

SUBMISSION TO THE
NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD
NOVEMBER 2023

FOR

Information: X

Recommendation:

Decision:

Issue: Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada – Marine Conservation Updates

Background

As part of the Marine Conservation Targets initiative, the Government of Canada committed to advancing progress on effective management of existing marine protected areas (MPAs) and Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs). In addition, the Government of Canada continues to work with partners to advance the establishment of new sites, aiming to conserve 25% of Canada's oceans by 2025 (see Appendix 1 for Arctic contributions), and working towards an international goal of conserving 30% by 2030.

Updates

1. Marine Refuges Management and Monitoring Plans

- With the support of co-management partners, fishing industry, and environmental organizations, three Eastern Arctic Marine Refuges (which qualify as OECMs) were established in 2017 ([Hatton Basin](#), [Davis Strait](#) and [Disko Fan](#)). These marine refuges are located in offshore areas adjacent to the NSA. These areas have conservation objectives to protect sensitive coral and sponge habitat. They also include important overwintering habitat for two narwhal populations.
- With establishment complete, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is now focusing on the development of management and monitoring plans to ensure these sites are effective in reaching the desired conservation objectives. This work is being led by DFO's Fisheries Management and Marine Planning and Conservation sectors in the Arctic region.
- To guide plan development, a steering committee has been established with membership from The Government of Nunavut, The Qikiqtani Inuit Association, Nunavut Tunngavik Corporation, The Nunatsiavut Government, and one observer from the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board.
- Next steps include:

- Qikiqtait refers to the waters in and around the Belcher Islands area, where the community of Sanikiluaq is located. This area is important nesting and feeding habitats for large groups of Common Eiders and also supports large groups of marine mammals.
- Sarvarjuaq and Qikiqtait have been identified in the Qikiqtani Inuit Association's (QIA) 2022 Prospectus to support a regional conservation approach and contribute towards advancing Inuit-led conservation in the Qikiqtani Region.
- DFO, along with Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) and Transport Canada, is leading a whole-of-government negotiation of an Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement (IIBA) with QIA to support Inuit-led marine conservation and management opportunities in both the Sarvarjuaq and Qikiqtait study areas.
- The Qikiqtait and Sarvarjuaq working group (QIA, GoC, GN) will be engaging seven communities in the Qikiqtani region on two community tours in October and November to share information and seek feedback on these two study areas. Additional community consultations are anticipated in Winter 2024 on the proposed regulatory content.
- All Inuit rights under the Nunavut Agreement, including harvesting rights, would be respected in establishment and management of a Marine Protected Area. The NWMB's powers, duties and functions would also continue to be respected.
- Following the public consultations and development of the regulatory approach (with all requirements under the Nunavut Agreement met), public posting to Canada Gazette I will be completed.
 - Advice or guidance on the proposed consultation approach or study areas by NWMB to the Working Group would gratefully be received at any time.
- A formal submission of the Qikiqtait and Sarvarjuaq MPAs by Ministerial Order, including proposed regulations and community letters of support, will be submitted for NWMB review and further consideration for board approval (anticipated February 2025) prior to posting in Canada Gazette II and designation.

4. Tuvaijuittuq Marine Protected Area

- 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.

- The Tuvaijuittuq Working Group, with members from all parties are continuing to pursue the establishment of a second Ministerial Order Marine Protected Area in Tuvaijuittuq, as requested by the Qikiqtani Inuit Association.
- A formal submission of the proposal for NWMB review and approval is anticipated in spring/early summer 2024 following the public comment period (Canada Gazette I).

5. Southampton Island Area of Interest

- DFO and the Kivalliq Inuit Association have partnered to advance the Southampton Island Area of Interest for potential designation as a new *Oceans Act* Marine Protected Area.
- The Southampton Island Area of Interest encompasses the nearshore ocean 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 and consultation.
- All Inuit rights under the Nunavut Agreement, including harvesting rights, would be respected in establishment and management of a Marine Protected Area. The NWMB's powers, duties and functions would be respected.
- As briefed to the NWMB at its last meeting, DFO, the Kivalliq Inuit Association and the Government of Nunavut plan to engage five communities in the vicinity of the Southampton Island Area of Interest (Baker Lake, Chesterfield Inlet, Coral Harbour, Naujaat and Rankin Inlet), on two community tours to present and seek feedback on a Marine Protected Area Proposal, in Fall 2023 and Winter 2024.
- The first tour is scheduled for November 2023, and will help refine the draft Marine Protected Area Proposal based on consultations. It will include an overview of key information from assessments of the area; conservation objectives; proposed boundary of a Marine Protected Area; and proposed measures that may regulate, restrict, allow with conditions, or allow activities, while respecting the Nunavut Agreement.
- Concurrently to the community consultations, partners will seek stakeholder feedback on the draft Marine Protected Area Proposal, including from mineral and petroleum, shipping, fishing, and tourism industries.

Prepared by: Fisheries Management & Marine Planning and Conservation, Arctic Region – Fisheries and Oceans Canada

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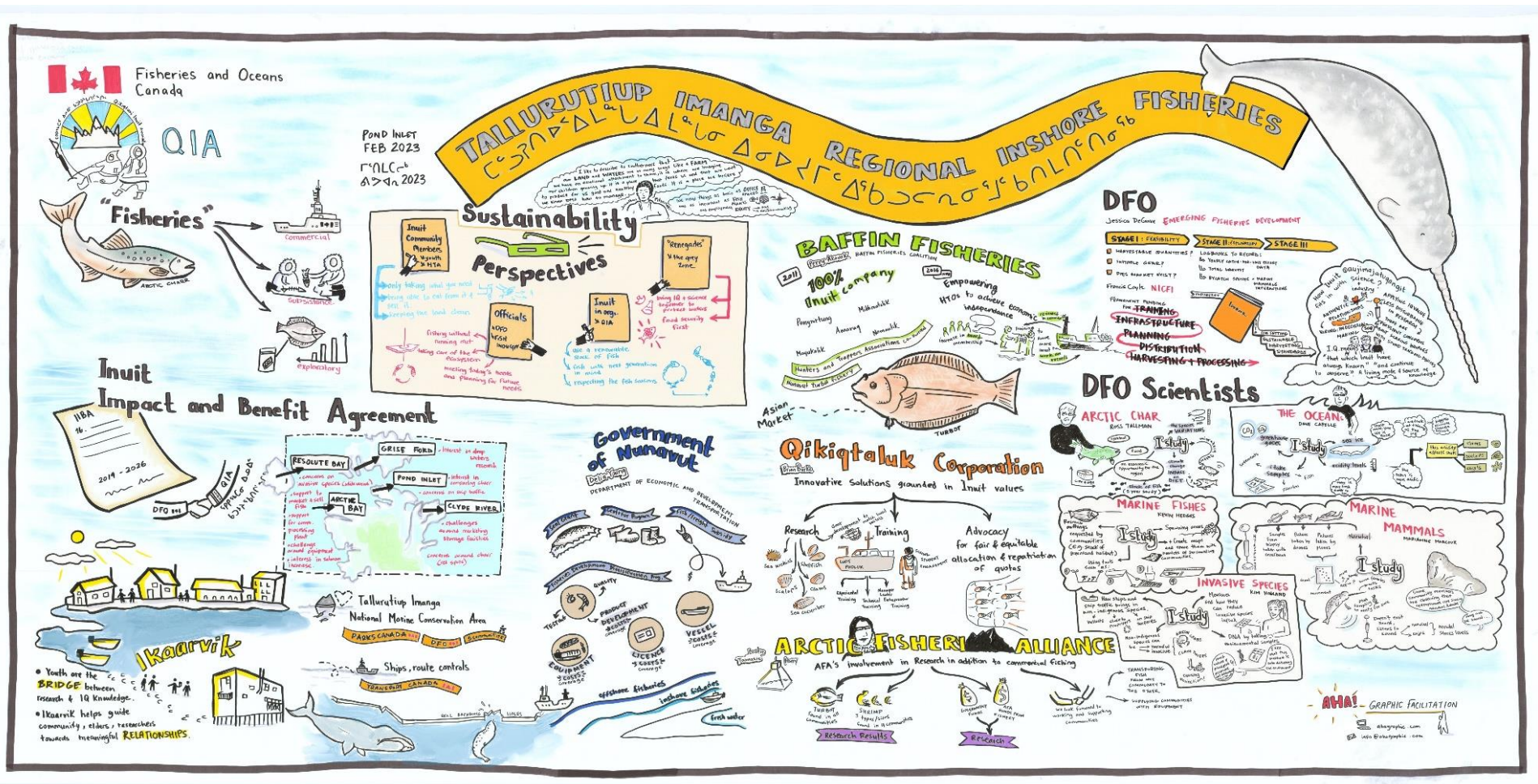
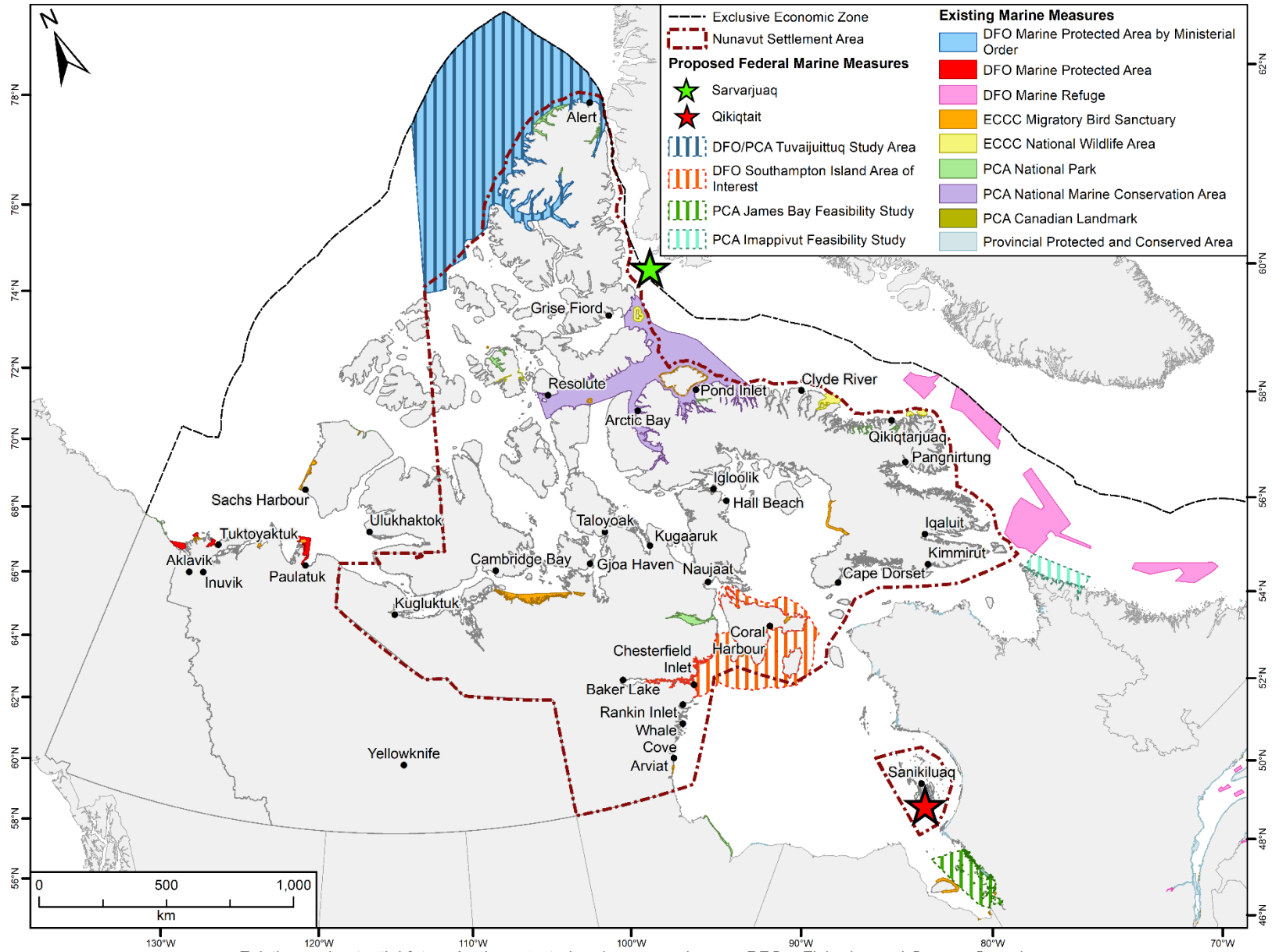


Figure 1. A graphic recording of the partnership, collaboration, discussions and priorities identified through the Tallurutiup Imanga National Marine Conservation Area regional inshore fisheries workshop.

Appendix 1. Existing and potential future Arctic protected and conserved areas.



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