



NIRB File No.: 25YN021

NIRB Public Registry Link: www.nirb.ca/project/126164

NPC File No.: 150687

May 15, 2025

Connor Faulkner
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
501 University Crescent
Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N6
Canada

Sent via email: connor.faulkner@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Re: Notice of Screening for Fisheries and Oceans Canada's "Movement and chemical ecology of fishes in Hudson Bay" Project Proposal

Dear Connor Faulkner:

The Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) received a referral to screen Fisheries and Oceans Canada's "Movement and chemical ecology of fishes in Hudson Bay" project proposal from:

- The Nunavut Planning Commission on April 4, 2025, noting positive conformity.
- The NIRB received a complete application on April 12, 2025, and assigned it file number **25YN021** - please reference this file number in all future related correspondence.

The NIRB has commenced screening the project proposal pursuant to the *Nunavut Agreement* and *Nunavut Planning and Project Assessment Act*¹ and by copy of this letter, **invites interested parties and municipalities potentially affected by the proposal to comment directly to the Nunavut Impact Review Board.**

SCOPE OF PROPOSED PROJECT

Location	Kivalliq and Qikiqtani regions, within 100 km of Rankin Inlet and Sanikiluaq
Objective	The Proponent intends to continue the study that was conducted in 2023 regarding the acoustic tagging and tracking of Arctic char, lake trout, Greenland cod, marine sculpin, lumpfish, and capelin fish in Rankin Inlet and Sanikiluaq area. Additionally, some fish will be analyzed to determine the microplastic particles content inside the fish's body.
Timeline	May 2025 to March 2035, multi-year research

¹ 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)

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

- Use of four (4) ATVs to transport personnel and equipment to research sites;
- Use of a boat and motor to transport personnel and equipment to research sites;
- Collect the following fish species:
 - Around Rankin Inlet:
 - 90 Arctic char,
 - 20 lake trout,
 - 50 Greenland cod,
 - 50 marine sculpins,
 - 10 lumpfish,
 - 55 capelin,
 - Around Sanikiluaq:
 - 50 Arctic char,
 - 50 Greenland cod,
 - 50 marine sculpins,
 - 50 capelin,
- Use 5.5” gill nets and fishing rods to catch the fish,
- Install tracking tags on some fish species,
- Analyze fish samples in the laboratory.
- Use of 50 gallons of gasoline in 5 gallon jerry cans for transportation;
- Use of one (1) liter of ethanol to be used to store and preserve fish fin clips for genetic analysis; and
- Non-combustible waste to be disposed of in the municipal landfill.

Inclusion or Exclusion of Scoping List

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

Documents received and describing the proposal can be accessed from the NIRB’s online public registry at www.nirb.ca/project/126164 and include:

- *NPC Conformity Determination and Application*
- *Animal Use Protocol*
- *Fisheries and Oceans Canada Application*
- *Fisheries and Oceans Canada Letter of Support*
- *KWB Letter of Support*
- *Sanikiluaq HTA Letter of Support*
- *Waterbody and Sampling Information*
- *NIRB Application*
- *Revised NIRB Application*

The NIRB may request additional information at any time during the process.

By copy of this letter, the NIRB is inviting interested parties and municipalities potentially affected by the project proposal to comment directly to the NIRB by **May 26, 2025**.

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.
 - Any matter of importance to the Party related to the project proposal including if a Review is required any additional factors that should be considered as part of that process.

Please note that *proposed* project-specific terms and conditions, should the project proceed, have been attached for consideration and comment ([Appendix A](#)).

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please send comments to the NIRB via email at 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/126164. Questions should be directed to the undersigned at (867) 983-4618 or rquammaniq@nirb.ca.

Sincerely,



Robby Qammaniq
Impact Assessment Officer
Nunavut Impact Review Board

Attachments: Appendix A: *Proposed* Project Specific Terms and Conditions

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

cc: Distribution List
Jared Ottenhoff, Qikiqtani Inuit Association
Chris Spencer, Qikiqtani Inuit Association
Conor Goddard, Qikiqtani Inuit Association
Joel Fortier, Qikiqtani Inuit Association
Assol Kubeisinova, Qikiqtani Inuit Association
Luis Manzo, Kivalliq Inuit Association
Ashley Aupaluktuq-Burton, Kivalliq Inuit Association
Brenda Pilakapsi, Kivalliq Inuit Association
Dustin Fredlund, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated
Carson Gillis, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated
Jorgan Aitaok, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated
Justin Buller, Government of Nunavut
Dianne Lapierre, Government of Nunavut
Jonas Azonaha, Government of Nunavut
Tracey McCaie, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada
Marcus Bermann, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada
Jose Audet-Lecouffe, Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Kangiqliniq Hunters and Trappers Organization
Sanikiluaq Hunters and Trappers Association

Appendix A: *Proposed Project Specific Terms and Conditions*

The following is a list of project-specific terms and conditions which, should the project proceed, may be recommended to be attached to any approval.

General

1. Government of Canada, 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.: 150687) and the NIRB (Online Application Form, April 12, 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

6. The Proponent shall ensure that water extraction from any fish-bearing waterbody is done with appropriate care and caution. Small lakes or streams should not be used for water withdrawal unless approved by the appropriate authorizing agency.
7. The Proponent shall ensure that no disturbance of the stream bed, lakebed or the banks of any definable watercourse be permitted, except where deemed necessary for maintaining project-specific operational commitments or approved by a responsible authority in cases of spill management.
8. 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

9. 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.

Fuel and Chemical Storage

10. The Proponent shall ensure that re-fuelling of all equipment occurs a minimum distance away from the high-water mark of any water body as required by the appropriate authorizing agencies.
11. The Proponent shall have a Spill Contingency Plan in place at all fuel storage or transfer locations and shall ensure that appropriate spill response equipment and clean-up materials (e.g., shovels, pumps, barrels, drip pans, and absorbents) are readily available.

Wildlife – General

12. 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.
13. 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.
14. The Proponent shall not hunt or fish, unless proper Nunavut authorizations have been acquired.
15. The Proponent shall ensure that all wildlife have the right-of-way on any roads or trails. Vehicles are required to slow down or stop and wait to permit the free and unrestricted movement of wildlife across roads or trails at any location.

Migratory Birds and Raptors Disturbance

16. The Proponent shall not disturb or destroy the nests or eggs of any birds. If active nests of any birds are discovered or located (i.e., with eggs or young), the Proponent shall avoid these areas until nesting is complete and the young have naturally left the vicinity of the nest by establishing a protection buffer zone² appropriate for the species and the surrounding habitat.
17. 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.

Caribou and Muskoxen Disturbance

18. The Proponent shall avoid interfering with any paths or crossings known to be frequented by caribou during periods of migration as identified by current land use plans in place and/or by Inuit Qaujimaningit.
19. The Proponent shall immediately cease activities likely to interfere with the migration or calving of caribou or muskoxen until such time as the caribou or muskox have passed.

Land Use and Restoration of Disturbed Areas

20. The Proponent shall use existing trails where possible during project activities on the land.

² Recommended setback distances to define buffer zones have been established by Environment and Climate Change Canada for different bird groups nesting in tundra habitat and can be found at www.ec.gc.ca/paom-itmb.

21. The Proponent shall ensure that the land use area is kept clean and tidy at all times.
22. The Proponent shall remove all garbage, fuel and equipment at the end of each field season and/or upon completion of work and/or upon abandonment.

Marine-Based Activities

23. 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.
24. 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.
25. 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.
26. The Proponent shall report all incidents, injuries or sightings of marine mammals to the appropriate authorizing agencies.

Heritage Sites

27. The Proponent shall ensure that archaeological and paleontological sites are not purposely or inadvertently disturbed by clients or staff as a result of project activities.
28. The Proponent shall ensure that all clients and staff are aware of the Proponent's responsibilities and requirements regarding archaeological or palaeontological sites that are encountered during land-based activities. This should include briefings explaining the prohibitions regarding removal of artifacts, and defacing or writing on rocks and infrastructure.
29. No activities shall be conducted in the vicinity (50 metres buffer zone) of any archaeological/historical sites. If archaeological sites or features are encountered, activities shall immediately be interrupted and moved away from this location. Each site encountered needs to be recorded and reported to the Government of Nunavut-Department of Culture and Heritage.

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.