

Submission to the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board

June 2023

FOR

Information : X

Decision:

Issue: Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) Update – Tuvaijuittuq Marine Protected Area

Background

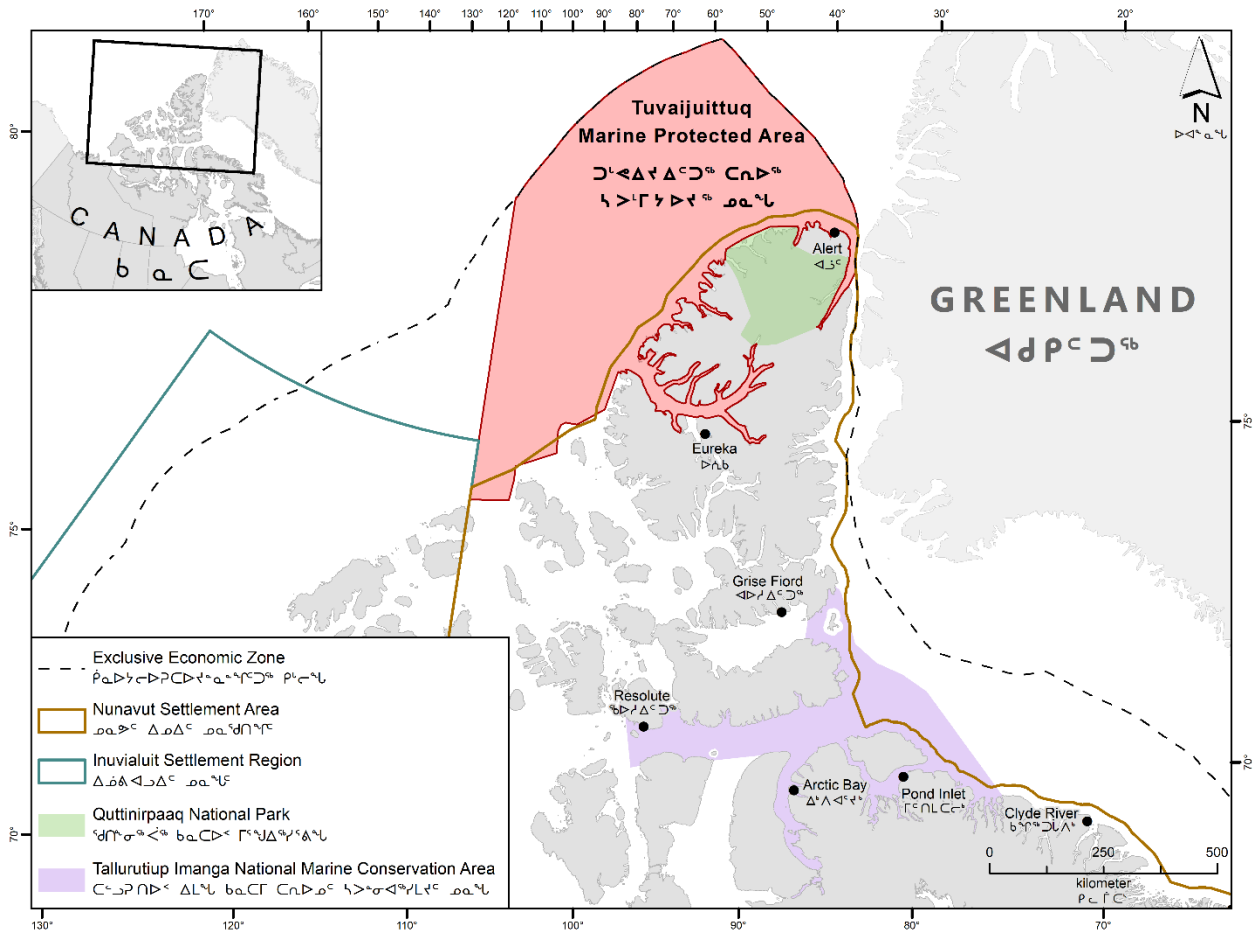
DFO, Parks Canada Agency, the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, and the Government of Nunavut have partnered to advance a feasibility assessment to consider long-term protection in Tuvaijuittuq. Tuvaijuittuq is located north of Ellesmere Island, contains the oldest and thickest multi-year sea ice in Canada's Arctic and is projected to become a critical refuge for ice-associated species into the future. The area was protected by a 5-year Ministerial Order Marine Protected Area (MPA) under the *Oceans Act* in 2019 to provide partners time to complete the feasibility assessment and establish a long-term protection measure if recommended.

Current Status

- In January 2023, the Qikiqtani Inuit Association formally requested that the current Ministerial Order MPA in Tuvaijuittuq be repealed and replaced with a new Ministerial Order MPA to help recover the time lost due to unforeseen pandemic challenges and to allow partners time to jointly explore an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area in Tuvaijuittuq.
- In March 2023, the Minister agreed to pursue the continued protection of the area via a second Ministerial Order MPA. This approach will ensure continued protection of Tuvaijuittuq for up to 5 years while partners continue to consult with communities and stakeholders and pursue an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area.
- DFO's intent is to designate the new Ministerial Order MPA in Summer 2024. The regulation currently in place in Tuvaijuittuq will remain the same, i.e., activities that have occurred or are approved to occur will be allowed to continue, and any new activities that may disturb, damage, destroy or remove key habitat, features, or organisms, will be prohibited, with some exceptions based on Canada's international commitments such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).
- The Tuvaijuittuq Working Group, with members from all parties are in the process of seeking input on this proposal from the communities of Arctic Bay, Clyde River, Grise Fiord, Pond Inlet and Resolute Bay, and will be seeking stakeholder input in early summer.
- A formal submission of the proposal for NWMB review and approval is anticipated in March 2024 following the public comment period (Canada Gazette I).

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

Date: April 28, 2023



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Map of Tuvaijuittuq MPA by Ministerial Order