

## Nicole Issakiark

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**From:** Ghazal, Maha (DFO/MPO) <Maha.Ghazal@dfo-mpo.gc.ca>  
**Sent:** January 15, 2025 1:36 PM  
**To:** Nicole Issakiark; Shawna Mullins; Kangiqliniq HTO; Mona Okalik  
**Cc:** Marcoux, Marianne (she / elle) (DFO/MPO)  
**Subject:** Western Hudson Bay Aerial Survey  
**Attachments:** 2025 WHB beluga Survey\_Letter.docx

Dear Co-management partners,

I am a biologist with Fisheries and Oceans Canada. I wanted to reach out about our proposal to survey for Western Hudson Bay Beluga in August 2025. A request for support is attached to this email which includes a map of the proposed survey area. The area is based off of the 2015 survey, but we are seeking your feedback to refine the details of the survey.

The plan is to survey all these areas with two twin otter airplanes in August 2025. We would welcome community members to join the survey. Details about this will be provided in the near future, but please reach out to me if you know of people that may be interested in joining the survey.

I would appreciate it if your HTO/As could consider the letter and sign if you support the upcoming survey. I would be happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have through email at maha.ghazal@dfo-mpo.gc.ca, or my phone number is 204-588-8174. We are still in the process of securing funding for this large survey, and this letter would be used to help secure that funding.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or would like to highlight any areas that may be missing in the attached map.

I wish you all a healthy and happy holiday season.  
Thank you. Qujannamiik.  
Maha

cc. Marianne Marcoux, Research Scientist, marianne.marcoux@dfo-mpo.gc.ca, 204-228-8042

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Maha Ghazal (she/her)  
Biologist  
Arctic and Aquatic Research Division  
Fisheries and Oceans Canada  
501 University Crescent, Winnipeg, MB, R3T 2N6  
Government of Canada  
P: 204-588-8174



Fisheries and Oceans  
Canada

Pêches et Océans  
Canada

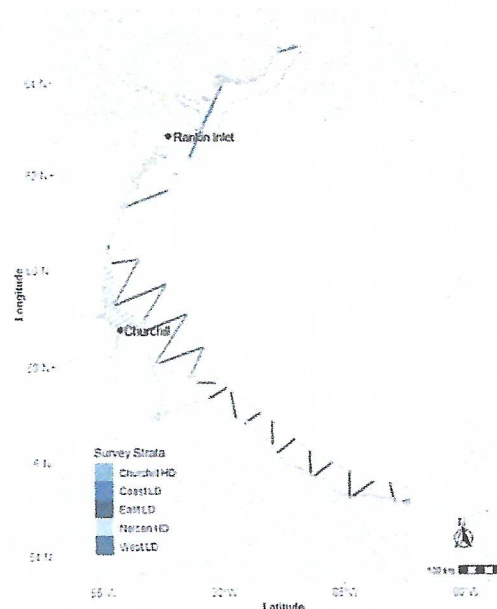
January 14, 2025

Dear Hunters and Trappers Organization board members,

An aerial survey is planned for Western Hudson Bay (WHB) in the summer of 2025 to update the abundance estimate for WHB beluga population. The survey will use a combination of aerial photography in estuaries, where the highest densities of animals are expected, and visual surveys, in areas where lower densities of beluga are expected. We will hire observers to assist with the survey from the adjacent communities and are requesting recommendations for staff of people who are interested. All equipment and training needed for the survey will be provided by Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

The WHB beluga population has been studied through aerial survey and satellite tracking in the 1980's, early 2000's and most recently in 2015. Data collected suggest that the population has been relatively stable. However, recent changes such as increased shipping traffic and potentially increased hunt pressure warrant an update to the abundance estimate for this population as the last survey was conducted ten years ago. The survey will be designed to cover the summer range of belugas in western and southern Hudson Bay following past survey efforts (2004 and 2015), and beluga satellite tracking data.

Surveys will include a crew of four visual observers as well as one camera operator, and will be flown in two Twin Otter planes fitted with four bubble windows and a camera port. Surveys will be conducted at an altitude of 305 m for visual portions and 610 m for photographic portions. Both planes will be based out of Churchill for the duration of the survey.



Please indicate if you support the survey below:

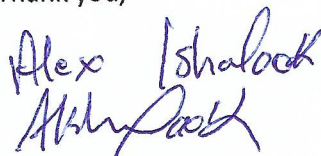



**Support**

**Do not support**

Thank you,

Marianne Marcoux, Research Scientist

Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Moved by Grabe  
Sec by Mikito K  
All in Favor.

MOTION=2025-01-002.





Maha Ghazal  
Biologist  
Arctic and Aquatic Research Division  
Fisheries and Oceans Canada  
501 University Crescent  
Winnipeg , Manitoba  
R3T 2N6

Dear Maha Ghazal,

**Re: Support for Aerial Survey of Western Hudson Bay Beluga in August 2025**

On behalf of the Arviat Hunters and Trappers Organization (HTO), I am writing to express our full support for the proposed aerial survey of the Western Hudson Bay beluga population, scheduled for August 2025. This initiative represents an important step toward better understanding and conserving the beluga whale population, which holds significant cultural, environmental, and subsistence value for our community.

The Arviat HTO has a long history of supporting research and conservation efforts that benefit both the local community and the broader ecosystem. As stewards of the land and sea, we have an enduring interest in protecting the wildlife that sustains us. The beluga whale is an integral part of our marine ecosystem, and its health directly impacts our way of life.

We believe that the proposed survey will provide valuable data that will contribute to informed decision-making on the management and conservation of beluga whales in Western Hudson Bay. The involvement of the Arviat HTO in this project is critical, as our members possess unique knowledge of the local environment and the migratory patterns of beluga whales in this region. Furthermore, we are eager to ensure that the survey is conducted in a manner that respects our traditional knowledge, cultural values, and the needs of our community.

We look forward to working collaboratively with your team to make this survey a success. We are confident that the data gathered will not only aid in the conservation of beluga whales but also foster a greater understanding of the ecological health of Western Hudson Bay.

If you require any further information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thank you for considering our support, and we look forward to contributing to this important initiative.

Sincerely,

Alex Ishalook

Arviat Hunters and Trappers Organization