

Written Submission No. 19

2016 Draft Nunavut Land Use Plan

Proposed Land Use Designation:

Community Area of Interest – Beluga and Narwhal Harvesting

To: The Nunavut Planning Commission

From: The Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board (QWB), and
the Hunters and Trappers Organization (HTO) of Resolute Bay, Iqaluit and Hall
Beach

Background Information:

Protection of the environmental integrity of the beluga and narwhal harvesting areas in Aston Bay, south central Frobisher Bay, Foxe Basin, Fury and Helca Strait, Gulf of Boothia, Committee Bay, Richards Bay and Lyon Inlet is critically important to maintain the health, culture and heritage of the Inuit of Iqaluit and Hall Beach. Without protection of these waters and this species, the Nunavut Land Use Plan will fail in its goal to protect and promote the well-being of all of Nunavut's residents and communities as a primary purpose of land use planning under Article 11 of the Nunavut Agreement.

These waters provide Inuit with both important cultural and subsistence resources. They are important areas for beluga and narwhal during Upingaaq, Aujaq and Aujaq, when the whales migrate into the areas from early break-up to late freeze-up. Narwhal and beluga also calve in these waters. The areas must also be protected throughout the year from any development, which could degrade the quality of these waters for beluga and narwhal.

There is evidence that military sonar has negative effects on marine mammals (Cressey 2008). A federal US court has found that the US Navy's use of sonar has illegally harmed numerous populations of whales, dolphins, seals and sea lions (Morell 2015). When beluga are present in Frobisher Bay, the use of sonar by military and other ships should be prohibited from the time that they enter the bay until they leave.

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;
- Sonar
- Moorings;
- Related research except Non-Exploitive Scientific Research

Conditions:

- Closed to all ship traffic, smaller vessels and watercraft all year, except for to access the communities of Hall Beach and Igloodik, and for emergency search and rescue purposes.
- Any project in Nunavut that would violate any of these conditions is prohibited.

Proposed Boundaries of the Community Area of Interest –Beluga and Narwhal Harvesting:

As per the attached maps and associated shp files.

References:

Cressey, D. 2008. Sonar does affect whales, military report confirms. Nature.
doi:10.1038/news.2008.997.

Morell, V. 2015. U.S. Navy to limit sonar testing to protect whales. Science.
doi:10.1126/science.aad1763

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