



80% of the geometric mean of female spawning stock biomass, and the adoption of the 2-Step harvest decision rules.

Reasons for NWMB Decision

In reaching its decision, the Board considered information from Fisheries and Oceans Canada. The Board deliberated three options for harvest decision rules: a one-step approach, a Base TAC approach, and a two-step approach. The two-step approach offers a smoothing factor to TAC fluctuations, providing greater socioeconomic stability while still responding to annual biomass changes. The Board determined that a two-step approach meets conservation objectives better compared to the current and other candidate rules.

The Board also considered Fisheries and Oceans Canada’s engagement with relevant stakeholders. Importantly, the Board considered that there is consensus among members of the Northern Shrimp Advisory Committee and its working groups to endorse a lower reference at 40%, an upper reference at 80%, and adopt the two-step harvest rule.

While the NWMB supports the 2-step harvest decision rule, the Board noticed that the maximum exploitation rate sub-rule for the Cautious Zone stipulates that a TAC may be up to 1.5 times the target TAC. The target exploitation rate in the Cautious Zone is calculated along a slope ranging from 10%–20%. However, with this sub-rule, a stock that is in the Cautious Zone may ultimately have a TAC and exploitation rate akin to a stock that would be in the Healthy Zone. It is unclear to the NWMB what the justification is for allowing a maximum TAC in the Cautious Zone, the rationale for assigning the specific number of 1.5 to the maximum TAC, and the potential conservation concerns for efforts to rebuild a stock. The Board would be remiss to not bring these to your attention.

CONCLUSION

The Board hereby forwards their decisions and recommendations to you for your consideration pursuant to the relevant terms of the *Nunavut Agreement*. Please be assured that the NWMB will continue to work collaboratively with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada and other co-management partners in ensuring that the management of shrimp in the Nunavut Settlement Area and adjacent waters fully aligns



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Nunavut Wildlife Management Board

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Conserving wildlife through the application of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and scientific knowledge

with the terms of the *Nunavut Agreement*.

If you or your officials have any questions with respect to the content of this letter, please do not hesitate to contact the NWMB at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Daniel Shewchuk
Chairperson
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board

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Minister of
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September 16, 2024

Mr. Daniel Shewchuk
Chairperson
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Mr. Iola Metuq
Chairperson
Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board
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Dear Mr. Shewchuk and Mr. Metuq,

I am writing in response to your correspondence of July 18, 2024, regarding the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board's (NWMB) and Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board's (NMRWB; the Boards) decisions and recommendations on *Pandalus borealis* and *P. montagui* in the Eastern Assessment Zone (EAZ) and Western Assessment Zone (WAZ). I have addressed each of the decisions and recommendations separately by assessment zone herein, for the 2024-25 fishing season.

I would also like to thank you for your correspondence of July 22 and August 6, 2024 regarding the Boards' decisions to support adopting the proposed Precautionary Approach (PA) Frameworks and subsequent amendments to the Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP) for *P. borealis* and *P. montagui* in the EAZ and WAZ.

I accept the Boards' decisions to amend the IFMP to include the new PA Frameworks in the EAZ and WAZ for *P. borealis* and *P. montagui*.

I note the NWMB's concerns with the 2-step harvest decision rule (HDR) and the associated maximum exploitation rate (ER) sub-rule allowing up to a maximum of 1.5 times the target ER in the Cautious Zone. The highest ER using this approach would result in an ER of 30%, which is on the lower end of ERs commonly employed for other coldwater shrimps (i.e., 30-35 per cent), and would decrease as the stock declines further into the Cautious Zone. In the absence of a model, selecting a 1.5 times the maximum ER sub-rule was deemed a reasonable and cautious approach, which garnered broad support among members of the Northern Shrimp Advisory Committee.

Canada 

Western Assessment Zone

I agree with the Boards' recommendation for the WAZ to establish an aggregate Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for *P. borealis* of 4,186t resulting in a decrease of 12.6 percent (23.4 per cent potential Exploitation Rate [ER]) and an aggregate TAC for *P. montagui* of 15,384t resulting in a decrease of 11 per cent (22.8 per cent potential ER). These TAC levels are consistent with the WAZ Precautionary Approach framework supported by the Boards and do not pose a conservation concern.

Consistent with that approach, in the Nunavut West management unit, within the Nunavut Settlement Area, I accept the NWMB's decision to set the Total Allowable Harvest (TAH) levels for *P. borealis* at 2,093t and *P. montagui* at 7,692t; and in the Nunavik West management unit, within the Nunavik Marine Region, and I accept the NMRWB's decision to set the Total Allowable Take (TAT) levels for *P. borealis* at 2,093t and *P. montagui* at 7,692t.

I wish to clarify that *P. borealis* and *P. montagui* are both directed species in the WAZ.

Eastern Assessment Zone

I agree with the Boards' recommendation for the EAZ to establish an aggregate TAC for *P. borealis* of 8,513t resulting in an increase of 15.3 per cent (17.7 per cent potential ER). This TAC level is consistent with the EAZ Precautionary Approach framework supported by the Boards and do not pose a conservation concern.

Consistent with that approach, in the Nunavut East management unit, within the Nunavut Settlement Area, I accept the NWMB's decision to set the TAH level for *P. borealis* at 526t; and in the Nunavik East management unit, within the Nunavik Marine Region, I accept the NMRWB's decision to set the TAT level for *P. borealis* at 131t.

I carefully considered the Boards' recommendation for the EAZ to establish an aggregate TAC for *P. montagui* of 2,100t. While I appreciate the conservation considerations raised by the Boards and support the Boards' harvest level decisions within the Nunavut Settlement Area and the Nunavik Marine Region, I am unable to support the recommended allocation of 804t in the Davis Strait East/West management unit. I understand that during your public hearing process the Boards received a proposal that offshore bycatch allocations may be set at 38.3 per cent of the overall TAC when the overall TAC for the EAZ is less than 2,464t. However, it is not clear whether this proposed approach has been discussed with all affected licence holders. As a lower bycatch allocation has the potential to impede the offshore fleet's prosecution of the directed *P. borealis* fishery in these areas, I have decided that an allocation of 920t be available to the offshore fleet for this fishing season. This will result in the establishment of a more conservative TAC than harvest decision rules recommend, without risk to the offshore fleet's harvesting abilities in Davis Strait.

As such, I have established an aggregate TAC for *P. montagui* of 2,216t (15.7 per cent potential ER). Consistent with that approach, I accept the NWMB's decision in the Nunavut West management unit, within the Nunavut Settlement Area, to set the TAH level for *P. montagui* at 907t; and in the Nunavik East management unit, within the Nunavik Marine Region, I accept the NMRWB's decision to set the TAT level for *P. montagui* at 389t.

An appended table illustrates the overall quotas for each management unit based on my decisions herein (Appendix 1).

I would encourage the Boards to continue to engage with Departmental officials to discuss the ongoing management and administration of the shrimp resource in the EAZ and the WAZ.

I appreciate the Boards' collaboration and cooperation in the sustainable management of the shared shrimp resource in the north.

Yours sincerely,



The Honourable Diane Lebouthillier, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard
Attachment: Appendix 1

c.c.: Mark Basterfield, Director of Wildlife Management, Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board
Denis Ndeloh, Director of Wildlife Management, Nunavut Wildlife Management Board
Leigh Edgar, Manager, Resource Management Operations, Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Jorge Negrin Dastis, Senior Fisheries Management Officer, Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Appendix 1

Western Assessment Zone – Total Allowable Catch

Management Unit	<i>P. borealis</i> (tonnes)	<i>P. montagui</i> (tonnes)
Nunavut West	2,093	7,692
Nunavik East	2,093	7,692
TOTAL	4,186	15,384

Eastern Assessment Zone – Total Allowable Catch

Management Unit	<i>P. borealis</i> (tonnes)	<i>P. montagui</i> (tonnes)
Davis Strait West -Offshore	3,874	-
Davis Strait East – Offshore	799	-
Davis Strait West - Nunavik	190	-
Davis Strait West - Nunavut	1,710	-
Davis Strait East – Nunavut	1,282	-
Davis Strait East and West - Offshore Bycatch	-	920
Nunavut East	526	907
Nunavik East	131	389
TOTAL	8,512	2,216