



June 13, 2012

Mr. David Akeeagok
Deputy Minister, Department of Environment
Box 1000, Stn, 1300
Iqaluit, NU X0A 0H0

Re: Revisions to Wildlife Report

Dear Mr. Akeeagok

The Government of Nunavut (GN) submitted a request to the Nunavut Planning Commission (the Commission) to revise the Nunavut Wildlife Resource and Habitat Values Report prepared by Nunami Jacques Whitford for the Commission.

The revisions to the report were undertaken by Nunami Stantec, and a digital version of the revised Wildlife Report is enclosed.

Attachments to this letter are: Appendix A - excerpts from an email from Stantec which provides an overview of major revisions; and Appendix B - Stantec's response to the revisions requested.

The Commission will be replacing the Wildlife Report on its website as part of a series of updates over the coming weeks.

Respectfully,

Sharon Ehloak
Executive Director

Attachments:

Appendix A - Overview of Revisions
Appendix B - Stantec Response to Revisions Requested
DVD - Wildlife Report 2012 Amendment

Appendix A

Excerpt from Stantec email to Commission:

The following is a highlight list of some of the major changes to the report based on comments from GoN:

- *The base layers were updated with shape files issued by NPC with accurate shapes for Migratory Bird Sanctuaries (MBS), National Wildlife Areas (NWA), and proposed national parks.*
- *Distribution data from the recently issued Arctic Marine Workshop report (Stephenson and Hartwig 2010) was updated and incorporated into the distribution maps of important habitat. The shape files from this report were provided to Nunami Stantec by Fisheries and Oceans (DFO).*
- *The caribou distribution and important habitat figure was excluded from this amendment due to issues with the shapedata used and more recent data was not available.*
- *The polar bear, caribou, and muskox sections were overhauled and revised extensively. The comments in the remaining sections were incorporated into the text.*

[Appendix B] lists the revisions which were not accepted with associated explanations.

Appendix B – Stantec Response to Revisions Requested

Report Section	Specific reference	Government of Nunavut Comment	Nunami Stantec Response
Caribou figure		There are issues with this map – see accompanying table for some issues. For example, there are calving areas that are missing from this map...	Data not available from GN. Figure removed from report
Muskox figure		There is some more up to date information on this from GN-DoE reports that we provided	Did not receive data. Confirm with NPC that data was not received from GN
Polar bear		Numerous	re-written, all changes addressed with the exception of comments listed below
	managed under federal jurisdiction'	Not really. There are obligations from the Int'l Agreement, however, all management is conferred to the territories/provinces. Also – only if the species is listed under SARA as a species of special concern will there be official management role for the federal government.	no change required. Species is under federal management through SARA listing.
	population numbers	Much of these are outdated. Also I don't know why some variances are listed, but not all. All Canadian estimates (which correct citations) are in the 2009 PBTC status (and every year prior) report, and also in the 2009 PBSG status report	: all population numbers cited in COSEWIC 2008 used now. Original NPC draft prior to COSEWIC 2008.
	distribution summary	In general this is a very bad summary of the range and basic habitat of polar bears in Nunavut. There are many more papers than Taylor et al. 2001	agree. This summary is weak. The basis for this has been identified and corrected (error in polygon/data) This text, in our view, does not require replacement given that the maps outline this information.
		COSEWIC is a conservation assessment (cited an old one here). It shouldn't be cited as a reference for ecological requirements.	disagree. COSEWIC is a peer-reviewed source of expert information
	pregnant females use of habitat	this should be in the denning section	disagree. Denning as it pertains to reproduction basis for location here.

	presence of drill ships attracting polar bears	Long term? Or is this an intermediate effect?	unknown. Stirling (1980's) suggested this concept and Stantec is not aware of corroborating evidence (or similar studies).
Caribou		Numerous	re-written, all changes addressed with the exception of comments listed below
	distribution	Where are the Bluenose East, the Bathurst and the Ahiak herds? These herds are similar to the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq: wintering mainly in another Jurisdiction and calving in Nunavut.	GNDoe reviewer added Cape Bathurst, but not Bluenose West which occurs _between_ Cape Bathurst and Bluenose East, so I opted to add it for completeness' sake. I can't find any information that shows that Cape Bathurst population occurs in NU at all, but they added it.
	ecology	Their main food source is lichen in winter, shrubs and graminoides in late spring, primarily forbs and graminoides in summer with an insurgence of fungi in the fall.	no reference provided, not included
		However, as Nunavut has no protected areas strategy yet, these designations carry little weight and are rarely enforced due to a critical lack of enforcement personell and sight inspection budgets.	no reference provided, not included
All other sections			Comments addressed and revised.