



**NIRB File No.: 24YN014**

*Related to NIRB File No.: 16YN009*

*NPC File No.: 150253*

*Related to NPC File No.: 148212, 149299, 149944*

April 15, 2024

Grant Gilchrist  
Environment and Climate Change Canada  
1125 Colonel By Drive  
Ottawa, ON K1S 5B6

*Sent via email: [grant.gilchrist@ec.gc.ca](mailto:grant.gilchrist@ec.gc.ca)*

**Re: Notice of Screening for Environment and Climate Change Canada’s “Marine Habitat Use of Thick-billed Murres” project proposal**

Dear Grant Gilchrist:

On March 1, 2024, the NIRB received a referral to screen Environment and Climate Change Canada’s (ECCC) “Marine Habitat Use of Thick-billed Murres” project proposal from the Nunavut Planning Commission (Commission), with an accompanying positive conformity determination with the North Baffin Regional Land Use Plan. The Commission noted that the previous conformity determination issued on February 25, 2016, for the activities associated with the current proposal continues to apply and has determined that the project proposal is a significant modification to the project because of the inclusion of the use of helicopters and drones as a survey method.

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 section 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. Due to the proposal containing activities that are sufficiently related to previously assessed activities under NIRB file number 16YN009, the NIRB views this project proposal as an amendment to the previously screened project and has assigned this proposal with the new file number **24YN014**. Please reference this file number in all future related correspondence. A summary of the previously screened project activities can be found in [Appendix A](#).

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

### **Project Scope:**

The following table provides a summary of the *original* project as previously screened by the NIRB (File No. 16YN009):

<b>Original Project:</b>	Marine Habitat use of Thick-billed Murres				
<b>Region:</b>	The project as previously approved was located within the Qikiqtani (North Baffin) region.				
<b>Location:</b>	Within the Bylot Island Migratory Bird Sanctuary				
<b>Closest Community:</b>	Pond Inlet	<b>Distance (approximate)</b>	66 kilometres (km)	<b>Direction</b>	Northeast
<b>Summary of Project Description:</b>	The Project as originally screened intended to determine the distribution and abundance patterns of Thick-billed Murres, in order to identify key marine habitats, as well as investigate whether birds breeding at a variety of specific locations within the colony utilize different marine habitat areas, and whether this changes between breeding stages (incubating eggs versus feeding chicks). A complete description of the scope of activities previously approved has been included within <a href="#">Appendix A</a> .				
<b>Original Project Timeline:</b>	August 2016				

The following table provides a summary of the current *amended* project as proposed by ECCC:

<b>Amended Project:</b>	Marine Habitat Use of Thick-billed Murres				
<b>Region:</b>	The project would be located in the same area as previously approved and would be located within the Qikiqtani (North Baffin) region.				
<b>Location:</b>	Within the Bylot Island Migratory Bird Sanctuary				
<b>Closest Community:</b>	Pond Inlet	<b>Distance (approximate)</b>	65 kilometres (km)	<b>Direction</b>	Northeast
<b>Summary of Project Description:</b>	The Proponent intends to amend the scope of previously approved activities to include the use of a helicopter and drones as a survey method.				
<b>Project Proposed Timeline:</b>	July to August 2024				

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

- Use of a helicopter for surveying purposes;
- Refueling of the helicopter at an existing fuel cache on Bylot Island; and

- Use of a drone for surveying purposes.

### ***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/125892](http://www.nirb.ca/project/125892) and include:

- *Commission Conformity Determination*
- *Commission Application*
- *NIRB Application*
- *ECCC Permit*
- *HTO Support Letter*
- *2014 Scientific Permit*
- *2015 Field Season Report*
- *2016 NPC Conformity Determination*
- *2016 NPC Questionnaire*
- *2016 Completed Questionnaire*
- *2016 Cover Ltr Re Questionnaire*
- *2016 Spill Contingency Plan*
- *2020 Application for Approval Without Licence*
- *2020 NPC Conformity Determination*
- *2020 Plain Language Summary in English and Inuktitut*
- *2020 Scientific Permit Application*
- *2020 Spill Contingency Plan*
- *2022 QIA Land Use Permit*
- *2022 Research Permit*
- *2022 ACMC Letter*
- *2022 Spill Contingency Plan*
- *2022 to 2024 Scientific Permit*
- *2023 NPC Conformity Determination*
- *2024 Application for Approval Without License*
- *2024 Plain Language Summary in English and Inuktitut*
- *2024 Scientific Permit*
- *2024 Wildlife Research Application*

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 Environment and Climate Change Canada's project proposal with this letter, and we invite interested parties to comment directly to the NIRB by **May 6, 2024**.

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.

#### 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/125892](http://www.nirb.ca/project/125892).

If you have any questions or require clarification, feel free to contact the undersigned at (867) 983-4622 or [motokiak@nirb.ca](mailto:motokiak@nirb.ca).

Sincerely,



Mia Otokiak  
Impact Assessment Officer  
Nunavut Impact Review Board

Attachments: Appendix A: Previously-Screened Project Proposals

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

cc: Distribution List  
Richard Dwyer, Nunavut Water Board  
Dustin Fredlund, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated  
Carson Gillis, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated  
Jorgan Aitaok, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated  
Jared Ottenhof, Qikiqtani Inuit Association  
Chris Spencer, Qikiqtani Inuit Association  
Conor Goddard, Qikiqtani Inuit Association  
Joel Fortier, Qikiqtani Inuit Association  
Assol Kubeisinova, Qikiqtani Inuit Association  
Justin Buller, Government of Nunavut, Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs  
Dianne Lapierre, Government of Nunavut, Department of Economic Development & Transportation  
Jonas Azonaha, Government of Nunavut, Department of Economic Development & Transportation  
Natalie D'Souza, Government of Nunavut, Department of Environment  
Brad Pirie, Government of Nunavut, Department of Environment  
Drikus Gissing, Government of Nunavut, Department of Environment  
Patrick Graillon, Government of Nunavut, Department of Environment  
Lisa Pirie-Dominix, Canadian Wildlife Services  
General ECCC Inbox  
Marie-Claude Martel, Parks Canada  
Jane Chisholm, Parks Canada

## APPENDIX A: PREVIOUSLY-SCREENED PROJECT PROPOSALS

The original project proposal (NIRB File No.: 16YN009), was received by the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB or Board) from the Nunavut Planning Commission on February 25, 2016. On February 25, 2016, the NIRB received a positive conformity determination from the Nunavut Planning Commission, with an accompanying positive conformity determination with the North Baffin Regional Land Use Plan. The project proposal was screened by the Board in accordance with Part 4, Article 12 of the *Agreement between the Inuit of the Nunavut Settlement Area and Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada (Nunavut Agreement)* and Section 3 of the *Nunavut Planning and Project Assessment Act*, S.C. 2013, c. 14, s. 2 (*NuPPAA*). On April 7, 2016, the NIRB issued a screening decision pursuant to s. 92(2)(a) of the *NuPPAA* to the Minister Responsible for the Nunavut Arctic College, and the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, which indicated that the proposed project could proceed subject to the NIRB's recommended project-specific terms and conditions.

Environment and Climate Change Canada's (Proponent) original "Marine Habitat use of Thick-billed Murres" project was located in the Qikiqtani (North Baffin) region, approximately 66 kilometres (km) northeast from Pond Inlet. The Proponent intended to determine the distribution and abundance patterns of Thick-billed Murres, in order to identify key marine habitats, as well as investigate whether birds breeding at a variety of specific locations within the colony utilize different marine habitat areas, and whether this changes between breeding stages (incubating eggs versus feeding chicks). The program was proposed to take place from July to August 2016.

According to the previously screened project proposal, the scope of the project included the following undertakings, works or activities:

- Use of helicopter for personnel drop off and pickup, including equipment transport;
- Temporary set-up of field camp for accommodation and research activities;
- Research marine habitat of Thick-billed Murres nesting at Cape Graham Moore, Bylot Island;
- Use of 2000 watts generator for electricity;
- Use of 25 litres (L) of gasoline for powering generator, and 4L of fuel for camp stove;
- High temperature incineration of six garbage bags, and transport of non-combustible wastes to Pond Inlet;
- Disposal of grey water and sewage in sumps, and backfilling of sumps to fit the contour of the landscape;
- Use of boats for personnel transport to and from Bylot Island; and
- Retrieval of 1 cubic metre of water through melted snow in shaded areas within 1km of camp.