

Written Submission No. 03

2016 Draft Nunavut Land Use Plan

Proposed Land Use Designation:

Community Area of Interest – Walrus Harvesting

To: The Nunavut Planning Commission

From: The Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board (QWB), and
the Hunters and Trappers Organizations (HTOs) of Clyde River, Grise Fiord, Pond
Inlet and Hall Beach

Background Information:

Atlantic walrus are important to the nutritional, cultural and economic well-being and traditions of Inuit. They are vital components of the ecology of marine environments of Baffin Bay, Jones Sound, Lancaster Sound, Foxe Basin, Hudson Bay and other arctic marine waters.

Walrus often congregate in areas with shallow water where food is readily available annually, and on terrestrial and ice haul-outs. These areas are important for Inuit where they harvest walrus according to the traditional rules of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ). Such important walrus areas are well known to Inuit in Foxe Basin, Baffin Bay, Lancaster Sound, Jones Sound and elsewhere. Walrus may occur in these areas throughout the year. These same areas also often have abundances of narwhal, bowheads, ringed seals and other marine species. These are important areas for harvesting of walrus and other marine mammals by Inuit of Clyde River, Pond Inlet, Grise Fiord and Hall Beach.

These areas need to be protected from human development and disturbance under the final Nunavut Land Use Plan.

Source of information: Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit.

Proposed Designation: Protected Area

Proposed Restrictions:

Prohibited Uses: The following uses are prohibited:

- Oil and Gas Exploration and Production;
- Seismic testing;
- Disposal at sea; and
- Related research except Non-exploitive Scientific Research

Conditions:

- Closed to all ship traffic, subject to safe navigation, during Ukiq, Ukiuq, Upiqak, and Upiq.
- When walrus are present, no vessel may approach within five (5) km seaward of a walrus harvesting area at any time during the year.
- When walrus are present, fixed wing aircraft must maintain a minimum vertical setback of 460 m (1500 ft) above ground level (AGL) while within 310 m (1000 ft) of a group of walrus. Helicopters should remain at altitudes greater than 910 m (3000 ft) AGL when traveling within 1,610 m (1 mile) of a group of walrus.
- When walrus are present, walrus must not be approached by terrestrial vehicles closer than 800 m (0.5 mile) while the vehicle remains out of sight of the walrus.
- Any project in Nunavut that would violate these conditions is prohibited.

Proposed Boundaries of the Community Areas of Interest – Walrus Harvesting:

See the attached maps and the associated shp files.

Note: The QWB and HTOs would like to meet with the Nunavut Planning Commission to determine the best locations of shipping lanes through these areas during Aujaq and Ukiak, as may be needed. These shipping lanes could be added to the maps after these meetings. The vessel setback distance may be modified for such shipping lanes.

References:

Ristoph, B. 2016. Pacific Walrus Protection and Management in a Changing Climate: Findings from the 2016 Arctic Science Summit Seminar. Pacific Environment, San Francisco, USA. 45 pp. http://www.pacificenvironment.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/walrus-mgmt-report_final_gl.pdf

US Fish and Wildlife Service. 2018. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Approach & Viewing Guidelines for Pacific Walruses. USFWS, Anchorage, USA. 2 pp. <https://s3.amazonaws.com/arc-wordpress-client-uploads/adn/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/08093104/walrus-viewing-guidelines-2018-1.pdf>

Date of this draft: November 22, 2018

