

Raised by	Question	Response from / Directed to	Response
species range, habitat, migration routes, etc.?			<p>waters, Gulf of St. Lawrence, the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as the eastern Arctic, Hudson Strait and Hudson Bay. These whales likely also travel to western Greenland. Declining summer sea ice appears to be allowing Killer Whales to expand their range in the Arctic. They have been observed with increasing frequency in Hudson Bay. Killer Whales are rarely seen in the western Canadian Arctic. There is no evidence of large-scale north-south migration in eastern Canada. Killer Whales are observed over a range of latitudes in summer. They inhabit a wide range of nearshore and pelagic habitats and tolerate broad temperature, salinity and turbidity levels. Killer Whale movement does not appear to be limited by features of their environment other than ice in high latitudes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Bowhead Whale</u>, Eastern Canada-West Greenland: The summer range of this population is mainly in Baffin Bay and adjoining waters of the Canadian High Arctic, Foxe Basin, and northwestern Hudson Bay and winter in northern Hudson Bay, Hudson Strait, Davis Strait and southern Baffin Bay. The winter range of this population includes the mouth of Cumberland Sound and Frobisher Bay, Hudson Strait and northeastern Hudson Bay, as well as West Greenland. Some bowheads are believed to winter in central Davis Strait and southern Baffin Bay in the unconsolidated pack ice and in polynyas. Knowledge regarding the routes and timing of Bowhead migrations between summering and wintering grounds in the eastern Canadian Arctic has been inferred from information in whaler logbooks, Inuit traditional

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2. NMRWB Staff	Why are these three species being considered for listing under SARA?	DFO and / or ECCC	<p>knowledge and satellite-linked tagging studies. Bowheads occur in marine waters, and in habitat conditions ranging from open water to thick and extensive, but unconsolidated, pack ice. They may choose habitat with protection from predators, especially Killer Whales.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - - <u>Northern Bottlenose Whale</u>: This population's range extends from Newfoundland to the Davis Strait and the southern part of Baffin Bay. This whale occurs in deep water habitats, generally with depths between 800 and 1500m along the continental slope. Based on patterns of sightings, there is some suggestion of a north-south seasonal migration within the population's range. However, there have been sightings of Northern Bottlenose Whales in the Baffin Bay-Davis Strait – Labrador Sea area in winter, perhaps indicating a lack of consistent seasonal migration.
			<p>All species assessed by COSEWIC as being at risk are eligible for addition to SARA. Moreover, SARA requires the Minister of the Environment to make a recommendation to the Governor in Council (the Governor General acting on behalf of Cabinet) about whether they should be added to the List. Before the Minister recommends their decision, consultations are done and land claim agreement requirements must be addressed.</p>

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3. NMRWB Staff	When a species is designated as Special Concern, does it mean the government	DFO and / or ECCC	<p>Here is a summary of COSEWIC's reasons for their assessment:</p> <p><u>Killer Whale</u> Threats include hunting in Greenland, acoustical and physical disturbance and contaminants. There are fewer than 1000 mature individuals and likely less than 250.</p> <p><u>Bowhead Whale</u> The population was severely depleted by commercial whaling (1500s to 1910). In the absence of commercial whaling, the population is believed to have increased and to continue to increase. The population is not yet clearly secure because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They have a long generation time and a very low natural growth rate; - There are rapid changes in their habitat due to climate change and increasing human activities (e.g. shipping and oil exploration) <p><u>Northern Bottlenose Whale</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Numbers were likely reduced by whaling in the late 1960s and early 1970s when 818 whales were taken. - Survey sighting rates have been low. - Entanglement in fishing gear is the primary known threat but noise and contaminants are also of concern. <p>When a species is assessed as Special Concern, it is because it may become Threatened or Endangered,</p>

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	is concerned that the population could disappear completely?		because of a combination of biological characteristics and identified threats. A species that is Threatened is likely to become Endangered if nothing is done to reverse the threats leading to its extirpation or extinction. Endangered species are those that are likely to disappear completely, either from Canada (Extirpated) or from the world (Extinct). It is the government's responsibility under the <i>Species at Risk Act</i> to take steps to address the threats so that the species status doesn't get worse. When species are at risk, the earlier those steps are taken, the more likely it is that the results will be successful. Also, the earlier the response, usually the less drastic are the measures that need to be taken.
4. NMRWB Staff	<p>What is the purpose of the listings? What will be the consequences to the region and to Inuit if these species are listed?</p> <p>As follow up to the initial response from DFO:</p> <p>Will there be impacts on other species that Inuit harvest (e.g. beluga and seals)?</p>	DFO and ECCC (additions may be needed)	<p>Species are listed under SARA to help the species to survive in the long term and ensure that it does not become endangered due to human activity.</p> <p>In terms of what it will mean for hunters, in a nutshell:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · No restrictions or impact on the hunt for these species under SARA · Hunters would be invited to participate in the planning of conservation measures through a management plan. Implementation of measures in the management plan would be voluntary under SARA.

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<p>Aside from increased research funding, are there additional advantages for Nunavik Inuit of listing these species as Special Concern? (i.e. increased population control funding? more efforts in tracking populations?)</p>	<p>In detail, listing under SARA as a species of Special Concern means:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · No legal prohibition under SARA of hunting activities · No legal obligation under SARA to set quotas · The only obligation that comes with the listing is DFO's obligation, within three years, to carry out collaborative planning of conservation objectives and measures to help the species to survive in the long term through a management plan, and to report (every five years) on the implementation of these measures. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Conservation measures will try to address all identified threats to the species and the habitat and may include measures with respect to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) monitoring the status of the species; (b) developing and implementing education and public awareness programs; (d) protecting the species' habitat; (e) undertaking research projects in support of recovery efforts for the species o Planning of conservation objectives and measures will be done in cooperation with affected governments, wildlife boards, Indigenous organizations, and any other appropriate organization and in consultation with any persons affected by or interested in the management plan. · Enhanced access to funding for implementing the conservation measures. 	

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5. NMRWB Staff	When a species is designated as Special Concern, does it mean that localized population control measure for that species could be limited or made illegal?	DFO and / or ECCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Note that there is no obligation under SARA to implement these measures. · Just as there are no restrictions or limitations on the hunt for these species under SARA, listing these species as special concern under SARA would not involve any changes to other species the Inuit harvest. <p>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. Planning of conservation objectives and measures is done in cooperation with affected governments, wildlife boards, Aboriginal organizations, and any other appropriate organization and in consultation with any persons affected by or interested in the management plan. There is no obligation under SARA to implement these measures, but there will be enhanced access to funding for implementing the conservation measures.</p> <p>Since there are no SARA prohibitions for species of special concern, there would be no new restrictions on hunting activities or population control measures put in place under the <i>Species at</i></p>

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6. NMRWB Staff	Are there currently any human activities threatening these species, or are there any that are predicted to occur in the future in the NMR?	DFO and / or ECCC	<p><i>Risk Act.</i> The existing process for hunt management measures for each of these species would continue to be used.</p> <p>For <u>Killer Whale (Northwest Atlantic – Eastern Arctic)</u>, the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) concluded that threats to this population include hunting in Greenland, underwater noises and physical disturbance from ships (which will become greater as shipping traffic increases in the Arctic), and contaminants or pollution. This population’s small size (fewer than 1,000 mature individuals and possibly less than 250) and the species’ low population growth rate justify its designation as Special Concern.</p> <p>For <u>Bowhead Whale (Eastern Canada – West Greenland)</u>, commercial whaling was once the greatest threat to the Bowhead Whale and the main reason why the species is at risk in parts of its range. While commercial harvesting is illegal, a small subsistence hunt is permitted. Other threats may include industrial and manmade underwater noises, net entanglements, collisions with ships, pollution and climate change. Natural predation by Killer Whales may also place pressure on the population.</p> <p><u>Northern Bottlenose Whale (Davis Strait – Baffin Bay – Labrador Sea)</u> faces two principal threats, entanglement in fishing gear and manmade underwater noise from seismic exploration or Navy sonars.</p>

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7. NMRWB Staff	Concerns have been raised that the designation of a species as Special Concern could be the start toward a path of limiting Nunavik Inuit harvesting (and possibly other) freedoms through future uplistings (e.g. listing a species as threatened or endangered). How can this concern be addressed and resolved?	DFO and / or ECCC	Designating a species as Special Concern would not influence how a species is to be designated in the future. The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) is to re-evaluate species regularly. Any new information that became available would be considered in future COSEWIC assessments. This could lead to the species changing status or even being delisted. If a change were to be proposed, changes to the species' status on SARA's List would be subject to the decision-making steps under the Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement, Moreover, the Species at Risk Act (SARA) requires that for Special Concern species, a management plan is developed in cooperation with wildlife management boards and aboriginal organizations. If the management plans are effective, this would reduce the possibility that the status of the species would be assessed at a higher level. Should the status of any species change in future assessments, consultations with anyone potentially impacted would be undertaken and subject to the NMRWB approval.
8. NMRWB Staff	What are COSEWIC and SARA, and what are their roles and responsibilities in Canada?	DFO and / or ECCC	COSEWIC is the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC). It 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. Members are wildlife biology experts from academia, government, non-governmental organizations and the private sector responsible for designating wildlife species in danger of disappearing from Canada. The Species at Risk Act (SARA) requires COSEWIC to assess species in an independent manner,

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9. NMRWB Staff	The populations assessments are nearly two decades old in the case of Eastern Canada-West Greenland population of	DFO and / or ECCC	<p>so that they are not influenced by political considerations. COSEWIC only examines the science, including Indigenous Knowledge. Drafts of their status report are sent out for comments from different levels of government and from the Wildlife Boards. A link to a summary of the assessment process can be found at: Cosewic / Cosepac - Assessment process and criteria (https://www.cosewic.ca/index.php/en-ca/assessment-process/wildlife-species-assessment-process-categories-guidelines.html).</p> <p>SARA is the Species at Risk Act. It is Canada’s federal act for the protection of wildlife species at risk in Canada and includes the List of species at risk in Canada. It was passed to reflect the federal government’s commitment to conserve Canada’s biodiversity. The purposes of this Act are to prevent wildlife species from disappearing from Canada or becoming extinct, to provide for the recovery of wildlife species that have disappeared from Canada, or are endangered or threatened as a result of human activity and to manage species of special concern to prevent them from becoming endangered or threatened. The Minister of the Environment is the minister responsible for the administration of the Act. SARA includes measures and steps for assessing species at risk and, if they are listed, to embark with responsible jurisdictions, on work to reverse the trend.</p> <p>COSEWIC must rely on published information. Often there is a lag between when a survey is completed and when it is published. For bowhead the COSEWIC assessment was</p>

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<p>Marine Region (NMR) have on other regions?</p> <p>If other regions, including regions adjacent to the Eeyou Marine Region (EMR) / NMR reach different decisions than the NMRWB/EMRWB, will the Minister make determinations for the species as a whole or for the species in each region.</p> <p>If there are different determinations from adjacent Boards/regions, how will the Minister reconcile differences.</p> <p>In addition to protentional impacts on harvesting, what impacts will designation have on other human activities in the NMR? Ex. Development and transportation, etc.</p>	<p>For Killer Whale, there have also been consultations conducted in Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Quebec. For Bowhead Whale there have been additional consultations in Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec. For Northern Bottlenose Whale there have been additional consultations in Newfoundland and Labrador.</p> <p>SARA listings apply to all areas within Canada where the species is found. The Minister must consider the species as a whole before he makes a recommendation to the Cabinet. He will consider all board decisions for these species. If the Minister rejects the Board's decision, he will provide the reasons why and he must take into consideration the decisions from other Boards. The Minister will also inform Cabinet, which makes the final listing decision, of all Board decisions reasons.</p> <p>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. Planning of conservation objectives and measures is done in cooperation with affected governments, wildlife boards, Aboriginal organizations, and any other appropriate organization and in consultation with any persons affected by or interested in the management plan. There is no obligation under SARA to implement these measures, but there will be enhanced access to</p>		

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11. Chisasibi LNUK	Has the Canadian Royal Navy conducted drills in James Bay and/or Hudson Bay before? If they did, did they consult with DFO and the people before entering EMR / NMR, because the sonars on the submarines are very powerful (up to 140dB) and can kill animals.	DFO and ECCC	funding for implementing the conservation measures. SARA requires that management plans be prepared in consultation with other countries, at least to the extent possible.
			The Department of National Defence (DND) is not required to notify DFO or ECCC when their ships use sonar so we cannot answer the question about whether sonar has been used in James Bay or Hudson Bay. However, even though there is an exception under SARA for activities in the interest of national security, these activities should be carried out 'in the spirit of SARA', with appropriate mitigation measures so that activities will cause the least amount of: (1) harm/harassment to endangered or threatened species at risk; and, (2) destruction of critical habitat. To understand, and to be able to best minimize potential impacts to marine species, DFO has created a summary list of marine mammals and other aquatic wildlife based on known distributions and critical habitat for species at risk.
			Overall, the impact that the DND training exercises will have on wildlife species will depend on which species are present, and if the mitigation plan put in place is effective enough to reduce risk below levels that are considered to negatively affect species'

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			health and energy budgets. Mitigation measures should be designed to assure the survival and recovery of species at risk, and the avoidance or minimization of disturbance to marine animals as much as possible.
Bowhead Specific Questions			
12. Quaqtaq LNUK	Wonder why DFO is now worried about Bowhead Whale, when the numbers have been increasing? Nunavik Inuit rarely harvest them, what is the human activity that threatens them now?	DFO and / or ECCC	<p>The species evaluated by COSEWIC are examined following a process which identifies priority species to be examined first (see answer to above question for link to COSEWIC). Commercial whaling reduced bowhead numbers to only a few hundred. Inuit observations indicated they had increased and a survey in 2013 provided the most recent estimate showing there has been some recovery. However, other factors included in the assessment include the lack of information on current population trends (the last survey is from 2013) and the potential impacts of climate change. For example, there appears to have been a mass mortality of bowhead, with 11 carcasses documented in 2020 in the central Arctic. The reasons for these mortalities are not known.</p> <p>Other threats that COSEWIC identified for Bowhead Whale include industrial and manmade underwater noises, net entanglements, collisions with ships, pollution and climate change. Natural predation by Killer Whales may also place pressure on the population.</p> <p>COSEWIC regularly reassesses species and will consider any new information that is available in the reassessment. If the population trend of a species is changing, it should be reflected</p>

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			in the reassessment. There will be a new SARA listing process, including consultations, if the COSEWIC reassessment changes the species status.
13. NMRWB Staff	Would the designation of Bowhead Whales as Special Concern have any effect on Nunavik Inuit harvesting rights, or any other rights?	DFO and / or ECCC	<p>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. Planning of conservation objectives and measures is done in cooperation with affected governments, wildlife boards, Aboriginal organizations, and any other appropriate organization and in consultation with any persons affected by or interested in the management plan. There is no obligation under SARA to implement these measures, but there will be enhanced access to funding for implementing the conservation measures</p> <p>Since there are no SARA prohibitions for species of special concern, there would be no new restrictions on hunting activities put in place under the <i>Species at Risk Act</i>. The existing process for hunt management measures for Bowhead Whale would be used if it is listed as special concern.</p>
14, NMRWB Staff	Why is the species being considered for listing, if the most recent estimates show there are many more Bowhead Whales than previously thought? Is there any indication of decline?	DFO and / or ECCC	COSEWIC must rely on published information. Often there is a lag between when a survey is completed and when it is published. For bowhead the COSEWIC assessment was completed in 2009, but a new survey was completed in 2013 Science Advisory Report 2015/052 (dfo-mpo.gc.ca). Inuktitut:

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<p>Can Killer Whales be harvested to have the numbers brought down?</p> <p>Are there other options to decrease the number of Killer Whales in the areas of Eastern Hudson Bay?</p> <p>What can DFO or ECCC do to assist?</p>	<p>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. Planning of conservation objectives and measures is done in cooperation with affected governments, wildlife boards, Aboriginal organizations, and any other appropriate organization and in consultation with any persons affected by or interested in the management plan. There is no obligation under SARA to implement these measures, but there will be enhanced access to funding for improving our understanding and implementing the conservation measures</p> <p>Since there are no SARA prohibitions for species of special concern, there would be no new restrictions on hunting activities or population control measures put in place under the <i>Species at Risk Act</i>. Therefore, the existing process for hunt management measures would be used if Killer Whale or Bowhead Whale are listed as special concern.</p> <p>Questions relating to whale population management would be addressed to DFO and not ECCC.</p>		
<p>17. NMRWB Staff</p>	<p>As follow up to previous question, if the Killer Whales are designated as Special Concern, would this in any way limit the</p>	<p>DFO and / or ECCC</p>	<p>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</p>

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options for how Nunavik Inuit could deal with the problem of too many Killer Whales?			<p>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. Planning of conservation objectives and measures is done in cooperation with affected governments, wildlife boards, Aboriginal organizations, and any other appropriate organization and in consultation with any persons affected by or interested in the management plan. There is no obligation under SARA to implement these measures, but there will be enhanced access to funding for implementing the conservation measures.</p> <p>Since there are no SARA prohibitions for species of special concern, there would be no new restrictions on hunting activities or population control measures put in place under the <i>Species at Risk Act</i>. Therefore, the existing process for hunt management measures would be used if Killer Whale or Bowhead Whale are listed as special concern.</p>
18. NMRWB Staff	<p>If they Killer Whales are designated as Special Concern, how would this interact with the somewhat conflicting view that Killer Whales are actually increasing in Nunavik, and could be causing increased predation pressure on other marine mammals, including Eastern Hudson Bay beluga?</p> <p>Further to this, while science has little available information related to this</p>	DFO and / or ECCC	<p>Killer whales are top apex predators. There are different types of killer whales, some are thought to feed only on fish, some feed only on marine mammals, and others apparently feed on a mix of fish and marine mammals. As apex predators, killer whale numbers will always be limited. The reduction in ice cover is allowing killer whales to range further into the north. This means that overall, killer whales may not be more abundant, but if they can venture into new areas, it gives the impression that numbers are increasing. Note that the population size of killer whales in the Canadian Arctic is not known.</p>

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<p>population of Killer Whales, Inuit are quite clear about the increasing observations and abundance of Killer Whales and expressed concerns about their presence and population size.</p>	<p>How do you reconcile this seemingly opposing concerns?</p>		<p>We are open to acquiring new information on population distribution from sightings in the Nunavik area. Sightings of marine mammals, including killer whales, can be reported to the Uumajuit warden in any of the Nunavik communities. The wardens communicate information on marine mammals (including harvest and observations) to DFO, who compiles a database of sightings to explore trends over time.</p>
<p>Further, if the increased presence of Killer Whales in the NMR and the threat to Killer Whales is attribute to climate change, how will this designation address the human activity causing climate change? (understanding that human activity causing climate change is happening outside of the NMR)</p>			<p>COSEWIC regularly reassesses species and will consider any new information that is available in the reassessment. If the population of a species is changing, it should be reflected in the reassessment. There will be a new SARA listing process, including consultations, if the COSEWIC reassessment indicates a change is needed to the species SARA status.</p> <p>The goal is to prevent them from becoming threatened and to address the threats to whales to the extent possible.</p>
Northern Bottlenose Whales Specific Questions			
<p>19. Kangirsuk LNUK</p>	<p>Asked what is the size of Northern Bottlenose Whales?</p>	<p>DFO</p>	<p>Northern Bottlenose Whales are 7 to 9 meters when at full maturity.</p>

Maps from COSEWIC evaluations:

OVERVIEW OF SPECIES DISTRIBUTION (based on COSEWIC'S reports)

Killer Whale
(Northwest Atlantic -
Eastern Arctic)

COSEWIC (Nov. 2008)



Bowhead Whale
(Eastern Canada-
West Greenland)

COSEWIC (Apr. 2009)



Northern Bottlenose Whale
(Davis Strait – Baffin Bay – Labrador
Sea)

COSEWIC (May 2011)



Figure 5: Generalized Seasonal Occurrence and Movements for the Eastern Canada – West Greenland Population of Bowhead Whales

