

Evidence supporting the change in location of the management boundary

There are several important pieces of evidence that the Anguvigaq would like the NMRWB to be aware of during its deliberations. We are well aware of the impacts of the commercial whaling of the Hudson Bay Company and how the hydroelectric project in LaGrande has impacted salinity and the rivers, particularly the diversion of the water, in a way that has forever altered how beluga use those rivers. Nonetheless, we believe these issues are beyond the scope of the current hearing. Below is the evidence that we maintain is the most important and relevant in the context of this current hearing:

Inuit Knowledge of migratory routes and the composition of beluga groups

- Inuit have long known that beluga are migrating in mixed groups of whales along the Hudson Bay coast, including when they are migrating past Inukjuak
- Inukjuak is not a summering area; it is part of the migratory route and as such should be part of the non-quota limitation (NQL) system in place rather than the TAT system

“We are not a moulting or birthing area, we are a migration route where they do not stick around for a long period of time. The areas of Umiujaq and Kuujjuaraapik are major summering areas.”– Sarollie Weetaluktuk

- Communities further north – Ivujivik, Akulivik and Puvirnituk – can harvest from the same mixed groups, and Inukjuak hunters can harvest from those groups north of Inukjuak, but not nearby Inukjuak, even though those same whales continue to migrate down the coast. Furthermore, Inukjuak then ends up buying beluga mattaq from those same communities. The same is true for Sanikiluaq – harvesting the same whales that Inukjuamiut then purchase.

Genetic evidence from sampled beluga in the EHB Arc and issues with the sampling and analysis

- Five beluga were recently harvested in Ikirasaaluq, an area just north of Inukjuak, in May/June 2022, and had no EHB genetic signature when they were genetically assessed.
- Sampling bias – samples have predominantly come from the summer because that is when hunting is allowed whereas there are mixed groups of beluga coming through Inukjuak, particularly in the spring and fall which are underrepresented in the sampling results because of the management restrictions.
- There is also a confirmation bias in the sampling method. For years, any belugas that were harvested in the EHB arc were assumed to be from the EHB stock. Therefore, any new beluga to the area become part of the reference stock.
- Further, very few of the samples from the past 40 years come from the area near Inukjuak. The vast majority are between Nastapoka and Long Island, the known summering area of these beluga.

Impacts of the current management decisions

Long distances travelled

- Harvesters are required to travel long distances (e.g., to Long Island, 1000 km away) to harvest beluga because they can't harvest near Inukjuak
- Travelling long distance to hunt beluga is both costly and dangerous

“It's still happening that they migrate through our community, but we're not able to hunt them anymore. We used to get only two or three. Once they started to migrate back in this area, after

they gathered there, it's the same stock that get hunted without a quota in Ivujivik, and once they go through Saattuajaaq (*islands near Inukjuak*), Kuujjuaraapik, Umiujaq. We cannot touch them near our community but then would have to start going to Long Island. Even Bear Island, I've been in that area. But because it's very much different from our—where we come from. It's very hard to harvest belugas over there, the water is darker than where we come from. The water is yellow in the James Bay area, so it's very hard to hunt beluga over there. We're not used to it. We never hunted in that area. We're not familiar with it, but we are asked to go there to hunt. And the waters get very rough because there is a lot of currents there.” – Elder of Inukjuak

Wastage and spoilage of meat/mattaq

- Many harvesters are unable to bring the entire beluga back given the distance and time associated with long distance travel
- In warmer weather, the meat spoils quickly and so sometimes only the mattaq is brought back to the community

“I've always wanted meat to dry. But I was told that they couldn't bring any because it's too far. Although I get a little share sometimes. I would want to see a bigger share, but they give me what little they can because for me, nikkuk is very important. Dried meat. I don't care for the mattaq so much I would prefer to get the meat to dry. If they have to travel far, then I don't get what I would really like to see. If it were moved closer to the community, there would be less waste.” – Anna Ohaituk

“If we start following our only written laws, nothing should be wasted at all, and that's one of our rules. And our own rule is that any food that is going to be consumed should not be dangerous whatsoever, and nothing to be wasted. If you feel that it's going to cause food poisoning, then it shouldn't be fed. We've lost many people to botulism because they ate food that was poisonous. So that can happen if we have to go long distances to harvest.” – Shaomik Inukpuk

Loss of life

- There have been deaths related to the long-distance travel required to hunt beyond the management boundary
- There was a harvester who drowned and someone who died from botulism due to meat that had spoiled because of needing to be transported a long distance

“We have to travel long distances. We've lost two people in the process of beluga hunting. What would happen if they were Qallunaat? But because they are Inuit, they don't even seem to care. We've had a drowning. And we lost a person, also lost Eva Kalula (Kasudluak) from botulism. What if this happened to Qallunaat? So we have to turn to Inuit managing the beluga hunt.” – Tommy Palliser

“I would still have a nephew if there weren't rules applied. I lost a nephew because rules exist now. He was trying to follow rules and went on a beluga hunting trip. Working on a hunting trip on Long Island, he drowned, he never returned. That's how much impact it has on my life. As family of a young hunter that we rely on, we lost him. And my older brother, because they had lost their younger son, they didn't have food anymore. That's an impact that has very much impacted me personally and my neighbours, my family members.” – Shaomik Inukpuk

Loss of knowledge

- Knowledge is being lost because Elders cannot go on hunting trips to pass on knowledge

“Our Elders were supposed to be given some power, they thought that they would still be able to harvest near their communities and they had been waiting for that for a long time and some of them passed away during that time. Our Elders are disappearing and a lot of them are still waiting and wanting to go beluga hunting, but they just can’t make that long dangerous journey to what is deemed an acceptable harvesting area. I want them and their descendants to be able to harvest here. We understand which groups we can harvest as they pass by, and some of this knowledge is being lost because we can’t hunt here and the Elders who knew the groups very well have passed on, this is what is being lost. Give them a chance to hunt near their home, I feel bad for our Elders, and I want them to be given the opportunities they deserve.” – Resident of Inukjuak

Interruption of knowledge transfer

- Due to the long distances associated with harvesting a beluga, youth are no longer able to join in the hunt and therefore are not learning how to harvest beluga

“The children were all taught by observing. And we learned how to do it, learned how to do the work just by observance. But our children are no longer like that because Inukjuakmiut and Kuujjuaraapimiut have to go long distance to do their beluga harvesting. So the younger generation, we would be able to teach them, but they would have to travel long distances with us. If it remains that way, perhaps beluga will not even be considered as food anymore in the future.” – Sarollie Weetaluktuk

Buying or selling mattaq

- Some people are starting to buy mattaq because there is no other to access it

“We were able to share it for free, but since we can't freely hunt the beluga anymore, they try to make money out of it, these days. Because we can't hunt nearby our community. When they're selling whale meat from Salluit or Ivujivik, then that's how we make our order. We feel that we are being punished for that. We feel we are being punished.” – Sarollie Weetaluktuk

“Here in Hudson Bay, we are only allowed certain number of beluga. When other communities know that we want beluga or mattaq, one square foot costs \$100, being sold here in Inukjuak and it was from Nunavut. But a lot of people who had tried to order mattaq were lied to because they took their money but they didn’t send the product. Because they know we cannot get as many beluga as we want they’ve turned to selling mattaq to us.” – Resident of Inukjuak

Hiding the harvest

- Some people have started to return during the night so that the community doesn’t know that there was a beluga harvested and won’t hope for a share

“The hunters now have to hide that they actually did catch a beluga, because it's not going to be enough for the community of Inukjuak anyway. I have to think of my father, my mom, my sisters, my cousins. We have to be able to share food with them. Those even who are not family

members are craving for mattaq too. We don't share anymore since the rules were imposed on us. When we get home from a beluga hunt, it's like we're hiding from everybody. It's like we're ashamed of ourselves.” – Resident of Inukjuak

“As a resident of Inukjuak, our tradition, our culture has been very impacted. It's very uncomfortable some days when other people are having mattaq and others aren't, because we don't want to be caught, and then word spreads like crazy. Knowing this, to this day, this is what we're doing now. We are doing things secretly now. We're hiding things. Maybe other members of the community aren't doing it, but this is what I see. We are going far – because we are over harvesting, going over the quota limit. We're not sharing information anymore. This is who we are now. At the end, I'm very uncomfortable about this. This is obvious in today's society.” – Simeonie Ohaituk

Not sharing the harvest

- Due to the costs associated with travelling further to harvest beluga, fewer people are sharing their harvest
- Youth are not able to join the hunt and are not learning the practice of sharing the hunt

“The way they are learning today is not to share, only to get an animal for themselves. This is not the way it should be, but that's what is being taught today. The important value and practice that we had is losing its strength. In regards to beluga hunting, we can no longer teach the younger generation, because we can't hunt near our community anymore. Where we are allowed to hunt. As young people, we never wanted to go to long distances, and if we're taught them over there, that's what they'll have to do. It's just discouraging them, because they have to travel far. So learning is not available anymore. And food is not being shared anymore in the community.” – Shaomik Inukpuk

Different harvesting rules for other communities

- Some people interviewed were concerned about how the rules that were applied to their community in Eastern Hudson Bay were not applied to other communities in Nunavik

“We live here. We can't go hunting over here. These communities, in front of their homes, are shooting at belugas [Akulivik and Puvirnituk]. Now us, we can't. The same belugas.” – Josie Nastapoka

“We used to go to Sanikiluaq to harvest beluga, but they seem to not want to see us there. They can get 25 belugas. Perhaps they are in... the population is 1,000. But only us. But us, we can only get five and this is from the same stock. When the whales are migrating, there's tons and tons or many, many belugas. They come right in front of our community. Sometimes we've had to make harvests, although we were not allowed to. What really bothers me is the whales migrating from the south. They're not allowed to be harvested by Kuujuaapimiut and Inukjuak, so we don't hunt them. But once the same stock goes to POV, we're not allowed to harvest them. But the other communities north of us can harvest as much as they want, although it's from the same stock.” – Sarollie Weetaluktuk

Increased hunting pressure in other areas and conflict with other communities

- The management measures that have been imposed have also really impacted communities outside of the arc as well since the arc communities are then required to go to other communities to harvest
- The communities that host the other hunters have expressed a lot of concerns about having other communities during their hunts and in some cases this has meant that some hunters no longer hunt in those areas

No clear rationale for the current location of the management boundary

- The current northern management boundary is scientifically arbitrary, was made without consulting Inuit, and is based on the geography of the 59th parallel (from 59°00'00" N 80°00'00" W to 59°00'00" N 78°20'00" W) rather than western science or Inuit knowledge.
- Table 1 in the appendix shows the different management boundaries that have been delineated for the EHB management zone over the history of available management plans. The EHB management zone used to extend much further north and then in 2014 the NMRWB reduced the size of the EHB management zone to the current boundary along the 59th parallel.
- In the 1996-2000 management plan the EHB summer sub-area is as defined as the area between Kuujjuaraapik (55°00' N) and Inukjuak (58°30' N) (Figure 2 in appendix).

Recommendation on the new location of the management boundary

Given all of the evidence presented above, and given the Anguvigaq's role to make recommendations, on behalf of the Anguvigait, of wildlife management measures to the NMRWB,³ the map (Figure 1) shows the recommended new location for the northern boundary of the EHB management zone. This would make the area of Inukjuak part of the Northeastern Hudson Bay management zone.

³ NILCA 5.7.4 (b)

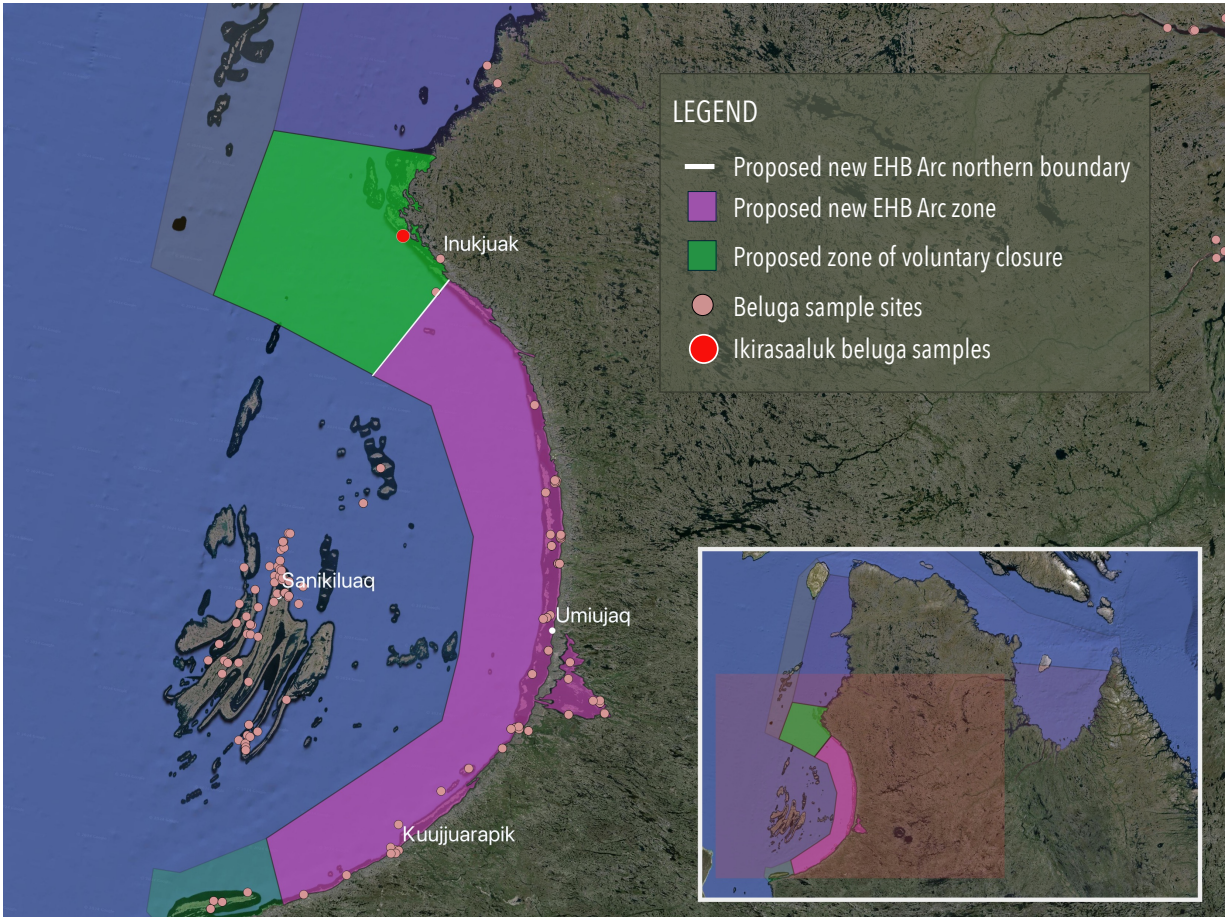


Figure 1: Map showing the recommended new location of the northern boundary of the EHB management zone, the proposed Inukjuak voluntary summer closure area, and the locations of the samples taken between 1980-2022, highlighting the location of the non-EHB whales (Ikirasaaluk).

Voluntary summer closure

As the main caretakers of EHB beluga in their region, Inukjuamiut have also suggested implementing a voluntary closure through a community hunt plan in the area between the current and proposed management boundary. This summer closure, from July 15th until September 30th, would offer further reassurance that there would not be increased hunting pressure during the summering season. This timing matches with when Inukjuamiut know belugas are in summering areas and also matches the voluntary closure that has been in place in Sanikiluaq. If the recommended change in the management boundary is approved, the Anguvigaq would prioritize supporting the community of Inukjuak to develop their community hunt plan.

It is clear that the time has come to move the boundary to both reflect the most relevant biological knowledge about beluga and to not unduly constrain Nunavimmiut harvesting rights. Although there have been significant improvements in beluga management in many parts of the Nunavik Marine Region since the establishment of the NMRWB, the communities of the arc still experience the same top-down approach to management and type of restrictions that were in place in 1980s. Not only do the current management boundaries not reflect the summering area of the EHB beluga but it has caused Inukjuak

great harm the way the boundary has been imposed. Inukjuamiut still feel the betrayal of those early visits from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) where their knowledge was used against them and the change in this management boundary would be an important step towards reconciliation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Billy Palliser', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Billy Palliser
Vice President, Anguvigaq (RNUK)

Table 1: Available Nunavik beluga management plans from 1986-2006 with reference to the location of the northern management boundary of the EHB Zone (bolded)

Nunavik Beluga Management Plan Catalogue			
Management Plan Title	Timeline	Author	EHB Management Boundary
Northern Quebec belugas management plan (English, French & Inuktitut versions)	1986	DFO	NA
Beluga management plan for northern Quebec 1987-1988	1987-1988	DFO	NA
Beluga management plan for the Nunavik region 1990-1991	1990-1991	DFO	NA
Management plan for the Eastern Hudson Bay beluga population (English & Inuktitut versions)	1993	DFO	Harvesting areas shown on map - might go up to along the 59th parallel
Northern Quebec belugas 5-year management plan: 1996-2000	1996-2000	DFO	Eastern Hudson Bay is described as from 52°32'00"N to 62°10'00"N. There is a summer sub-area of EHB described from 55°00'N to 58°30'N that has a separate TAT.
Northern Quebec beluga 3-year management plan: 2001-2003 - Amended 2002 version	2001-2003	DFO	Eastern Hudson Bay is described as from 54°54'35"N to 62°10'00"N .
Nunavik & adjacent waters beluga management plan 2005	2005	DFO	Eastern Hudson Bay is described as from 54°54'35"N to 62°10'00"N .
Nunavik & adjacent waters 3-year beluga management plan 2006-2008	2006-2008	DFO	Eastern Hudson Bay is described as from 54°54'35"N to 62°10'00"N .
Nunavik & adjacent waters 2010 beluga management plan	2010	DFO	Eastern Hudson Bay is described as from 54°54'35"N to 62°10'00"N .

Beluga (<i>Delphinapterus leucas</i>): Management plan for the Nunavik Marine Region (2011 - 2013)	2011-2013	NMRW B	Eastern Hudson Bay is described as from 54°54'35"N to 62°10'00"N .
Rationale and support for the NMRWB resolutions for a TAT for EHB beluga whales and associated non-quota limitations in the NMR	2014-2016	NMRW B	Eastern Hudson Bay is described as from 54°54'35"N to 59°00'00"N.
Rationale and support for the NMRWB and EMRWB resolutions for a TAT for EHB beluga whales and associated non-quota limitations in the NMR (2017-2020)	2017-2020	NMRW B	Eastern Hudson Bay is described as from 54°54'35"N to 59°00'00"N .
Reasons for final decisions in relation to the resolutions for the establishment of a TAT for beluga in the Eastern Hudson Bay Arc Region and associated non-quota limitations for beluga in the NMR (2020 - 2026)	2020-2026	NMRW B/ EMRWB	Eastern Hudson Bay Arc Region is described as from 54°54'35"N to 59°00'00"N .

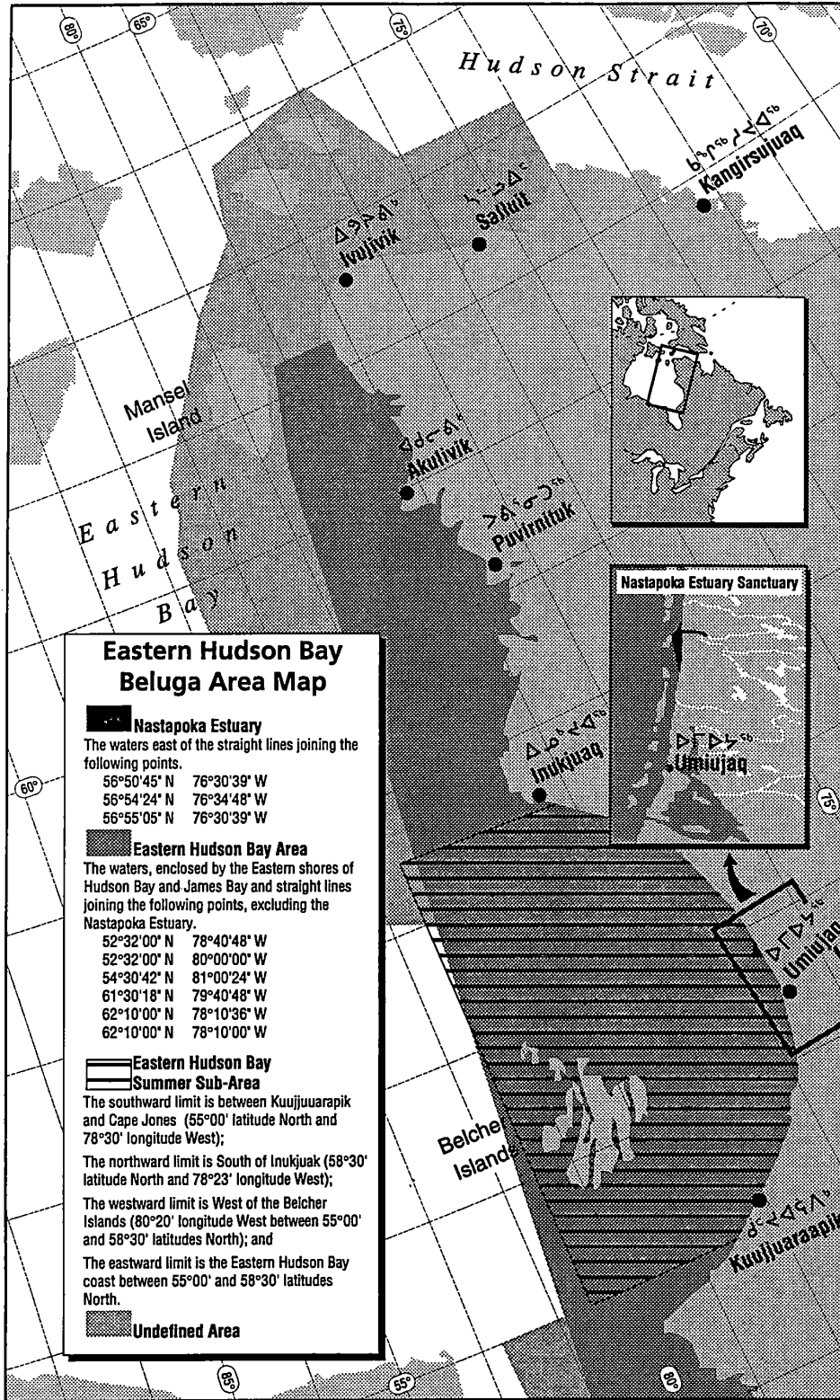


Figure 2: Eastern Hudson Bay Management Areas (DFO. Northern Quebec Belugas 5 Year Management Plan: 1996-2000)