear Administrative Committee (PBAC). This committee provides a forum for provincial, territorial, and federal jurisdictions (including governments and management agencies, councils and boards created under land claims agreements) to work together to manage polar bears in Canada. It also serves to ensure that Canada respects the international Agreements it has signed, as they relate to polar bear. Nunavik is represented on the Committee by the NMRWB, the Makivik Corporation, and the Quebec Government. The Committee normally meets once per year in person and on several occasions via teleconference. As the NMRWB's designated representative to the Polar Bear Administrative Committee, the Director of Wildlife Management travelled to Ottawa, ON, for the committee's annual face-to-face meeting where participants discussed a multitude of regional, national, and international issues related to polar bear (e.g. research, management, population status, CITES, etc.).

The NMRWB also continued to participate to the Polar Bear Technical Committee (PBTC), represented by the Wildlife Biologist, which serves as a technical advisory Committee to the PBAC. The PBTC includes representation from each Canadian province and territory in which polar bears occur, as well as representatives from relevant Indigenous organizations and co-management boards. In addition, the PBTC includes international representation from relevant jurisdictions where polar bear subpopulation boundaries extend outside of Canada (ie: Alaska, and Greenland). The PBTC meets in person once per year to discuss new technical information, including Scientific and Traditional Aboriginal Knowledge, on polar bears, and to update the trends and status of the subpopulations accordingly. Typically, the PBTC also meets via teleconference once per year in preparation for the annual meeting and discusses issues of importance throughout the year via email. This year the Wildlife Biologist participated in the annual PBTC meeting held in Winnipeg in February.

Since 2014 the NMRWB, and later the Eeyou Marine Region Wildlife Board (EMRWB), has been engaged in a decision making process to establish a Total Allowable Take (TAT) and Non-Quota Limitations (NQLs) for Southern Hudson Bay polar bears. Following a rejection of the Boards' initial decisions in September 2015 by both the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada and the Minister of the Environment for the Government of Nunavut the Boards made Final Decisions and responded to technical concerns in the present fiscal year. In October 2016, the NMRWB and the EMRWB received responses from the federal and territorial governments regarding the Boards' Final Decisions that varied the Final Decisions of the boards and reduced the Total Allowable Take.

The Board and staff have invested considerable time and energy in working towards a coordinated hearing process for the Davis Strait polar bears with the other management boards with responsibilities for this sub-population. Despite encouragement from Makivik, as well as the Federal, Territorial, and Nunatsiavut Governments, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board decided that they would not be holding a public hearing at this time. Therefore, the Board and its staff worked on developing a Memorandum of Understanding / Terms of Reference (MOU/ToR) with the Torngat Wildlife, Plants and Fisheries Secretariat (TWPFS) that would be used to guide a coordinated hearing process for Davis Strait polar bears. The NMRWB undertook extensive consultation with co-management partners who were supportive of this approach. The MOU / ToR was signed in October 2016 and the NMRWB and TWPFS set dates for a hearing. Following the release of the notice several parties raised concerns with the timing and the ongoing lack of participation of the NWMB. As a result, the NMRWB decided to postpone the hearing until a later date while making another attempt to engage the NWMB in the hearing; however the NMRWB is still awaiting a response. The NMRWB anticipates being able to hold this hearing in 2017-18.

The Director of Wildlife Management continued to participate as an appointed member of a working group that was tasked with drafting a pol bear management plan for Quebec and it's associated offshore regions (i.e. NMR and EMR). The group met via teleconference on several occasions, as well as an in-person in May and September, particularly focusing on finalizing a draft management plan, and developing a consultation guide to further inform the draft. A consultation tour occurred in February and March of 2016, and although Board staff did not directly participate in the consultation, the Wildlife Biologist served as a technical advisor during a planning workshop for the consultation team in Montreal.

Recognizing that Nunavik Inuit knowledge of polar bears is central to NMRWB management decisions, the Board has dedicated significant financial resources, as well as in-kind support, toward the conducting a thorough Traditional Knowledge study in all Nunavik communities. Initially, a final report was expected in 2016-2017, however the project was held up in the late stages of review due to time constraints of reviewers, and a small drop in priority with the delay of the Davis Strait Polar Bear public hearing. The Davis Strait results have been given initial approval of the Board, with final approval pending a detailed review by appointed Board Members to take place early in 2017-2018. A final report for all three sub-populations is expected in 2017-2018. Board staff also provided verified maps from this project for use in the planning of the aerial survey for both Southern Hudson Bay and Davis Strait polar bears.

Beluga Whale

Beluga were a primary focus of the NMRWB during the 2016-2017 fiscal year, and required the considerable resources from Board staff and members compared to any other wildlife management issue. Work primarily focused on two areas, and largely included the involvement of the EMRWB. The first was a decision to allow for a limited fall harvest after the hunt closed due to the 2014-2017 TAT being reached early in the fall, months ahead of the expiry of the previous plan. The second was work related to decisions regarding TAT and NQLs for 2017-2020. **In order to fully comprehend the issues with the previous plan and to gather suggestions for consideration for the new plan the NMRWB together with all co-management parties hosted a three day workshop September 2017 in Inukjuak. This workshop was funded through a special funding agreement with INAC and is financially accounted for separately from the regular operational funds in the associated financial report. Funds were used to cover travel of one LNUK member from each community as well as honouraria, accommodations, and per diems for the selected member. DFO covered the expenses related to translation and the Umajuit warden's participation.** Based upon the feedback from this workshop DFO, Makivik and the RNUK submitted a joint letter to the Board expressing the need for a new harvest management plan with changes from the previous. The NMRWB opened a multi-phase written hearing to gather information that would inform these decisions. Parties to the hearing included all Nunavik Inuit, LNUKs, Makivik, Government of Canada, Nunavut Government, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, Nunatsiavut Government, and the Cree Nation Government. All parties were invited to submit their concerns in relation to the previous management plan and to share ideas on how to improve the existing management plan. Staff communicated directly with all of the LNUKs, ensuring that all communities had a chance to submit their concerns. The notice of the Written Public Hearing was provided on October 20th, 2016. During the Board's regular December meeting and following an in-depth review of submissions from DFO, Makivik, 12 LNUKs, and 2 individuals, the Board decided that more information was needed. To gather the necessary information the Board opened a question period for the last two weeks of January 2017, where the NMRWB and parties were afforded the opportunity to ask other parties for further information on their initial submissions, followed by an answer period and chance for final/additional submissions in February. Questions were posed to Makivik and DFO, as well as to several LNUKs. In addition, the two LNUKs that had not submitted an initial decision, were invited to submit. The NMRWB received submission from all parties that were asked for answers, and/or final submissions. The initial and final submissions formed the basis of the decision taken by the NMRWB during a conference call in March to establish a TAT and NQLs for 2017-20. The EMRWB was fully involved for all decisions related to the Area of Overlapping Interest. The NMRWB expects a decision by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans by mid-May 2017

The NMRWB staff, primarily the Director of Wildlife Management, continue to participate on the Eastern Hudson Bay Beluga Working Group. This work is aimed at ensure the sustainability of hunting for Eastern Hudson Bay beluga in all regions.

Narwhal

The 2016-2019 Narwhal Management Plan is underway. This management plan contains all relevant Board decisions and other Agreements currently in place (e.g. flexible quota system and tag transfer agreement between Makivik and NTI). In the 2016-2017 fiscal year, little work was needed by Board staff or members on this species.

Bowhead Whale

In 2014-2015, a Total Allowable Take of two bowhead whales was accepted by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. A hunt was in the process of being planned in Kangiqsujaq in 2016-2017, and the NMRWB was kept informed of the progress. The hunt was eventually abandoned due to a shortage of time and funding. However, the community of Kangiqsujaq continued the process of planning a bowhead hunt for the 2017-2018 fiscal year. The NMRWB has been kept informed of progress and an official hunt plan is expected early in the 2017-2018 fiscal year, with the hunt planned for August.

Walrus

The NMRWB continues to follow ongoing discussions in Nunavut concerning the development of an Integrated Fisheries Management Plan for walrus. Should the plan have any potential impacts on walrus harvesting in the NMR, the Board will engage more fully in this matter.

The NMRWB continues to fund research looking into stock discrimination of walrus via genetic sampling, in the anticipation of Board decisions that may be needed. The Director of Wildlife Management and the Wildlife Biologist reviewed and commented on the COSEWIC status report, and participated in the COSEWIC threats assessment for walrus.

The Director of Wildlife, together with the DFO appointed board member, a member of the RNUK, Makivik staff, attended a two-day workshop in Winnipeg to discuss the development of a walrus research program.

Migratory Birds

The NMRWB was regularly apprised of progress made on various migratory bird research activities, primarily with regards to studies being conducted on Eiders and Thick-billed Murres. In 2016-17 the Board also provided funding towards a shorebird and breeding bird survey which took place in the summer of 2016.

Finally, the NMRWB provided a response to the Species at Risk Recovery Strategy and Management Plan for Red Knots in July of 2016.

Fisheries

Northern Shrimp

The NMRWB has been a member of the Northern Shrimp Advisory Committee (NSAC) since 2010. The NSAC is composed of license holders, land claims organizations (e.g. Makivik, NWMB, NTI, etc.) and staff from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, among others. The committee meets bi-annually to discuss the status of northern and striped shrimp populations, harvest results, and management of the fishery in Eastern Canada including waters adjacent to Nunavik and Nunavut. The NMRWB's Wildlife Biologist attended the Committee's face-face meeting in Montreal in July 2016 but no staff were available to attend the regular March NSAC meeting in 2017.

The NMRWB and NWMB held a joint written hearing to consider Total Allowable Catch levels for the 2016-2017 in the early spring. At the June meeting the Board made both TAT decisions for the NMR and recommendations for the areas outside of the NMR which were then approved by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. The acceptance of the decisions and recommendations resulted in an increase for Borealis for the Davis Strait Zone. The NMRWB and NWMB were consulted on how that additional allocation could be used. Specifically the Boards concurred that Montagu quota allocated in Nunavik East and Nunavut East within the NMR and Nunavut Settlement Area, respectively, could be used to account for Montagu bycatch in the Davis Strait West Borealis fishery.

Following a request in early 2017 from DFO to establish TATs for both species of shrimp for 2017-18 and 2018-19 the NMRWB decided in March to hold a joint written hearing together with the NWMB. The written hearing, which will also consider the current sharing arrangements, will close in May 2017. NMRWB staff, along with colleagues from the NWMB and DFO will continue efforts to collaborate on this issue.

Notably, in February 2017 the Boards received a request from Makivik Corporation to recommend a carry forward request for unused shrimp TAT as well as for an exploratory quota of Greenland halibut in the NMR. To consider the exploratory quota the Board decided to hold a written hearing for which notice will be posted early in 2017-18.

Other Commitments

National Marine Mammal Peer-Review Committee (NMMPRC)

Since 2014, the NMRWB has participated in the DFO peer-review process. The NMMPRC has an annual face-to-face meeting in the fall where all publications from science advisory requests are reviewed. The NMMPRC also holds conference calls for outstanding items. The Wildlife

Biologist attended the NMMPRC meeting in Winnipeg, where recent research on walrus and beluga were of particular relevance.

Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP)

The NMRWB continues to participate in the Canadian National Network (CNN), albeit as an observer rather than active participant. The CNN guides and oversees Canada's implementation of the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program-Marine Plan. The CBMP-Marine Plan is an initiative of the Arctic Council, through its Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) and Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP) working groups. Overall the CBMP aims at monitoring Arctic ecosystems worldwide. In Canada, the National Network uses historical datasets to develop a list of indicator species that can be monitored throughout the Arctic. The CNN also intends to establish a monitoring network that can provide regular updates about ecosystem changes that are occurring. This was a quiet year for this group but it is currently working towards a State of the Arctic Marine Biodiversity Report, which is expected to be released in early 2017-18.

Other Meetings

Board staff also attended several other meetings. The Executive Director, Director of Wildlife Management and Biologist attended the ArcticNet Conference that was held in Winnipeg. Much information was gathered during the event, and the NMRWB presented a poster regarding research needs in the NMR. The next ArcticNet Conference will be held in Quebec City in December 2017.

The Executive Director and the Director of Wildlife Management travelled to Chisasibi to take part in the inaugural Hudson Bay Consortium, organized by the Arctic Eider Society. Issues pertaining to the whole of eastern Hudson Bay were discussed, and baseline information was presented to inform the nature of future meetings of this kind.

The Executive Director and the Director of Wildlife Management also attended an inter-regional DFO meeting, along with the NWMB, Makivik, NTI, and staff from DFO Central and Arctic and Quebec region. A follow up meeting with the Regional Director Generals from both DFO regions is planned for 2017-18.

Research

Access Approval

The NMRWB exercised its powers under s. 12.3.6, in consultation with the RNUK, to approve access for government employees conducting the following wildlife research:

- *Projects funded through the Wildlife Research Fund*

Research Fund

The NMRWB finalized work towards restructuring of its research fund. To this end, legal advice was sought concerning the creation of a research trust to isolate the research fund from the NMRWB's operation funds. In 2016-2017 the Trust Agreement was finalized and Trustees were appointed from the Board and Stas Olpinski was nominated as the independent Trustee. The research fund continues to be invested by MGI Securities and allocated to research as the NMRWB sees fit.

In April 2016, the NMRWB committed \$120,000 from the research fund towards six research projects to take place in 2016-2017; funds were allocated as follows:

- \$10,000 towards a stock discrimination and abundance of walrus study, as proposed by Mike Hammill (DFO); and
- \$20,000 towards the survey of Southern Hudson Bay polar bears, as proposed by Markus Dyck (GN); and
- \$35,000 towards community-based monitoring of sea-ice in Eastern Hudson Bay, as proposed by Mike Hammill (DFO); and
- \$15,000 towards the biopsy darting of beluga whales, as proposed by Mike Hammill (DFO); and
- \$10,000 towards the study of ballast waters as proposed by Kim Howland (DFO); the funds were destined specifically to allow presentation of results to the relevant communities; and
- \$30,000 towards shorebirds and breeding bird surveys in Inuit communities, in the Nunavik coastal area and on Mansel Island.

Eeyou Marine Region Boards

The NMRWB and EMRWB worked closely together throughout the year on matters relating to the establishment of beluga TAT and NQL decisions. This culminated successfully in a joint decision-making process for the Cree-Inuit Overlap Areas.

It was clear throughout this collaboration that a formal process is needed to guide interactions between the two boards (and with the Eeyou Marine Region Planning Commission/Review Board). The Boards continue to work on this matter.

Nunavik Marine Region Planning Commission & Impact Review Board

The NMRWB continued its close collaboration with the other NILCA boards regarding licensing and review of projects that affect the NMR. For instance, the NMRWB continues to collaborate with the NMRPC and NMRIRB to develop a clear protocol that will facilitate input, by the NMRWB, into the environmental review process for future development processes.

The NMRWB and NMRIRB have collaborated regularly to put in place a research authorization protocol that meets the obligations of both boards, while ensuring a more streamlined process for researchers to follow. This protocol will ensure a collaborative approach in evaluating

research projects occurring in the NMR. Work continues on this project, and it is expected to be in place during the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

The NMRPC/NMRIRB invited the NMRWB to participate in a Marine Protected Areas Working Group whose mandate will be to determine areas that are particularly important to the Nunavik Marine Region's ecosystem and begin planning for the protection of these areas, as appropriate. The NMRWB agreed to appoint its wildlife biologist to the working group. A face-to-face meeting took place in May 2016. Staff from both Boards held subsequent discussions on the development of the Marine Conservation Atlas and work is ongoing.

Regional and Local Consultative Bodies

Regional Nunavimmi Umajulirijiit Katujjiqatigiinninga (RNUK)

Representatives from the NMRWB participated in the RNUK AGM, held in Salluit during November 2016. The NMRWB chairperson and three staff attended to provide updates on a number of issues included the beluga management system, and the NMRWB's ongoing study on Inuit knowledge of polar bears, as well as a number of administrative items. For the second time the NMRWB staff also conducted a Research Priorities Survey with members of the RNUK which will be used to refine the evaluation of research proposal as well as gain a better understanding of research needs from LNUKs and RNUK perspective. The information gathered in the survey was also presented the following month at the ArcticNet meeting in Winnipeg. An amount of \$100,000 was provided to the RNUK to hold this AGM.

Local Nunavimmi Umajulirijiit Katujjiqatigiinninga (LNUK)

The NMRWB continues to work very closely with the LNUKs in order to ensure that their funds are secured and well-managed. As well, efforts to ensure proper reporting and accountability are ongoing. The NMRWB has provided \$65,763.80 to each LNUK to cover their annual operational costs.

Public Information and Advertising

The NMRWB continued to invest substantially to ensure thorough understanding of the beluga management system by Nunavik Inuit and to communicate of the Boards' Final Decision for Southern Hudson Bay polar bear. This included a number of announcements over regional radio and at various meetings of the RNUK and LNUKs, as well as formal letters. Considerable resources were also invested in developing a new NMRWB website which is expected to be released early in 2017-18.

Financial Reporting

For additional information about the expenditure of funds by the NMRWB, please refer to the Board's audited financial report, prepared by Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton. The report provides a summary of expenses from April 1st, 2016 to March 31st, 2017. The appended financial report is an integral part of the present interim activity report.