



SCREENING DECISION REPORT NIRB FILE No.: 25YN066

Commission File No.: 150867

October 7, 2025

Following the Nunavut Impact Review Board's (NIRB or Board) assessment of all materials provided, the NIRB is recommending that a review of Fisheries and Oceans Canada's "Coastal Baseline Inventory: Benthic community composition and food web structure in water adjacent to Qikiqtarjuaq, NU 2025" is not required pursuant to Article 12, Section 12.4.4(a) of the *Agreement between the Inuit of the Nunavut Settlement Area and Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada (Nunavut Agreement)* and s. 92(1)(a) of the *Nunavut Planning and Project Assessment Act*, S.C. 2013, c. 14, s. 2 (*NuPPAA*).

Subject to the Proponent's compliance with the terms and conditions as set out in below, issued in accordance with s. 92(2)(a) of *NuPPAA*, the NIRB is of the view that the project proposal is not likely to cause significant public concerns, and it is unlikely to result in significant adverse environmental and social impacts. The NIRB therefore recommends that the responsible Minister(s) accepts this Screening Decision Report.

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REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The primary objectives of the NIRB are set out in Article 12, Section 12.2.5 of the *Nunavut Agreement* and are confirmed by s. 23 of the *NuPPAA*. The purpose of screening is provided for under Article 12, Section 12.4.1 of the *Nunavut Agreement* and s. 88 of the *NuPPAA*.

As set out under Article 12, Section 12.4.4 of the *Nunavut Agreement* and s. 92(1) of the *NuPPAA*, upon conclusion of the screening process, the Board must provide its written report the Minister indicating one of three options:

- (a) a review of the project is not required;
- (b) a review of the project is required; or
- (c) the project should be modified or abandoned.

PROJECT OVERVIEW & THE NIRB ASSESSMENT PROCESS

On August 7, 2025 the NIRB received a referral to screen Fisheries and Oceans Canada’s “Coastal Baseline Inventory: Benthic community composition and food web structure in water adjacent to Qikiqtarjuaq, NU 2025” project proposal (NIRB File No.: 25YN066) from the Nunavut Planning Commission (Commission), which noted that the project proposal is outside the area of an applicable regional land use plan.

All documents received and pertaining to this project proposal can be accessed from the NIRB’s Public Registry by using any of the following search criteria or www.nirb.ca/project/126224.

- Project Name: Coastal Baseline Inventory: Benthic community composition and food web structure in water adjacent to Qikiqtarjuaq, NU 2025
- NIRB File No.: 25YN066
- NIRB Application No.: 126224

1. Screening Process Timelines

The following key stages were completed for the screening process:

Table 1: NIRB’s Assessment Process

Date	Stage
August 7, 2025	Receipt of project proposal and referral from the Commission.
August 7, 2025	Pursuant to s. 144(1) of the <i>NuPPAA</i> the NIRB requested the Proponent complete an online application to address information required for Screening
August 11, 2025	Receipt of online application from Proponent
August 26, 2025	Request(s) to Proponent for additional information in order to carry out screening pursuant to s. s. 144(1) of the <i>NuPPAA</i>
August 27, 2025	Proponent responded to information request(s) and provided additional information
August 28, 2025	Scoping pursuant to s. 86(1) of the <i>NuPPAA</i>
September 10, 2025	Translated Public engagement and comment request (which included terms and conditions) was issued to the community of Qikiqtarjuaq
September 22, 2025	Receipt of public comments

Date	Stage
October 7, 2025	Issuance of Screening Decision Report

2. Project Scope

Project:	Coastal Baseline Inventory: Benthic community composition and food web structure in water adjacent to Qikiqtarjuaq, NU 2025
Location:	Qikiqtani region, near the community Qikiqtarjuaq
Summary of Project Description:	The Proponent intends to conduct research activities to collect baseline data on benthic habitat and species to determine the current conditions near Qikiqtarjuaq and allow examinations of effects of climate change or human development activities on these species.
Project Proposed Timeline:	August 2025 to October 2026, during the open water season

As required under s. 86(1) of the *NuPPAA*, the Board accepts the scope of the project as set out by Fisheries and Oceans Canada in the proposal. The scope of the project proposal includes the following undertakings, works, or activities:

- Conduct bottom trawling six (6) to eight (8) times per day to capture Greenland Halibut, sculpins and Northern shrimps;
- Use of four (4) traps to capture shrimp and benthic invertebrates on a 12 hourly basis;
- Use of a baited camera system at each sampling station to collect data on the sea floor traps habitat characteristics and record observations on species not caught in the trawl and traps;
- Conduct conductivity, temperature, and depth (CTD) casts to obtain vertical profiles of the water column
- Use of vertical zooplankton net tow to collect sample of local zooplankton communities;
- Collection of tissues samples from all species encountered to determine their diets and for stable isotope analysis (to be analyzed in Winnipeg);
- Use of *Patrick and William* research vessel to conduct the marine research activities;
 - Use of fuel for the marine vessel and onboard power generation;
 - Use of a reverse osmosis desalination system to create potable water;
 - Storage of hazardous materials onboard as needed;
 - Storage of waste on vessel and disposed of at an appropriate facility;
- Hiring of members from Nattivak Hunters and Trappers Association (HTA) to assist in research activities;
- Use of local facilities and accommodations, including the Qikiqtarjuaq Research Station; and,
- Reporting on research results on an annual basis to the HTA and Nunavut communities.

3. Inclusion or Exclusion to 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 proceeded with screening the project based on the scope as described above.

4. Public Comments and Concerns

As outlined in Table 1 above, notices regarding the NIRB's screening of this project proposal were distributed to community organizations as well as to relevant federal and territorial government agencies, Inuit organizations and other parties with a request for interested parties to provide the Board with any comments or concerns 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.

Additionally, proposed project-specific terms and conditions were attached within the notice for parties' consideration and comment.

On or before September 22, 2025, the NIRB received comments from the following interested parties:

Table 2: Comments Received

Commenting Party	NIRB Doc ID No.
Government of Nunavut	357392
Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada	357391
Transport Canada	357396

a. Summary of Comments and Concerns Received

The following provides a summary of the comments and concerns received by the NIRB in relation to "Coastal Baseline Inventory: Benthic community composition and food web structure in water adjacent to Qikiqtarjuaq, NU 2025":

Government of Nunavut

- Has no comments or concerns to raise at this time.

Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada

- Has no comments to offer at this time.

Transport Canada

- Noted that works in navigable waterways may require approval under the *Canadian Navigable Waters Act* (CNWA) and advised the Proponent to review the Minor Works Order to self-assess on whether an approval under the CNWA is required.

5. Comments and Concerns with respect to Inuit Qaujimaningit, Indigenous and Community Knowledge

No concerns or comments were received with respect to Inuit Qaujimaningit, Indigenous and Community Knowledge in relation to this project proposal. However, Inuit Qaujimaningit and Indigenous and community knowledge is incorporated into the terms and conditions recommended below based on information collected from prior and similar projects, data collected and mapped by the Commission, and other available sources.

ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT PROPOSAL IN ACCORDANCE WITH PART 3 OF *NuPPAA*

In determining whether a review of the project is required, the Board considered whether the project proposal had potential to result in significant ecosystemic or socio-economic impacts. Table 3 provides the Board's assessment of the factors that are relevant to the determination of significant impacts with respect to this project proposal. The Board took particular care to consider Inuit Qaujimaningit, Indigenous and Community Knowledge in carrying out its assessment and determination of the significance of impacts.

Table 3: Summary of the Board's Assessment of Factors s. 90 *NuPPAA*

Factor	Comment
The size of the geographic area, including the size of wildlife habitats, likely to be affected by the impacts.	▪ The physical footprint of the proposed project components would be located within the marine environment approximately 20 kilometres from the community of Qikiqtarjuaq and extends outwards to the Nunavut Settlement Area boundary, with marine depths ranging from 200 metres to 1000 metres. ▪ The proposed project would take place within habitats of far-ranging wildlife species such as migratory birds, Species at Risk (such as Polar Bears, spotted wolffish) and marine wildlife (such as marine fish, seals, narwhals, whales, walrus). ▪ The proposed project may potentially affect marine animal calving and spawning areas as well as migratory patterns.
The ecosystemic sensitivity of that area.	▪ No specific areas of ecosystemic sensitivity have been identified by the Proponent within the physical footprint of the proposed project. However, it is noted that the study region would be in the general proximity to the Auyuittuq National Park.
The historical, cultural and archaeological significance of that area.	▪ No specific areas of historical, cultural and archaeological significance have been identified by the Proponent within the physical footprint of the proposed project.
The size of the human and the animal populations likely to be affected by the impacts.	▪ The proposed project takes place within the habitat of several species identified above and as such, may potentially affect marine wildlife, their habitat and their migratory patterns.

Factor	Comment
	As components of the proposed project activities are expected to occur near Qikiqtarjuaq, there is the potential for traditional use activities to be affected.
The nature, magnitude and complexity of the impacts; the probability of the impacts occurring; the frequency and duration of the impacts; and the reversibility or irreversibility of the impacts.	- A zone of influence of up to 20 km from the most potentially-disruptive project activities was selected for the NIRB's assessment. - With adherence to the relevant regulatory requirements and application of the mitigation measures recommended by the NIRB, no significant residual effects are expected to occur.
The cumulative impacts that could result from the impacts of the project combined with those of any other project that has been carried out, is being carried out or is likely to be carried out.	- The mitigation measures recommended by the NIRB have been designed with consideration for the potential for cumulative effects to result from the impacts of the project combined with other past, present and reasonably foreseeable projects. - Although no public concerns were raised during the public commenting period, the NIRB notes that the close proximity of the proposed activities to the community of Qikiqtarjuaq and that the areas may be used by residents for recreational/traditional pursuits and could potentially contribute to public concern.
Any other factor that the Board considers relevant to the assessment of the significance of impacts.	No other relevant factors were identified; however, see below for Regulatory Requirements mandating mitigation and/or reporting.

Regulatory Requirements

The Proponent is also advised that the following legislation may apply to the Project:

Acts and Regulations

1. The *Fisheries Act* (<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/F-14/index.html>).
2. The *Migratory Birds Convention Act* (<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/M-7.01/>), the *Migratory Birds Regulations* (https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/C.R.C.,_c._1035/index.html) and the *Migratory Bird Sanctuary Regulations* (https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/C.R.C.,_c._1036/index.html).
3. The *Species at Risk Act* (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/s-15.3/>). Attached in **Appendix A** is a list of Species at Risk in Nunavut.
4. The *Wildlife Act (Nunavut)* and its corresponding regulations (<http://www.canlii.org/en/nu/laws/stat/snu-2003-c-26/latest/snu-2003-c-26.html>).
5. The *Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act* (<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/t-19.01/>) and the *Transportation of Dangerous Goods Regulations*

(<https://tc.canada.ca/en/corporate-services/acts-regulations/list-regulations/transportation-dangerous-goods-regulations>).

6. The *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* (<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-15.31/>).
7. The *Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act* (<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/A-12/>) and the *Arctic Shipping Safety and Pollution Prevention Regulations* (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2017-286/index.html>).
8. The *Canada Shipping Act, 2001* (<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-10.15/>).
9. The *Marine Liability Act* (<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/M-0.7/>).
10. The *Canadian Navigable Waters Act* (<https://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/N-22/>).

Other Applicable Guidelines

11. The *Guidance Document for Passenger Vessels Operating in the Canadian Arctic* (<https://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/marinesafety/tp-tp13670-menu-2315.htm>).

Views of the Board

In considering the above factors, the Board has identified the following and respectfully provides its views regarding whether or not the proposed project has the potential to result in significant impacts. The NIRB has also proposed terms and conditions that would mitigate the potential adverse impacts identified.

Ecosystem, wildlife habitat and Inuit harvesting activities:

Valued Component	Marine mammals, marine fish and marine habitat, and Species at Risk
Potential effects:	Potential adverse impacts to marine mammals, marine fish and marine habitat (e.g., benthic populations), Species at Risk (such as Polar Bear and Wolffish) and key critical habitat (calving, post-calving areas, and migratory pathways) resulting from increased noise and/or physical disturbance associated with the vessel operation and marine based research activities. Cumulative effects on marine wildlife and marine habitat could occur if multiple vessels are encountered in the same area.
Nature of Impacts:	The potential for impacts is applicable to small areas within Davis Strait, and the probability of impacts occurring is considered to be low, with potential adverse effects anticipated to be low in magnitude, infrequent in occurrence and reversible in nature. However, as noted cumulative effects on marine wildlife and marine habitat could occur if multiple vessels are encountered in the same area.
Mitigating Factors:	The Proponent indicated that they will remain outside of all marine sanctuaries, marine protected areas and any other land identified as protected. Trawling would occur for a minimal amount of time to limit impacts and any Species at Risk (Wolffish) will be released upon capture. Finally, the Proponent committed to not conduct research activities in areas with high concentration of marine mammals.

	The Board notes that measures should be taken to avoid encounters with other vessels, where possible, to minimize adverse impacts to the marine wildlife, particularly in critical habitat, calving areas, and narrow migration corridors. The Board is recommending terms and conditions to ensure the project activities do not negatively affect marine wildlife and habitat.
Proposed Terms and Conditions:	Water courses/Water bodies – 6 Waste Management – 7 and 8 Fuel and Chemical Storage – 9 through 12 Wildlife-General – 14 through 16 Marine-based activities –20 through 29

Valued Component	Migratory and non-migratory birds, and Species at Risk
Potential effects:	Potential adverse effects to migratory and non-migratory birds, Species at Risk, and their migratory routes from noise and visual disturbance associated with the vessel operation and marine based research activities.
Nature of Impacts:	The potential for impact(s) is considered to be limited due to the temporary and infrequent activities within sensitive wildlife temporal periods. Project activities, such as transport of research personnel to sampling sites and the research activities could potentially disturb migratory birds with home range sizes habituated to the project area. However, any resulting impacts would be expected to be reversible and temporary only.
Mitigating Factors:	The Board is recommending terms and conditions to minimize and mitigate potential adverse impacts to migratory birds, non-migratory birds and Species at Risk.
Proposed Terms and Conditions:	Waste Management – 7 Fuel and Chemical Storage – 11 Wildlife-General – 14 and 15 Migratory Birds and Raptors Disturbance – 17 through 19 Marine-based Activities – 21 and 22

Valued Component	Air quality
Potential effects:	Potential adverse effects to air quality from emissions during the operations of the vessel to conduct research activities.
Nature of Impacts:	The potential for impacts is considered to be limited due to infrequent and temporary activities and any resulting impacts would be expected to be reversible.
Mitigating Factors:	The Board is recommending a term and condition to mitigate the potential project impacts to air quality.
Proposed Terms and Conditions:	Air Quality – 13

Valued Component	Public and traditional activities
Potential effects:	No specific concerns or impacts to public and traditional activities in the area have been identified; however, potential adverse impacts to the public and traditional activities may result from proposed vessel movement and research activities.
Nature of Impacts:	Due to the proposed project's proximity to the community of Qikiqtarjuaq there is potential for adverse impacts to result from proposed project components.
Mitigating Factors:	The Proponent indicated that it would consult with the Hunters and Trappers Organization to ensure that the research activities did not disturb specific organized hunts and areas that may be used by community members while work is being conducted. The Proponent also committed to leaving any areas where community members might be hunting in. The Board is recommending terms and conditions to ensure project activities are informed by available Inuit Qaujimaningit and that project activities do not interfere with Inuit wildlife harvesting or traditional land use activities. Further, it is recommended that the Proponent engage with local residents, if possible and practical, regarding planned activities in the area.
Proposed Terms and Conditions:	Waste Management – 7 Wildlife-General – 14 Public Consultation – 30 Inuit Harvesting and Traditional Land Use – 31

Socio-economic effects on northerners:

Valued Component	Economic impact, local business, employment and hiring
Potential effects:	Potential positive impacts to the local community resulting from proposed research activities as the program is hiring community members through the Nattivak Hunters and Trappers Association (HTA) to assist as research crew with the sample collection. There is potential for non-locals workers purchasing arts and crafts from local artisans.
Nature of Impacts:	Potential positive economic benefits as the research activities would involve community members with the sampling collection but short-term for the duration of activities.
Mitigating Factors:	The Board is recommending terms and conditions to ensure the Proponent continues to inform the community of the proposed research activities and findings, as well as provide community members with information to ensure a successful local hiring opportunity.
Proposed Terms and Conditions:	Public Consultation – 30 Local Hiring and Services– 32

Significant public concern:

Valued Component	Public concern
Potential effects:	No significant public concern was expressed during the public commenting period for this file; however, there may be potential adverse effects to Inuit harvesting and marine mammals as the research activities may interfere with these activities.
Nature of Impacts:	Each of the potential concerns were discussed in previous sections and the potential for impacts is considered to be minimal as long as the Proponent follow the recommended terms and conditions.
Mitigating Factors:	The Board is recommending terms and conditions to ensure that to the extent possible, the Proponent hire locally and access local services where possible, and to ensure planned activities in the area utilizes available Inuit Qaujimaningit.
Proposed Terms and Conditions:	Public Consultation – 30 Inuit Harvesting and Traditional Land Use – 31

Technological innovations for which the effects are unknown:

- No specific issues have been identified associated with this project proposal.

Administrative Conditions:

To encourage compliance with applicable regulatory requirements and assist the Board and responsible authorities with compliance and effects monitoring for project activities, the following project-specific terms and conditions have been recommended: 1-5.

In considering the above factors and subject to the Proponent's compliance with regulatory requirements and the terms and conditions necessary to mitigate against the potential adverse environmental and social effects, the Board is of the view that the proposed project is unlikely to cause significant public concern and its adverse ecosystemic and socioeconomic impacts are unlikely to be significant, or are highly predictable and can be adequately mitigated by known technologies.

RECOMMENDED PROJECT-SPECIFIC TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The Board is recommending the following specific terms and conditions to apply in respect of the project:

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.: 150867), and the NIRB (Online Application Form, August 18, 2025; Revised Application Form, August 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 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

7. 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.
8. The Proponent shall dispose of all wastes as required by the appropriate authorizing agencies if not removed to an approved facility for disposal.

Fuel and Chemical Storage

9. The Proponent shall ensure that re-fuelling of all equipment occurs in accordance with marine emission and air pollution standards (International Maritime Organization and International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code) and as required by the appropriate authorizing agencies.
10. The Proponent shall follow the authorizing agencies' direction for management and removal of hazardous materials and wastes (e.g., contaminated soils, sediment and waste oil).
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 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.
19. 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.

Marine-Based Activities

20. The Proponent shall, where practicable, coordinate with other vessels to minimize simultaneous vessel traffic in critical wildlife habitat areas allowing the wildlife to continue to use the habitat undisturbed (e.g. Navy Board Inlet, Lancaster Sound, Milne Inlet, Bellot Strait).
21. 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.
22. The Proponent shall not visit cliffs used by nesting and breeding birds during the late afternoon or early evening hours during the months of August and September.
23. 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.
24. 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.
25. 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.
26. The Proponent shall maintain a distance of 500 metres of a walrus haul out while conducting activities from a zodiac or other small craft.

27. 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.
28. The Proponent shall report all incidents, injuries or sightings of marine mammals to the appropriate authorizing agencies.
29. 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

30. The Proponent should engage with local residents regarding planned activities in the area and should solicit available Inuit Qaujimaningit and information regarding current recreational and traditional usage of the project area which may inform project activities. Posting of translated public notices and direct engagement with potentially interested groups and individuals prior to undertaking project activities is strongly encouraged.
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.

OTHER NIRB CONCERNS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to the project-specific terms and conditions, the Board is recommending the following:

Change in Project Scope

1. Responsible authorities or Proponent shall notify the Nunavut Planning Commission and/or Parks Canada as appropriate, and the NIRB of any changes in operating plans or conditions, including phase advancement, associated with this project prior to any such change.

Copy of licences, etc. to the Board and Commission

2. The NIRB respectfully requests that responsible authorities submit a copy of each licence, permit or other authorization issued for the Project to the NIRB to assist in enabling possible project monitoring that may be required. Please forward a copy of the licences, permits and/or other authorizations to the NIRB directly at info@nirb.ca or upload a copy to the NIRB's online registry at www.nirb.ca.

Use of Inuit Qaujimaningit

3. The Proponent is encouraged to work with local communities and knowledge holders to inform project design, to carry out the project, and to confirm or validate the perspectives represented in publications, and reports produced as part of the project. Care should be taken to ensure that Inuit Qaujimaningit and local knowledge collected for the project is used with permission and is accurately represented.

Bear and Carnivore Safety

4. The Proponent should review the Government of Nunavut's booklet on "*Bear Safety: Reducing Bear-People Conflicts in Nunavut*" (https://www.gov.nu.ca/sites/default/files/publications/2022-01/bear_safety_-_reducing_bear-people_conflicts_in_nunavut_0.pdf) for information on reducing conflicts with bears. Further information on bear/carnivore detection and deterrent techniques can be found in the "*Safety in Grizzly and Black Bear Country*" pamphlet (https://www.gov.nt.ca/ecc/sites/ecc/files/resources/2025_bear_brochure_en_0.pdf).
5. Information on polar bear and grizzly bear safety resources can be obtained in reviewing the "*Safety in Polar Bear Country*" (https://www.gov.nt.ca/ecc/sites/ecc/files/resources/128-polar_bear_brochure_2024_en_web_0.pdf) or in reviewing Parks Canada's website on bear safety (<https://parks.canada.ca/lhn-nhs/nu/epaveswrecks/securite-safety/ours-bears>). Additional safety resources are available from the *Bear Safety Society* including videos on polar bear and grizzly bear safety in English, Inuktitut, and French.
6. Any problem wildlife or any interaction with carnivores should be reported immediately to the local Government of Nunavut, Department of Environment Conservation Office (Conservation Officer of Iqaluit, phone: 867-975-7783; Pangnirtung, phone: 867-473-8937).

Species at Risk

7. The Proponent review Environment and Climate Change Canada's "Environment Assessment Best Practice Guide for Wildlife at Risk in Canada", available at: http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca/virtual_sara/files/policies/EA%20Best%20Practices%202004.pdf. The guide provides information to the Proponent on what is required when Wildlife at Risk, including *Species at Risk*, are encountered or affected by the project.

Migratory Birds

8. The Proponent review Canadian Wildlife Services' "Key migratory bird terrestrial habitat sites in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut", available at: <http://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/317630/publication.html> and "Key marine habitat sites for migratory birds in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories", available at: <http://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/392824/publication.html>. The guide provides information to the Proponent on key terrestrial and marine habitat areas that are essential to the welfare of various migratory bird species in Canada.
9. For further information on how to protect migratory birds, their nests and eggs when planning or carrying out project activities, consult Environment and Climate Change Canada's Incidental Take web page and the fact sheet "Planning Ahead to Reduce the Risk of Detrimental Effects to Migratory Birds, and their Nests and Eggs" available at: http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2013/ec/CW66-324-2013-eng.pdf.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing constitutes the Board's screening decision with respect to the Fisheries and Oceans Canada's "Coastal Baseline Inventory: Benthic community composition and food web structure in water adjacent to Qikiqtarjuaq, NU 2025. The NIRB remains available for consultation with the Minister regarding this report as necessary.

Dated October 7, 2025 at Iqaluit, NU.



Albert Ehloak, *Acting* Chairperson

Attachments: Appendix A: Species at Risk in Nunavut

APPENDIX A: SPECIES AT RISK IN NUNAVUT

Due to the requirements of Section 79(2) of the *Species at Risk Act*, S.C. 2002, c. 29 (*SARA*), and the potential for project-specific adverse effects on listed wildlife species and its critical habitat, measures should be taken as appropriate to avoid or lessen those effects, and the effects need to be monitored. Project effects could include species disturbance, attraction to operations and destruction of habitat. This section applies to all species listed on Schedule 1 of *SARA*, as listed in the table below, or have been assessed by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), which may be encountered in the project area. This list may not include all species identified as at risk by the Territorial Government. The following points provide clarification on the applicability of the species outlined in the table.

- Schedule 1 is the official legal list of Species at Risk for *SARA*. *SARA* applies to all species on Schedule 1. The term “listed” species refers to species on Schedule 1.
- Schedule 2 and 3 of *SARA* identify species that were designated at risk by the COSEWIC prior to October 1999 and must be reassessed using revised criteria before they can be considered for addition to Schedule 1.
- Some species identified at risk by COSEWIC are “pending” addition to Schedule 1 of *SARA*. These species are under consideration for addition to Schedule 1, subject to further consultation or assessment.

If species at risk are encountered or affected, the primary mitigation measure should be avoidance. The Proponent should avoid contact with or disturbance to each species, its habitat and/or its residence. All direct, indirect, and cumulative effects should be considered. Refer to species status reports and other information on the Species at Risk Registry at <http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca> for information on specific species.

Monitoring should be undertaken by the Proponent to determine the effectiveness of mitigation and/or identify where further mitigation is required. As a minimum, this monitoring should include recording the locations and dates of any observations of Species at Risk, behaviour or actions taken by the animals when project activities were encountered, and any actions taken by the proponent to avoid contact or disturbance to the species, its habitat, and/or its residence. This information should be submitted to the appropriate regulators and organizations with management responsibility for that species, as requested.

For species primarily managed by the Territorial Government, the Territorial Government should be consulted to identify other appropriate mitigation and/or monitoring measures to minimize effects to these species from the project.

Mitigation and monitoring measures must be undertaken in a way that is consistent with applicable recovery strategies and action/management plans.

Schedules of *SARA* are amended on a regular basis, so it is important to check the *SARA* registry (www.sararegistry.gc.ca) to get the current status of a species.

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Terrestrial Species at Risk ¹	COSEWIC Designation	Schedule of SARA	Government Organization with Primary Management Responsibility ²
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Special Concern	Schedule 1	Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC)
Common Nighthawk	Threatened	Schedule 1	ECCC
Eskimo Curlew	Endangered	Schedule 1	ECCC
Harlequin Duck	Special Concern	Schedule 1	ECCC
Harris's Sparrow	Special Concern	Schedule 1	ECCC
Horned Grebe	Special Concern	Schedule 1	ECCC
Ivory Gull	Endangered	Schedule 1	ECCC
Olive-sided Flycatcher	Threatened	Schedule 1	ECCC
Peregrine Falcon	Special Concern	Schedule 1	ECCC
Red Knot Islandica Subspecies	Special Concern	Schedule 1	ECCC
Red-necked Phalarope	Special Concern	Schedule 1	ECCC
Ross's Gull	Threatened	Schedule 1	ECCC
Rusty Blackbird	Special Concern	Schedule 1	ECCC
Short-eared Owl	Special Concern	Schedule 1	ECCC
Porsild's Bryum	Threatened	Schedule 1	Government of Nunavut (GN)
Transverse Lady Beetle	Special Concern	No Schedule	GN
Caribou (Dolphin and Union Population)	Endangered	Schedule 1	GN
Caribou (Barren-ground Population)	Threatened	No Schedule	GN
Caribou (Torngat Mountains Population)	Endangered	No Schedule	GN
Grizzly Bear (Western Population)	Special Concern	Schedule 1	ECCC
Peary Caribou	Endangered	Schedule 1	GN
Polar Bear	Special Concern	Schedule 1	ECCC
Wolverine	Special Concern	Schedule 1	GN
Atlantic Walrus (High Arctic Population)	Special Concern	No Schedule	Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO)
Atlantic Walrus (Central/Low Arctic Population)	Special Concern	No Schedule	DFO
Beluga Whale (Cumberland Sound Population)	Threatened	Schedule 1	DFO
Beluga Whale (Eastern Hudson Bay Population)	Endangered	No Schedule	DFO
Beluga Whale (Eastern High Arctic-Baffin Bay Population)	Special Concern	No Schedule	DFO
Beluga Whale (Western Hudson Bay Population)	Special Concern	No Schedule	DFO
Atlantic Cod (Arctic Lakes Population)	Special Concern	No Schedule	DFO
Fourhorn Sculpin (Freshwater Form)	Data Deficient	Schedule 3	DFO
Lumpfish	Threatened	No Schedule	DFO
Thorny Skate	Special Concern	No Schedule	DFO

¹ The Department of Fisheries and Oceans has responsibility for aquatic species.

² Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) has a national role to play in the conservation and recovery of Species at Risk in Canada, as well as responsibility for management of birds described in the Migratory Birds Convention Act (MBCA). Day-to-day management of terrestrial species not covered in the MBCA is the responsibility of the Territorial Government. Populations that exist in National Parks are also managed under the authority of the Parks Canada Agency.