



SUBMISSION TO THE

NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD

FOR

Information:

Decision: X

Issue: Aerial Survey Results for Muskox Management Zone, Victoria Island Group, MX-07

Background

- The Victoria Island Group, Muskox Management Zone MX-07, was previously surveyed over two consecutive years, 2013 and 2014. On transect, 1,296 muskoxen were observed, which resulted in an estimate of $10,026 \pm 597$ (SE) (CV = 6%) muskoxen.
- The current Total Allowable Harvest (TAH) for MX-07 is 400 muskoxen.
- The reported harvest has been low in recent years with Kugluktuk hunters harvesting zero (0) since 2019, and with Cambridge Bay hunters harvesting less than 15 muskoxen since 2018.

Current Status

- A recent aerial survey was performed in two parts, the southern portion between October 23 and November 1, 2023, and the northern portion between August 26 to September 1, 2024. HTO-appointed observers actively participated in the survey.
- The number of muskox groups on transect was too low ($n = 43$) to derive an abundance estimate with confidence. A minimum count was used because of the low number of observations which led to a high degree of inaccuracy in producing an estimate. The minimum count was 180 muskoxen.
- From 2013-2014 to 2023-2024 muskoxen in MX-07 have experienced a drastic decline. Health conditions (low pregnancy rates, high rates of brucella, Erysipelothrix, orf, poor quality teeth, and mineral deficiencies), increased reports of grizzly bear and wolf sightings, and emigration of muskox to the mainland may have negatively affected the population.

Consultations

- The final survey report was distributed to Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., the Kugluktuk Angoniatit Association (KAA), Ekaluktutiak Hunters and Trappers Organization (EHTO), and the Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board (KRWB) on March 20, 2025.
- At that time the ENV biologist requested meetings with KRWB, EHTO and KAA to discuss the survey results and potential management actions in the following weeks.

- Government of Nunavut staff met with several members of the EHTO on April 3, 2025, however there were not enough members in attendance to constitute quorum.
- ENV staff also consulted the KAA on June 18, 2025 and discussed the survey results. The KAA acknowledged that the muskox population on Victoria Island was currently low.
- A second consultation was scheduled for August 19, 2025 with the EHTO in an attempt to include additional members who could not attend the April 3, 2025 meeting. This meeting did not proceed as scheduled.

Recommendation

- Based on the recent aerial survey results, and Traditional Knowledge/*Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* gathered throughout the project planning, the Government of Nunavut is recommending the current TAH of 400 muskoxen be reduced to 5 muskoxen.