



NIRB File No.: 25YN040
NIRB Public Registry link:
www.nirb.ca/project/126349
NPC File No.: 151035

March 3, 2026

Brent Young
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
501 University Crescent
Winnipeg MB R3T 2N6

Sent via email: brent.young@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Re: Notice of Screening and Comment Request for Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO)'s "ECWG Bowhead Whale Photo Identification and Biopsy Sampling" project proposal

Dear Brent Young:

The Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) has commenced screening¹ the project proposal.

By copy of this letter, NIRB invites regulators, interested parties, and community members or groups potentially affected by the proposal to view the application and comment directly to the NIRB by March 24, 2026.

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

The application can be viewed on NIRB's online registry www.nirb.ca/project/126349 where a comment form is available, or comments can be also submitted to info@nirb.ca, or by fax.

¹ 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)

Scope of proposal

Location	Qikiqtani region, 100 kilometers Southeast of Clyde River
Objective	The Proponent intends to conduct research on bowhead whales within the Ninginganiq National Wildlife Area. The main objectives of this study are to collect biopsy samples that will be used for estimating population abundance, determining sex, studying diet, estimating age, and assessing pregnancy through hormone analyses. The Project also includes the use of small drones to collect photographic and video data for photo-identification studies, as well as the deployment of a hydrophone (SoundTrap) to record bowhead whale vocalizations during the field program.
Timeline	Operations: July 2026 to September 2026

The scope of the project includes the following undertakings, works or activities:

- Operation of two boats daily to transport personnel and equipment to research sites
- Establishment and use of a temporary camp at an existing camp location at Nuvuttiapik
- Hiring of four locals through the Hunters and Trappers Association in Clyde River to support the researchers
- Use of two (2) drones to be used to take photos and videos of bowhead whales
- Up to four (4) crossbows to collect small skin/blubber tissue samples from bowhead whales
- Use of a hydrophone to record bowhead whales around Isabella Bay for approximately 2 weeks
- Up to approximately 100 bowhead whales may be sampled over a two-week period.
- Use of a generator to power small electronics at camp
- One (1) 12-gauge shotgun to be used for polar bear safety at camp.
- Use of approximately 2,640 liters of gasoline to be used for the boats
- Use of approximately 4 gallons of naphtha to operate camp stoves for meals
- Use of one liter of povidone iodine to clean stainless steel biopsy tips prior to sample collection
- Use of 5-gallon jugs of water will be transported to the site from the Clyde River community when needed
- Waste Management:
 - Greywater to be dispersed on the land at least 50 meters from camp and water sources
 - Non-combustible waste to be stored in garbage bags inside sealed plastic barrels to be packed out and disposed of at the Clyde River municipality dump
 - Used Betadine will be collected and transported back to the Freshwater Institute in Winnipeg and disposed of properly
 - human waste will be stored in sealed bags, packed in a sealed barrel and disposed in the Clyde River facility

Inclusion or Exclusion of Scoping List

The NIRB has identified that the previously assessed activities listed above will be considered in the current assessment especially for potential of cumulative impacts where previous approvals may still be in force.

Questions about the NIRB's work should be directed to the undersigned at femingak@nirb.ca.

Sincerely,



Francis Emingak
Screening Officer
Nunavut Impact Review Board

cc: Distribution List
 Dustin Fredlund, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.
 Carson Gillis, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.
 Jared Ottenhof, Qikiqtani Inuit Association
 Chris Spencer, Qikiqtani Inuit Association
 Conor Goddard, Qikiqtani Inuit Association
 Assol Kubeisinova, Qikiqtani Inuit Association
 Justin Buller, Government of Nunavut
 Dianne Lapierre, Government of Nunavut
 Natalie D'Souza, Government of Nunavut
 Bradley Pirie, Government of Nunavut
 Michele LeBlanc-Havard, Government of Nunavut
 Drikus Gissing, Government of Nunavut
 Jakub Garbarczyk, Government of Nunavut
 Lisa Pirie, Canadian Wildlife Service
 Jose Audet-Lecouffe, Fisheries and Oceans Canada
 Nangmoutaq Hunters and Trappers Organization