

# SUBMISSION TO THE NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD FOR

## Information:

**Decision: X**

**Issue:** Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is requesting a decision to approve the “Recovery Strategy for Cumberland Sound Beluga (*Delphinapterus leucas*)”.

## Background:

- In May 2001, Cumberland Sound Beluga were assessed by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) as Threatened. This population was included in Schedule 1 of the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) in May 2017.
- As required under the federal *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) for species listed as Threatened, a recovery strategy was developed (Appendix A). A summary of the document can be found in Appendix B.
- The recovery strategy identifies a description of the critical habitat for the Cumberland Sound Beluga. Three areas of critical habitat have been identified, which are all used by Cumberland Sound Beluga seasonally. Under SARA, critical habitat must be legally protected within 180 days after the recovery strategy or action plan that identified the critical habitat is included in the Species at Risk Public Registry.
- Article 5.2.34 (d) (i) of the Nunavut Agreement states that the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) shall, at its discretion, approve plans for management, classification, protection, restocking or propagation, cultivation or husbandry of particular wildlife, including endangered species.
- DFO is now ready to post the final recovery strategy on the public registry (marked as proposed until the Board makes a decision) and is asking the NWMB to approve the document before it is posted as final.

## Consultations

- An early draft of the recovery strategy was completed in 2005, in anticipation of listing, and involved: members of the Pangnirtung Hunter and Trappers Association (HTA), NWMB, Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board (QWB), and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc (NTI). A Cumberland Sound Beluga Recovery Team was formed with DFO and representatives from these organizations.
- Over ten meetings were held in Pangnirtung over the years with community members and representatives of the Nunavut organizations. This included a meeting in 2010 to identify critical habitat.
- A virtual meeting was held with the Pangnirtung HTA in April 2022 to go over the final draft of the proposed recovery strategy and get approvals before it was posted as proposed on the Species at Risk public registry. Changes and additions suggested by the HTA were incorporated into the final draft of the recovery strategy.
- On January 22, 2023, the draft recovery strategy was posted on the Species at Risk public registry for a 60 day public comment period, in English, French and Inuktitut. An information

email was sent to the NWMB, Nunavut Inuit Wildlife Secretariat, QIA, QWB, Government of Nunavut, NTI, and Pangnirtung HTA informing them of the upcoming posting two weeks in advance. A second email was sent on the date of the posting.

- No comments were received from groups in Nunavut during the public comment period. No comments were received that changed the content of the recovery strategy.

**Recommendations:**

The NWMB review the updated “Recovery Strategy for Cumberland Sound Beluga (*Delphinapterus leucas*)” and provide any comments and its decision to DFO

**Prepared by:**

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**Date:**

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