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Subject: [EXTERNAL] DRDC / Northern Watch Technology Demonstration Project / Annual Report / NIRB File 123875/08DN056 / Supplemental Information
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Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[231207-08DN056-Annual Report Received-Deficiencies Noted-OT7E.pdf](#)
[230315-08DN056-2022 Annual Report-IT9E.pdf](#)
[DOC 20240122 2023 Gascovne Inlet Camp Photos.pdf](#)

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Good morning,

This email is to provide supplemental information to the NIRB regarding the 2022 Annual Report for the Northern Watch Technology Demonstration Project LUP. This information is provided in response to the NIRB's 7 December 2023 deficiency letter. The report and the deficiencies letter are attached for reference.

We appreciate the NIRB's patience while the DRDC consolidated the required information.

The requested information follows:

Comment #1 - No mention of local hires and initiatives; please indicate if there have been any local hires and initiatives during 2023.

1. There were no local hires in 2023. One person was hired to support the camp (cooking service) under a competed government of Canada contract; this was won by an Indigenous small business (not a local business). There were discussions with a local ROV operator to operate an ROV out of the camp, however this work did not go ahead this year.
2. Other logistics support for the camp was coordinated through the Polar Continental Shelf Project in Resolute; this support was not directly hired by the DRDC.

Comment #2 - No further information on wildlife monitoring (i.e., timing of critical life history events observed, all potential impacts to wildlife from project activities, all actions/mitigation measures taken to reduce adverse impacts to wildlife, and an analysis of the effectiveness of mitigation measures); please provide this information.

1. Critical life history events were not recorded for wildlife. The DRDC science team does not include biologists; if NIRB has additional guidance on what to look for and record during wildlife sightings, the DRDC can certainly look at whether it is able to perform the requested additional data collection.
2. The camp team did note that there was more polar bear activity within sight of the camp compared to recent years. A total of 17 days of polar bear sightings were observed. Notably, a mother and cub were observed in the camp area for two days (Aug 2 and 3, 2023). An apparently juvenile bear returned to the camp on Aug 20 and remained for 11 days in the area the mother and cub had been sighted. The camp team guessed this could be the cub, recently parted from the mother, and returning to a site where they had previously visited.

3. With respect to potential impacts to wildlife, there were several occasions where deterrents (e.g., bear bangers, wooden clappers, and use of the Polaris Ranger) were used to distance a polar bear from the immediate camp area. No adverse impacts to the bear were noted.
4. Efforts were taken to reduce wildlife impacts, including:
 - a. Observing wildlife in the area and avoiding those areas where possible;
 - b. Limiting areas where vehicles are driven;
 - c. Carefully handling food and waste to avoid attracting wildlife;
 - d. Following a safety plan for polar bears sighted close to camp;
 - i. The safety plan ceases work, brings people inside bear fence or indoors, confirms the bear fence is operational, and considers potential deterrence measures depending on how close the polar bear approaches; and
 - e. Additional training by camp leads on wildlife interactions, particularly bears, to ensure safe and appropriate plans are in place and reasonable actions are taken for deterrence when necessary.
4. Each year an internal camp report is written by the camp team which presents the wildlife mitigation measures used and describes how they performed. Overall mitigation measures have been reasonably effective and lessons-learned have been incorporated by the camp team into the DRDC's future plans.

Comment #3 - No site photos for the reporting year; please provide site photos for 2023.

1. Photos attached.
2. The DRDC also has a video that their videographer put together. It is a large file size and difficult to transmit by email; if the NIRB is interested, arrangements can be made to upload it to a file sharing service for their access.

Please let me know if this closes out the requirements for this report, or if further information is required.

Kind regards,

Marc M. Bouchard, P. Geo. (Limited)

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