

Winnipeg, 20 February 2024

Chairperson, Nattivak Hunters and Trappers Organization
Qikiqtarjuaq, NU X0A 0B0

Re: Scientific clam research as part of baseline program – 2024/25

Dear Madame/Sir,

We are hoping to receive support from the Nattivak Hunters and Trappers Organization for scientific research to study the influence of different algal blooms on the reproduction cycle of soft-shell clams in the coastal waters of Qikiqtarjuaq Island. This research project is part of the DFO Coastal Environmental Baseline Program.

The objective of our research is to better understand the importance of the algae living in the sea ice bottom in spring and free-floating phytoplankton in summer for the reproduction cycle of soft-shell clams. Our research will provide ecological information on the health and growth of the soft-shell clam population in the area. For this project, we are proposing to collect clams (in total approx. 100 clams per year) by divers at 2 to 3 locations near Qikiqtarjuaq Island in summer 2024 and spring 2025. In addition, we plan to collect water samples at approximately 20 stations during a two-week ship expedition in summer 2024, and small ice cores (9 cm diameter) and water samples on sea ice in late spring in 2025 in the same area.

During our field sampling we also measure light, temperature and salinity of the water column with small sensors to describe the water conditions. We also hope to deploy a small underwater camera to take pictures from the sea floor at some stations. We do not leave anything on site after our sampling. For the collection of soft-shell clams within our program, we hope to hire the local diving team. For the proposed ice sampling in spring 2025, we are also hoping to hire local support to guide us to the selected sampling locations near Qikiqtarjuaq Island. We hope that the Nattivik HTO would be willing to set up a contract agreement with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to facilitate these hirings.

Results of our research project are planned to be shared regularly in the Baseline Program newsletter and with the HTO during in-person visits of the Qikiqtarjuaq community throughout the program.

In closing, I would like to formally request written HTO support for our proposed research in summer 2024 and spring 2025. Please don't hesitate to contact me should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,

Lisa Matthes

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