



Pangnirtung Hunters and Trappers Organization
PO Box 2
Pangnirtung, Nunavut X0A 0R0

29 January 2025

Subject: 2025 Cumberland Sound bowhead research proposal

Dear Pangnirtung Hunters and Trappers Organization,

We are requesting support to continue the bowhead whale biopsy collection and drone photography in Cumberland Sound in 2025 and in addition, we would like to tag bowhead whales in 2025. The purpose of this work is to develop a photo-id catalogue to monitor individual whales, assess body condition and age-structure, to estimate abundance using mark-recapture methods, to evaluate foraging behaviour of whales from satellite tags, and to develop correction factors for bowhead surveys.

We would also like to request support to equip bowheads with short-term (24 hrs), non-invasive tags that record underwater movement in three-dimensions, if we secure funding. This research would build upon past work (with Sarah Fortune) aimed at understanding when and where whales feed and how much food they consume. Only adult and juvenile whales (>1 year old) will be approached for tagging.

Additionally, we'd like to collect ocean measurements to better understand food quality, quantity, and location within Cumberland Sound. To do this, we'd like to use: 1) nets to sample their food; 2) fish-finders to see at what depths they are located and where; 3) underwater camera to collect images of food at different depths. This information will be used to understand how climate change is affecting bowhead food.

Just like in previous years, with the approval of the HTO, we would like to see this work conducted by local community members, led by Ricky Kilabuk.

Please complete the bottom portion of this letter to show whether or not the HTO supports the proposed work. The completed letter can be returned by email to Cortney.Watt@dfo-mpo.gc.ca or Sarah.Fortune@dal.ca. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Cortney Watt
Research Scientist
Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Sarah Fortune
Professor
Dalhousie University



29 Jan 2025

Pangnirtung Hunters and Trappers Organization
PO Box 2
Pangnirtung, Nunavut
XOA 0R0

Subject: 2025 Cumberland Sound killer whale research program

Dear Pangnirtung Hunters and Trappers Organization,

We are requesting support for three research projects on killer whales in Pangnirtung in summer 2025.

- 1. We would like to continue collection of photographs, video, biopsies, and satellite tagging of killer whales that visit Cumberland Sound in 2025. This work has been led by Ricky Kilabuk and the biopsies and satellite tags are deployed using a crossbow. Photographs and videos will be collected with drones.
2. A behavioural study of the impact of killer whales on beluga whales. This study would involve passively monitoring killer whales with recorders in the water. These recorders are listening devices and emit no noise. There are two options, recorders could be deployed and left in the water in strategic locations decided in partnership with the HTO. Alternatively, opportunistic recordings in the water could be collected while boating and observing behaviour. We would be interested in hiring someone from the community who would be interested in observing behaviour and recording the vocalizations.

Please complete your response below to show whether or not the HTO supports these killer whale research programs and feel free to call me if you have any questions or concerns at 204-451-0087. The completed response can be returned to me by email at Cortney.Watt@dfo-mpo.gc.ca.

Sincerely,

Cortney Watt
Research Scientist
Fisheries and Oceans Canada

We, the Hunters and Trappers Organization of Pangnirtung:

[checked] support the proposal hire Ricky Kilabuk to biopsy, tag, photograph, and video killer whales in Cumberland Sound in 2025.

[unchecked] do not support the proposal hire Ricky Kilabuk biopsy, tag, photograph, and video killer whales in Cumberland Sound in 2025.



We, the Hunters and Trappers Organization of Pangnirtung:

_____ **support** the proposal to tag, biopsy and collect drone photographs from bowhead whales in 2025.

_____ **do not support** the proposal to tag, biopsy and collect drone photographs from bowhead whales in 2025.

_____ **support** the proposal to record underwater noise in 2025.

do not support the proposal to record underwater noise in 2025.

MARK KILABUK
Print Name

Mkt
Signature

Date



We, the Hunters and Trappers Organization of Pangnirtung:

_____ **support** the proposal to conduct a behavioural study of killer whales in 2025 which would involve collecting behavioural observations and recording vocalizations with recorders that will be deployed in locations decided with the HTO (**left in the water**).

✓
_____ **support** the proposal to conduct a behavioural study of killer whales in 2025 which would involve collecting behavioural observations and recording vocalizations with recorders only from a boat (**not left in the water**).

_____ **do not support** the proposal to conduct a behavioural study of killer whales in 2025.

MARK KILBICK
Print Name

Mark Kilbick
Signature

12 Feb 2025
Date



29 Jan 2025

Pangnirtung Hunters and Trappers Organization
PO Box 2
Pangnirtung, Nunavut
X0A 0R0

Subject: 2025 Cumberland Sound whale research program

Dear Pangnirtung Hunters and Trappers Organization,

We are requesting support for three research projects on whales in Pangnirtung in summer 2025.

1. Since August 2017, Ricky Kilabuk has been collecting drone photographs of beluga whales in Clearwater Fiord to add to an ongoing photographic-identification catalogue. We would like to continue this work in summer 2025 and also have Ricky deploy an environmental camera on shore in Clearwater Fiord to evaluate whale movement in and out of Clearwater Fiord.
2. The community of Pangnirtung has expressed interest in collecting biopsies from the other beluga population that visits Cumberland Sound, and satellite tagging these whales to see how far they travel outside of Cumberland Sound. This year there will hopefully also be a narwhal and beluga survey in Cumberland Sound. In this case, tag data is needed to correct the surface abundance counts for whales that are diving too deep to be seen. We would like to equip beluga, and narwhal if the opportunity arises, with remotely attached tags using a crossbow. For beluga we particularly need these correction factors for when they are in Clearwater Fiord, and as such we are requesting permission to tag the beluga preferably before they enter Clearwater Fiord or shortly after entering in the month of July. We would contract Ricky Kilabuk and/or other community members to collect biopsy samples and remotely deploy, using a crossbow, satellite linked tags on the whales. Ricky has been successful in remotely deploying these tags and collecting biopsies for two beluga whales, one in 2021 and one in 2022.

Please complete your response below to show whether or not the HTO supports these whale research programs and feel free to call me if you have any questions or concerns at 431-277-3617. The completed response can be returned to me by email at Cortney.Watt@dfo-mpo.gc.ca.

Sincerely,

Cortney Watt
Research Scientist
Fisheries and Oceans Canada

We, the Hunters and Trappers Organization of Pangnirtung:

support the proposal hire Ricky Kilabuk to collect drone photographs of beluga whales and put out an on-shore camera in 2025.



_____ **do not support** the proposal hire Ricky Kilabuk to collect drone photographs of beluga whales and put out an on-shore camera in 2025.

We, the Hunters and Trappers Organization of Pangnirtung:

_____ **support** the proposal to collect biopsy samples and remotely tag beluga whales and narwhals in 2025.

_____ **do not support** the proposal to collect biopsy samples and remotely tag beluga whales and narwhals in 2025.

MARK KILABUK
Print Name

Mark Kilabuk
Signature

12 FEB 2025
Date



Pangnirtung Hunters and Trappers Organization
PO Box 2
Pangnirtung, Nunavut X0A 0R0

6 Feb 2025

Subject: 2025 Cumberland Sound bowhead research proposal

Dear Pangnirtung Hunters and Trappers Organization,

We are requesting support to continue the bowhead whale biopsy collection and drone photography in Cumberland Sound in 2025 and in addition, we would like to tag bowhead whales in 2025. The purpose of this work is to develop a photo-id catalogue to monitor individual whales, assess body condition and age-structure, to estimate abundance using mark-recapture methods, to evaluate foraging behaviour of whales from satellite tags, and to develop correction factors for bowhead surveys.

We would also like to request support to equip bowheads with short-term (24 hrs), non-invasive tags that record underwater movement in three-dimensions, if we secure funding. This research would build upon past work (with Sarah Fortune) aimed at understanding when and where whales feed and how much food they consume. Only adult and juvenile whales (>1 year old) will be approached for tagging.

Additionally, we'd like to collect ocean measurements to better understand food quality, quantity, and location within Cumberland Sound. To do this, we'd like to use: 1) nets to sample their food (from boat); 2) fish-finders to see at what depths they are located and where (from boat and/or glider); 3) underwater camera to collect images of food at different depths (from boat and/or glider); and 4) record underwater noise (from boat and/or glider). This information will be used to understand how climate change is affecting bowhead food.

Just like in previous years, with the approval of the HTO, we would like to see this work conducted by local community members, led by Ricky Kilabuk.

Please complete the bottom portion of this letter to show whether or not the HTO supports the proposed work. The completed letter can be returned by email to Cortney.Watt@dfo-mpo.gc.ca or Sarah.Fortune@dal.ca. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Cortney Watt
Research Scientist
Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Sarah Fortune
Professor
Dalhousie University



Fisheries and Oceans
Canada

Pêches et Océans
Canada

We, the Hunters and Trappers Organization of Pangnirtung:

support the proposal to tag, biopsy and collect drone photographs from bowhead whales in 2025.

do not support the proposal to tag, biopsy and collect drone photographs from bowhead whales in 2025.

MARK KILABUK
Print Name

Mark Kilabuk
Signature

12 Feb 2025
Date