

May 7, 2025

**Meeting with Aiviit Hunters and Trappers Organization  
Discussion on Establishing the Basic Needs Level for  
Southampton Island Caribou  
Coral Harbour, Nunavut**

In attendance in-person

Aiviit Hunters and Trappers Organization

Casey Paniyuk: Chairperson

Moses Nakoolak: Vice Chairperson

Norman Nakoolak

Bobby Saviakjuk

Sam Emiktowt

Noah Nakoolak: Secretary Manager

Other

Mostafa Bougria (Tech Support)

Mary Nashook (Interpreter)

NWMB

Jason Akearok

Denis Ndeloh

Kivalliq Wildlife Board

Maria Kasaluak

Virtual attendance

Sutheat Tim (NWMB Legal Counsel)

Pamela Wong (KRWB)

Bert Dean (NTI)

Jason Akearok stated that the purpose of the Nunavut Agreement was to set out Inuit rights within the Nunavut Settlement Area. He explained that he would speak to these rights as they relate to wildlife, in particular the Basic Needs Level. Jason Akearok gave a presentation that outlined how and when restrictions and limitations are imposed on Inuit wildlife harvesting, highlighting the role of the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board in establishing, modifying, or removing Total Allowable Harvests. He explained that a Basic Needs Level shall be set by the NWMB when a Total Allowable Harvest is established, and that the Basic Needs Level shall constitute the first demand on the Total Allowable Harvest. Jason Akearok emphasized that the Basic Needs Level is not a quota or restriction: its purpose is to ensure Inuit have the first right to access to wildlife that are under a Total Allowable Harvest. He provided some basic examples to illustrate the relationship between the Total Allowable Harvest and the Basic Needs Level. Jason Akearok provided some

background about the Nunavut Wildlife Harvest Study (Harvest Study) and the role of the data in calculating the Basic Needs Level.

Moses Nakoolak asked how a change in wildlife population might be reflected in the Basic Needs Level. Jason Akearok explained that a Total Allowable Harvest can change over time, but that the Basic Needs Level remains constant. Denis Ndeloh added that, if a population recovered to the point that a Total Allowable Harvest could be removed, the Basic Needs Level would be redundant as the purpose of the Basic Needs Level is to ensure that Inuit have the first right to access the resource where there are harvest restrictions in place. At the request of Maria Kasaluak, Jason Akearok confirmed that the baseline data established during the Harvest Study would not change. He added that the intent of the study was to record how Inuit harvested without restrictions.

Denis Ndeloh noted that the NWMB would be establishing the Basic Needs Level for Southampton Island caribou. He described how the Basic Needs Level would be calculated using formula set out in the Nunavut Agreement. Denis Ndeloh stated that the Nunavut Agreement requires the NWMB to check if harvest records exist for the five years leading to the establishment of the Total Allowable Harvest. For Southampton Island caribou, this would be harvest records for 2008 to 2012. He asked representatives of the Aiviit Hunters and Trappers Organization as to whether such records exist.

Representatives of the Aiviit Hunters and Trappers Organization spoke to current caribou population and harvest levels and considered that, overall, current management of the herd was working well. The Hunters and Trappers Organization referred to historic population trends, citing icing events as a contributing factor to more recent declines. Denis Ndeloh explained that the Total Allowable Harvest could be modified in response to changing population levels and potential conservation concerns but noted that Basic Needs Levels warrant separate discussion: the Basic Needs Level permanently locks down Inuit right to first access to wildlife where there is a restriction.

Moses Nakoolak suggested that Mitch Campbell, a long-standing Nunavut Government Biologist working with caribou in the region, may have relevant data for 2008 to 2012. Denis Ndeloh committed to following up with Mitch Campbell but cautioned that biological survey records were not the same as a record of harvest. He invited the Hunters and Trappers Organization to bring forward any data they locate and offered to engage in further discussion with Members that were unable to attend the present meeting.

The Chair requested a 5-minute recess.

Bert Dean reminded those present of historic discussions regarding whether commercial caribou harvest should be included in calculations of Basic Needs Levels. He suggested that Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. would likely continue to bring forward their position on the issue. Bert Dean was unaware of any records kept with the Hunters and Trappers Organization or with the Regional Wildlife Organization. He said that Robert Connolly, with Economic Development and Transportation at the Government of Nunavut, may have relevant information available.

In response to concerns expressed by a Board member, Jason Akearok spoke to the ability of Hunters and Trappers Organizations to set by-laws for their Members but acknowledged the concerns with enforcement, particularly among non-members.

Denis Ndeloh said that NWMB staff are available to the Hunters and Trappers Organization for further discussion on this subject, or any other subject concerning wildlife in Nunavut. He committed to advising the Hunters and Trappers Organization as to when the Southampton Island caribou Basic Needs Level would be presented to the Board, and that they would be formally invited to attend that meeting.

The Chairperson asked for an anticipated timeline under which they should bring forward any data relating to harvests between 2008 and 2012. Denis Ndeloh suggested the end of August. The Hunters and Trappers Organization agreed to the timeline.

Representatives of the Aiviiq Hunters and Trappers Organization offered closing comments and thanked NWMB staff for the information.