

**SUBMISSION TO THE**  
**NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD**  
**March 2021**

**FOR**

**Information: X**

**Decision:**

**Issue:** Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) Update – Marine conservation initiatives

**Background**

DFO Marine Planning and Conservation Program (formerly the Oceans Program) focuses on implementation of responsibilities within the *Oceans Act*, using integrated oceans management and marine conservation tools. DFO - Arctic Region, is working with Inuit partners on a number of marine conservation initiatives within and adjacent to Nunavut. These activities include advancement of marine protection measures in Tuvaijuittuq and around Southampton Island and management of existing marine refuges. At the request of the Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA) and the community of Sanikiluaq, DFO has also become involved in multi-party discussions on advancing consideration of protection measures in Qikiqtait.

DFO is also advancing marine environmental quality guidelines in support of sustainable development and integrated management, and supporting implementation of recommendations from the Pikialasorsuaq Commission within Sarvariuq in partnership with the QIA.

**Current Status**

**Southampton Island Area of Interest**

- DFO and Kivalliq Inuit Association (KIA) have partnered to advance the Southampton Island Area of Interest for potential designation as a new Marine Protected Area. The Southampton Island Area of Interest encompasses the nearshore waters around Southampton Island and Chesterfield Inlet in the Kivalliq Region of Nunavut. The final boundary of a potential future Marine Protected Area will be based on assessments.
- The Southampton Island Area of Interest Co-Development Committee met most recently in September 2020, to provide input on the Marine Protected Area process. The Co-Development Committee has representation from Aiviit and Aqigiq Hunters and Trappers Organizations, Irniurviit Co-Management Committee, Government of Nunavut, KIA, and DFO.
- An Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit workshop was held in February 2020 in Rankin Inlet, with five participants from Chesterfield Inlet, eight from Coral Harbour, and one each from

KIA and Government of Nunavut. An Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Workshop Report was produced.

- DFO Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat (CSAS) meetings were held in December 2018 in Winnipeg and virtually in August 2020. Meeting documents are publically available on the CSAS website.
- We are currently conducting assessments of the area: ecological, Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, socio-economic, petroleum potential. DFO is consulting with partners and stakeholders on the various assessment reports, with the aim of finalizing the reports by winter/spring 2021. The next step, expected to begin in spring of 2021, is to determine conservation objectives and conduct a risk assessment of current and potential future activities, which will inform the regulatory intent (i.e., proposed measures).
- DFO will continue engaging with partners and stakeholders throughout the Marine Protected Area establishment process.

#### Tuvaijuittuq Marine Protected Area

- Since the establishment of Tuvaijuittuq Marine Protected Area by Ministerial Order in August 2019, an assessment to determine the feasibility and desirability of long-term protection in the area has been underway in partnership with Parks Canada, Qikiqtani Inuit Association and Government of Nunavut. In February 2020, a working group was established with members from all parties to implement an agreed-upon work plan. Tuvaijuittuq Working Group advancement of this work is ongoing, with some delays due to COVID 19.
- Face-to-face community consultations in Arctic Bay, Clyde River, Grise Fiord, Pond Inlet and Resolute Bay were planned for fall 2020 but have been postponed. The Working Group is currently developing ideas for an alternative consultation process and materials for circulation in the new fiscal year. Additional consultations are expected later in the feasibility assessment process to provide communities and stakeholders with opportunities to comment on preliminary results.
- Upon completion of the feasibility assessment and associated consultation processes, a report with recommendations will be submitted the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Canadian Coast Guard, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada, the Minister of Environment and the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation for the GN, and the President of QIA.

#### Eastern Arctic Marine Refuges

- With the support of co-management partners, fishing industry, and environmental organizations, three eastern Arctic Marine Refuges, fisheries closures under the *Fisheries Act* were implemented in 2017 also contributing 1.17% to marine conservation.
- DFO monitors compliance with these fishery closures by conducting at-sea patrols and aerial surveillance as well as using vessel monitoring systems. Since the Marine

Refuges were established in C&A Region, DFO has investigated one violation and detected several potential violations.

- Research projects such as electronic tagging and monitoring of Greenland Halibut, Greenland Shark and skates as well as fisheries surveys continue in and around these Marine Refuges.
- DFO was thrilled to be a partner in the public outreach project 'Guardians of Tariuq' which highlights the eastern Arctic Marine Refuges.

### Pikialasorsuaq

- The Pikialasorsuaq Commission (PC) was established by the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) to explore management options for a large, international Northwater Polynya marine area. The PC report contains three recommendations, two of which related to DFO mandate: The establishment of a management regime, including an Inuit-led management authority; and The identification of a protected area comprised of the polynya and including a larger management zone.
- The Inuit-Crown Partnership Committee released a joint statement in March 2019 that committed the Leaders to working together, and with the governments of Greenland and Denmark, on implementing an approach to address the concerns expressed by the Pikialasorsuaq Commission.
- Discussions with Inuit partners are ongoing to identify opportunities to provide support and build capacity within Inuit organizations to promote leadership on this initiative. The Qikiqtani Inuit Association has taken a leadership role in advancing discussions around Sarvarjuaq (the Canadian portion of the Pikialasorsuaq) and articulating their shared vision for the Qikiqtani region.
- Initial discussions have occurred with Greenland and the Kingdom of Denmark on development of a framework for implementing ocean management across the Pikialasorsuaq. DFO will also work with Canadian Inuit organizations and other key partners to inform international discussions.
- A DFO Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat (CSAS) meeting was held in January 2020 in Winnipeg with international experts and scientists to review the existing body of information relevant to the Northwater Polynya. Publication of meeting reports and documents are anticipated shortly and can be shared by request and are publicly available on the CSAS website

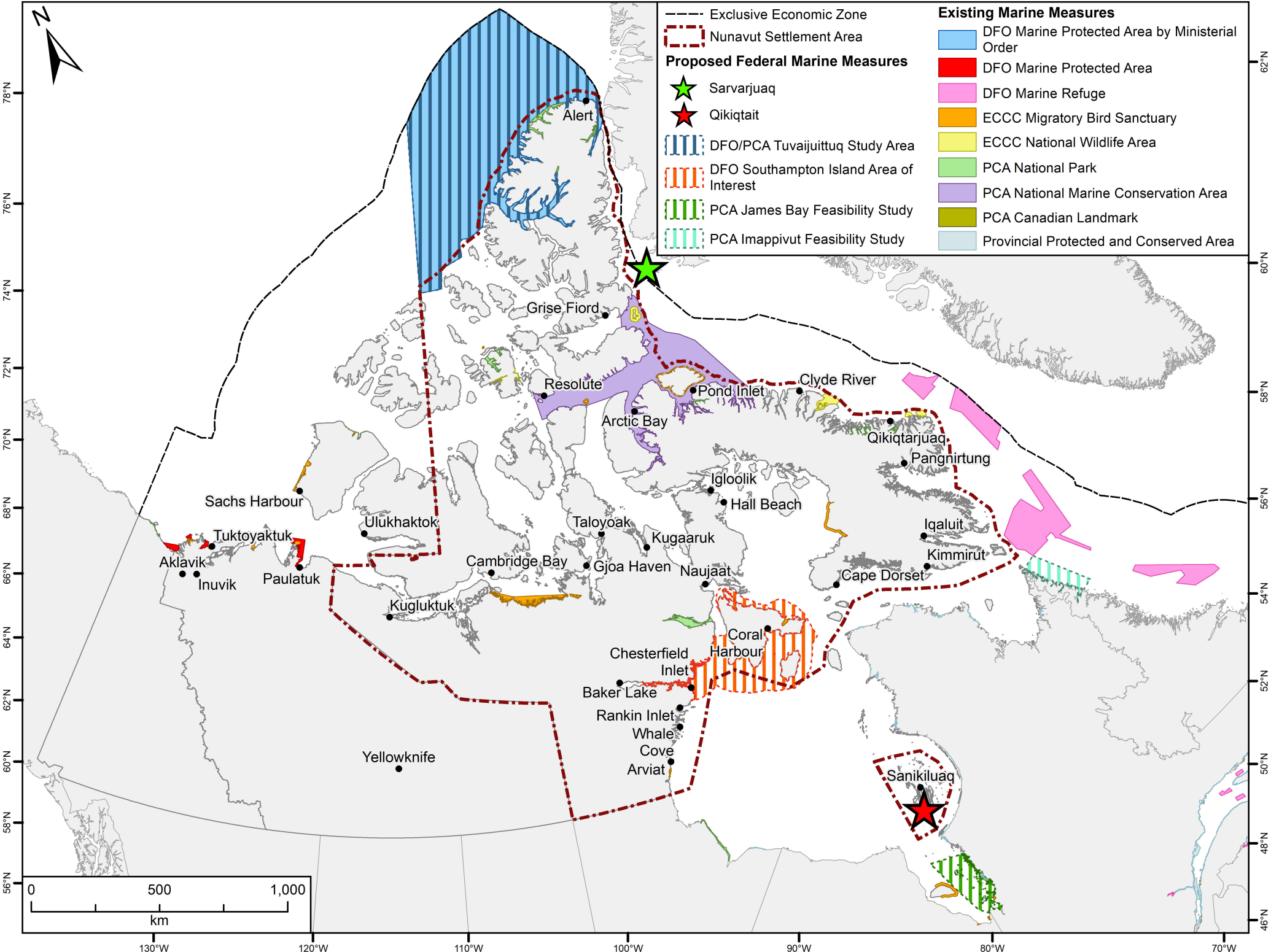
### Marine Environmental Quality

- Recent Oceans Protection Plan (OPP) investments are supporting Marine Environmental Quality (MEQ) programs under the *Oceans Act*. A commitment under OPP is to focus on mitigating the risk of human caused stressors on the marine environment, including impacts of underwater noise from ships.

- In collaboration with partners, the national MEQ program is working towards developing integrated and evidenced-based tools and strategies to better manage and maintain healthy and sustainable marine, coastal and estuarine ecosystems.
- Nationally, working on development of an Ocean Noise Strategy to coordinate federal efforts in understanding and managing human-induced underwater noise. A discussion document was developed in collaboration with other federal departments and agencies to outline a framework for the strategy and act as the primary mechanism to receive initial feedback from partners, stakeholders, and the Canadian public. A presentation was delivered to the Nunavut Marine Conservation Targets Steering Committee on December 2, 2020.
- Within Nunavut, DFO is working with partners to establish underwater noise baseline data within Frobisher Bay and the Southampton Island Area of Interest.
- Developing an Arctic Pile Driving Protocol for Reducing Risks Caused by Underwater Noise. The draft is complete, it has been filed tested at the Iqaluit Deep Sea Port development site and has been submitted to DFO Science for review.

**Prepared by:** Arctic Region – Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Marine Planning and Conservation Program

**Date:** January 28, 2021



Existing and potential future Arctic protected and conserved areas. DFO = Fisheries and Oceans Canada; PCA = Parks Canada Agency; ECCC = Environment and Climate Change Canada