

Public Hearing - Hudson Strait Seasonal Closure (December & January) Public Hearing

Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board Technical Questions

Background information for Questions:

The EHB and the WHB migration patterns in the late fall indicate there should be a progressively lower percentage of EHB within the sampled harvests as the season progresses. From what has been understood through Inuit knowledge, the EHB migrate earlier in the fall (September and October), while the WHB typically migrate later in the fall (November/December). Therefore, the communities of Kangiqsujaq and Quaqtac should have a lower percentage of EHB in their areas towards the end of November and the months of December and January, while the communities of Ivujivik and Salluit have a somewhat higher level of EHB in the beginning of the fall when most of the samples have been provided to DFO.

To have a better understanding of the seasonally closed area, background information and sampling research is needed.

If we assume all the whales migrating through Hudson strait are EHB or WHB, and that the entire stock migrates, then:

$3,400 \text{ (EHB)} + 58,000 \text{ (WHB)} = 61,400 \text{ beluga}$

$3,400 \text{ (EHB)} / 61,400 \text{ beluga} = \text{approximately } \underline{5.5\%}$ of the whales migrating through Hudson Strait are expected to be EHB.

DFO fall estimate of EHB proportion, based on past years harvests samples = 25%

This indicates that the number of EHB in the harvest samples is much higher than would be expected if the two stocks were fully mixed during migration.

WHB migrating later in the fall based on Inuit Knowledge, means the proportion of EHB in the harvest should be lower in the late fall or in early winter.

Questions for DFO:

1. What are the detailed sampling statistics for the late fall season in the Nunavik Marine Region for the past 5 years in the Hudson Strait? Please provide at least the specificity of detail indicated in the table below.

	% EHB from harvest samples			
	Nov. 1 st to 14 th	Nov. 15 th to 30 th	Nov. 1 st to Jan. 31 st	Dec. 1 st to Jan. 31 st
Hudson Strait				
Ivujivik + Salluit				
Kangiqsujaq + Quaqtaq				
Ivujivik				
Salluit				
Kangiqsujaq				
Quaqtaq				

2. Would DFO consider a December opening for the communities of Kangiqsujaq and Quaqtaq?
3. If the closure remains in place in December and January, how will DFO work with Nunavik Inuit to encourage avoiding harvest of the earlier-migrating EHB beluga?
4. How did DFO ensure that Nunavik Inuit had meaningful input into the decision to implement a December/January closure of Hudson Strait?

Questions for LNUKs and/or RNUK:

1. If the LNUK of a Hudson Strait community (your own community or others) chose to delay the opening of November beluga hunting by 1 week (as an example) to avoid EHB migration, would a December 1st closure be reasonable?
2. Do beluga ever migrate through your hunting area in high numbers in December? Is the 2nd, larger migration (as indicated by Inuit Knowledge observations) ever still occurring in December?
3. If the closure were in place, and during December or January beluga are found by hunters in an ice entrapment, would it be reasonable and possible for hunters to submit an application to DFO to harvest those whales?