



**NIRB File No.: 25YN048**  
Commission File No.: 150778

July 2, 2025

Paloma Carvalho  
Fisheries and Oceans Canada  
501 University Crescent  
Winnipeg, MB  
R3T 2N6

Sent via email: [paloma.calabriacarvalho@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:paloma.calabriacarvalho@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

**Re: Notice of Screening for Fisheries and Oceans Canada’s “Coastal Invertebrates Sampling around Belcher Islands” project proposal**

Dear Paloma Carvalho:

On May 16, 2025, the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) received a referral to screen Fisheries and Oceans Canada’s “Coastal Invertebrates Sampling around Belcher Islands, Qikiqtait” project proposal from the Nunavut Planning Commission (Commission), which noted that the project proposal is outside the area of an applicable regional land use plan. On June 27, 2025, the NIRB received the complete application from the Proponent.

Pursuant to Article 12, Sections 12.4.1 and 12.4.4 of the *Agreement between the Inuit of the Nunavut Settlement Area and Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada (Nunavut Agreement)* and s. 87 of the *Nunavut Planning and Project Assessment Act*, S.C. 2013, c. 14, s. 2 (*NuPPAA*), the NIRB has commenced screening this project proposal and has assigned it file number **25YN048** - please reference this file number in all future related correspondence.

#### PROJECT OVERVIEW

***Project Scope:***

All documents received and pertaining to this project proposal can be accessed from the NIRB’s online public registry at [www.nirb.ca/project/126193](http://www.nirb.ca/project/126193).

<b>Project:</b>	Coastal Invertebrates Sampling around Belcher Islands, Qikiqtait
<b>Location:</b>	Qikiqtani region, around Belcher Islands near Sanikiluaq

<b>Summary of Project Description:</b>	Conduct coastal sampling in collaboration with the Sanikiluaq community, the Arctic Eider Society and the Hunters and Trappers Association (HTA) to identify sea-ice algae reliance of benthic species and to examine temporal and special differences in genetic diversity, carbon source use and trophic position of each species
<b>Project Proposed Timeline:</b>	June 2025 to November 2028, during the open-water season (late spring to early fall)

According to the project proposal, the scope of the project includes the following undertakings, works or activities:

- Collect zooplankton samples using zooplankton tows/nets;
- Collect benthic invertebrates (urchins, scallops, sea cucumbers and sea urchins) using a community benthic dredge;
- Collect temperature, depth and salinity at each site using a CTD instrument;
- Use of HTA community boat to access sampling sites;
- Refuel community boat as needed; and,
- Use of local accommodations and facilities.

### ***Inclusion or Exclusion of Scoping List***

At this time, the NIRB has identified no additional works or activities in relation to the project proposal. As a result, the NIRB will proceed with screening the project based on the scope as described above.

## REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

All documents received can be accessed from the NIRB's online public registry at [www.nirb.ca/project/126193](http://www.nirb.ca/project/126193) and include:

- *Commission Conformity Determination*
- *Commission Application*
- *NIRB Online Application in English*
- *Non-technical Summary in English and Inuktitut*
- *Letter of Support from the Sanikiluaq Hunters and Trappers Association*

The NIRB will copy you on screening process related correspondence and upload related documents to the NIRB's online registry for public access. The NIRB may request additional information at any time during the process.

The NIRB is copying parties and municipalities potentially affected by Fisheries and Oceans Canada project proposal with this letter, and we invite interested parties to comment directly to the NIRB by **July 14, 2025**.

The NIRB would like parties to provide comments regarding:

- Whether the project proposal is likely to arouse significant public concern; and if so, why;
- Whether the project proposal is likely to cause significant adverse eco-systemic or socio-economic effects; and if so, why;
- Whether the project proposal is likely to cause significant adverse impacts on wildlife habitat or Inuit harvest activities; and if so, why;
- Whether the project proposal is of a type where the potential adverse effects are highly predictable and mitigable with known technology, (and providing any recommended mitigation measures); and
- Any matter of importance to the Party related to the project proposal.

Please note that *proposed* project-specific terms and conditions, should the project proceed, have been attached for consideration and comment ([Appendix A](#)).

#### CONTACT INFORMATION

Please send your comments to the NIRB via email at [info@nirb.ca](mailto:info@nirb.ca), via fax at (867) 983-2594 or via the individual project dashboard for this assessment on the NIRB's online public registry at [www.nirb.ca/project/126193](http://www.nirb.ca/project/126193).

If you have any questions or require clarification, feel free to contact the undersigned at 867-983-4607 or [vnayak@nirb.ca](mailto:vnayak@nirb.ca).

Sincerely,



Varun Nayak  
Monitoring Officer  
Nunavut Impact Review Board

Attachments: Appendix A: *Proposed* Project Specific Terms and Conditions

Enclosures (4): Public Notice of Screening (English, and Inuktitut)  
Comment Forms (English, and Inuktitut)

cc: Distribution List  
Sanikiluaq Hunters and Trappers Association  
Arctic Eider Society  
Jared Ottenhof, Qikiqtani Inuit Association  
Chris Spencer, Qikiqtani Inuit Association  
Joel Fortier, Qikiqtani Inuit Association  
Justin Buller, Government of Nunavut  
Dianne Lapierre, Government of Nunavut  
Sean Joseph, Government of Nunavut  
Mosha Cote, Nunavut Research Institute  
Adrian Paradis, Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency  
Melissa Alexander, Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency

José Audet-Lecouffe, Fisheries and Oceans Canada

## **Appendix A: Proposed Project Specific Terms and Conditions**

The following is a list of project-specific terms and conditions which, should the project proceed, may be recommended to be attached to any approval.

### **General**

1. Fisheries and Oceans Canada (the Proponent) shall maintain a copy of the Project Terms and Conditions at the site of operation at all times and make it accessible to enforcement officers upon request.
2. The Proponent shall operate in accordance with all commitments stated in correspondence provided to the Nunavut Planning Commission (NPC File No.: 150778), and the NIRB (Online Application Form, June 4, 2025; June 27, 2025). This information should be accessible to enforcement officers upon request.
3. The Proponent shall operate the site in accordance with all applicable Acts, Regulations and Guidelines.
4. The Proponent shall ensure that it meets the standards and/or limits as set out in the authorizing agencies' permits or licences as required for this project.
5. The Proponent shall ensure that all personnel, staff and contractors are adequately trained prior to commencement of all project activities, and shall be made aware of all operational plans, management plans, guidelines and Proponent commitments relating to the project.

### **Water courses/Water bodies (including fresh and marine waters)**

6. The Proponent shall ensure that water extraction from any fish-bearing waterbody is done with appropriate care and caution.
7. The Proponent shall not deposit, nor permit the deposit of any fuel, chemicals, wastes (including wastewater) or sediment into any water body. The Proponent should have in place an Emergency Spill Response Plan that is approved by the appropriate authorizing agency(ies).

### **Waste Management**

8. The Proponent shall manage all hazardous and non-hazardous waste including food, domestic wastes, debris and petroleum-based chemicals (e.g., greases, gasoline, glycol-based antifreeze) in such a manner to avoid release into the environment and access to wildlife at all times until disposed of appropriately or at an approved facility.
9. The Proponent shall dispose of all combustible wastes as required by the appropriate authorizing agencies. All non-combustible wastes from the project site shall be removed to an approved facility for disposal.

### **Fuel and Chemical Storage**

10. The Proponent shall ensure that re-fuelling of all equipment occurs a minimum distance away from the high-water mark of any water body as required by the appropriate authorizing agencies.

11. The Proponent shall ensure that wildlife deterrent systems are utilized at the time of a spill incident in order to avoid wildlife (terrestrial or marine) and migratory birds from being contaminated.
12. The Proponent shall ensure that all spills of fuel or other deleterious materials of 100 litres or more must be reported immediately to the 24-hour Spill Line at (867) 920-8130.

### **Air Quality**

13. The Proponent shall eliminate unnecessary idling to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as much as possible.

### **Wildlife – General**

14. The Proponent shall not substantially alter or damage or destroy any wildlife habitat in conducting this operation unless otherwise authorized by the appropriate authorizing agencies.
15. The Proponent shall not chase, weary, harass or molest wildlife. This includes persistently circling, chasing, hovering over, pursuing or in any other way harass wildlife, or disturbing large groups of animals.
16. The Proponent shall not hunt or fish, unless proper Nunavut authorizations have been acquired.

### **Migratory Birds and Raptors Disturbance**

17. The Proponent shall carry out all phases of the project in a manner that protects migratory birds and avoids harming, killing or disturbing migratory birds or destroying, disturbing or taking their nests or eggs. In this regard, the Proponent shall take into account Environment and Climate Change Canada's *Avoidance Guidelines*. The Proponent's actions in applying the *Avoidance Guidelines* shall be in compliance with the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994* and with the *Species at Risk Act*.
18. The Proponent shall not disturb or destroy the nests or eggs of any birds. If active nests of any birds are discovered or located (i.e., with eggs or young), the Proponent shall avoid these areas until nesting is complete and the young have naturally left the vicinity of the nest by establishing a protection buffer zone<sup>1</sup> appropriate for the species and the surrounding habitat.
19. The Proponent shall avoid the seaward site of seabird colonies and areas used by flocks of migrating waterfowl, a minimum distance away on the recommendation of the appropriate authorizing agencies.
20. The Proponent shall not pursue seabirds or waterbirds swimming on the water surface and shall avoid concentrations of these birds if encountered on the water.

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<sup>1</sup> Recommended setback distances to define buffer zones have been established by Environment and Climate Change Canada for different bird groups nesting in tundra habitat and can be found at [www.ec.gc.ca/paom-itmb](http://www.ec.gc.ca/paom-itmb).

## **Land Use and Restoration of Disturbed Areas**

21. The Proponent shall ensure that the land use area is kept clean and tidy at all times.
22. The Proponent shall remove all garbage, fuel and equipment at the end of each field season and/or upon completion of work and/or upon abandonment.

## **Marine-Based Activities**

23. The Proponent shall ensure that noise be kept to a minimum and shall refrain from making sharp or loud noises, blowing horns or whistles and shall maintain constant engine noise levels.
24. The Proponent shall not attempt to intersect or interfere with the movements of marine mammals. This includes ensuring that there are no wake zones within 250 metres and a minimum of 100 metre no go zone around marine mammals. Strategic positioning of vessels ahead of the path being traveled by mobile mammals and waiting for the mammals to pass is also prohibited.
25. When marine mammals appear to be trapped or disturbed by vessel movements, the Proponent shall implement appropriate measures to mitigate disturbance, including stoppage of movement until wildlife have moved away from the immediate area.
26. The Proponent shall maintain a distance of 100 metres if a Polar Bear is encountered on land or ice while conducting activities from a zodiac or other small craft; all interaction with Polar Bears should be avoided if possible.
27. The Proponent shall maintain a distance of 500 metres of a walrus haul out while conducting activities from a zodiac or other small craft.
28. The Proponent shall suspend all project activities should any dead fish or wildlife (both marine and terrestrial), or any injured wildlife be observed during any works or activities in and around the marine waters. Activities may only be resumed on the recommendation of the authorizing agencies.
29. The Proponent shall report all incidents, injuries or sightings of marine mammals to the appropriate authorizing agencies.
30. The Proponent shall implement measures designed to minimize disturbance to seabed sediments and benthic communities and marine wildlife when carrying out project activities within the marine environment.

## **Other**

31. The Proponent shall ensure that project activities do not interfere with Inuit wildlife harvesting or traditional land use activities.
32. The Proponent should, to the extent possible, hire local people and access local services where possible.