



23 October 2024

Taloyoak Umarulirigut Association
Taloyoak, Nunavut

Subject: Narwhal research program

Dear Taloyoak Umarulirigut Association,

We are requesting support for a research program on narwhal near the community of Taloyoak from summer 2025-2027. This research aims to better understand the effects of climate change, killer whale predation and shipping activity on narwhal, but would also opportunistically target beluga, killer, and bowhead whales within the research area. We lay out our methods below:

1. We will use hunt samples and newly collected biopsy samples from free-ranging whales to look at diet and hormone levels (for assessing stress and pregnancy). Biopsy samples will be collected with air guns that shoot a dart or drones that drop at dart on the whales, and after they hit the whale they bounce off and can be collected in the water. The dart collects a small piece of skin and blubber. We are interested in having hunters collect the samples while out on the land, and also collecting samples from a field camp that would be set up in summer 2025-2027.
2. Drones will be used to collect video and photographs of whales in their natural environment. These images and videos will be used to assess body condition and behaviour. Again we would be interested in this data being collected by land users who we would offer training and equip with drones for collection of data, while also collecting the images during a field camp set-up in summer 2025-2027.
3. During the field camp we would attempt to collect blow samples with the drone as well. This would involve flying the drone equipped with a dish to collect the blow, at a lower altitude above the whales. This would primarily be led by scientists to start while we determine the methodology, but would hopefully be able to be collected by community members trained in the field camp in future years.
4. Deploying acoustic monitoring devices that record whale calls and ship noise. We would try to deploy a few of these around Taloyoak to evaluate overlap in ship noise and narwhal vocalizations.
5. Tagging narwhal, beluga, and bowhead whales with satellite linked tags using an air rifle, crossbow or drone.

Please complete your response below to show whether or not the HTO supports this whale research program 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



Fisheries and Oceans
Canada

Pêches et Océans
Canada

We, the Taloyoak Umaruliririgut Association:

support the proposal to collect harvest samples from whales hunted in Taloyoak.

do not support the proposal to collect harvest samples from whales hunted in Taloyoak.

support the proposal to collect biopsy samples from whales around Taloyoak.

do not support the proposal to collect biopsy samples from whales around Taloyoak.

support the proposal to collect whale imagery, video and blow from whales around Taloyoak using drones.

do not support the proposal to collect whale imagery, video and blow from whales around Taloyoak using drones.

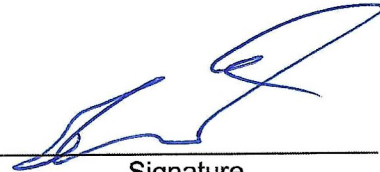
support the proposal to deploy acoustic monitors in areas prescribed by the Taloyoak Umaruliririgut Association near Taloyoak.

do not support the proposal to deploy acoustic monitors in areas prescribed by the Taloyoak Umaruliririgut Association near Taloyoak.

support the proposal to tag narwhal, beluga, and bowhead whales with satellite linked tags using an air rifle, crossbow or drone.

do not support the proposal to tag narwhal, beluga, and bowhead whales with satellite linked tags using an air rifle, crossbow or drone.

Joe Asherak
Print Name


Signature

Oct 29, 2024
Date



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