



Honourable Joan Shea
Minister of Environment and Conservation
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
P.O. Box 8700
St. John's, NL, Canada
A1B 4J6

November 28, 2013

Re: Moose Total Allowable Harvest in the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area, 2014-15

Dear Minister Shea,

I write to inform you of the Torngat Wildlife and Plants Co-Management Board's 2014-15 Total Allowable Harvest (TAH) decision for Moose in the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area. Part 12.9.1(a) of the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement empowers the Board to establish, modify, or eliminate a TAH of Non-Migratory Species. This letter satisfies the Board's responsibilities under 12.9.1, and is intended to capture the Board's annual assessment of whether recent information or interpretation merits modification to the existing TAH.

Further, the Board is responsible to recommend research and measures for the timely collection, analysis and sharing of information relevant to Inuit rights, conservation, and the sustainable utilization of wildlife, plants, and habitat.

After having carefully considered all available information, the Board has decided to not modify the TAH of 35 for 2014-15. However, there are opportunities to enhance our understanding of Moose in the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area, and to that end we recommend that your Department work with the Nunatsiavut Government and the Board to collect and analyze jawbones of harvested animals.

We hope that this annual correspondence will be part of a continuing dialogue about Moose co-management in Nunatsiavut, and we invite your comments and ideas. We are available to meet at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Ron Sparkes Ed.D
Chairperson
Torngat Wildlife and Plants Co-Management Board



Moose Total Allowable Harvest in the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area, 2014-15

Decision:

Pursuant to Part 12.9.1(a) of the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement, the Torngat Wildlife and Plants Co-Management Board has decided to:

- Not modify the Total Allowable Harvest of Moose at 35 for the 2014-15 hunting season within the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area.

Recommendation:

Pursuant to Part 12.9.1(b)(v), and 12.9.1(e) of the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement, the Torngat Wildlife and Plants Co-Management Board recommends:

- That the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador collect and analyze harvest samples.

1.0 Background:

- The Torngat Wildlife & Plants Co-Management Board (TWPCB or ‘the Board’) is established by Part 12.8 of the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement (LILCA or ‘the Agreement’), with its responsibilities and powers outlined in Part 12.9. For greater clarity, the TWPCB is empowered to establish, eliminate, or modify Total Allowable Harvests (TAH) for non-migratory species of wildlife (12.9.1(a)).
- The Board is also responsible to make recommendations pertaining to research (12.9.1(b)(v)) and measures for the timely collection, analysis and sharing of information relevant to Inuit rights, conservation, and the sustainable utilization of wildlife, plants, and habitat (12.9.1(e)).
- The Board decided to establish a TAH for Moose in the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area in June of 2010. In accordance with Part 12.9.10 of the Agreement, the Board consulted formally with the Nunatsiavut Government in June and November of 2010, and the Nunatsiavut Government supported the decision on both occasions.
- Although the Minister of Environment and Conservation rejected the decision for 2010-11, in accordance with Part 12.9.5, discussions continued through to 7 April, 2011, when a Government of Newfoundland and Labrador press release and the 2011-12 Hunting and Trapping Guide recognized and affirmed the decision.
- In 2012 and 2013 the Board decided to maintain the TAH of 35.

- On May 30, 2013, the Nunatsiavut Minister of Lands and Natural Resources sent a letter to the TWPCB recommending that the TAH for 2013-14 be increased to 50. The Board responded on July 31, 2013, committing to consider the recommendation for application in 2014-15.

2.0 Management Principles

- Part 12.2.1 of the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement prioritizes the principles of Conservation and the Precautionary Approach in decision-making that affects Wildlife, Plants, or Habitat in the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area:

"Precautionary Approach means that, if there are threats of serious or irreversible damage to Wildlife or Plants, measures to prevent the reduction or loss of the Wildlife or Plants should not be postponed for lack of full scientific certainty.

"Conservation means the management of Wildlife, Plants and Habitat, including the management of human activities in relation to them, to foster Sustainable Utilization and maintenance of natural populations, biodiversity and ecological processes."

"Sustainable Utilization means the use and management of Wildlife, Plants and Habitat in a manner that does not impair their natural viability in order that the needs of the present may be met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs."

3.0 Key Considerations

3.1 Survey Information

- The TWPCB partnered with the Department of Environment and Conservation to conduct surveys in MMA 88 'the Backway' in 2011-12, and MMA 89 'Rigolet' in 2012-13. Preliminary results in both cases suggest that Moose are present where suitable habitat exists, but in relatively low densities in both areas. There has been no attempt to estimate abundance in MMAs 91 'Kaipokak', or 92 'Nain'.

3.2 Harvest Information

- Aerial surveys provide important point estimates of abundance, but they are expensive and infrequent. Harvest information can provide important information on population structure, trends in abundance, and general health every year.

- In 2011-12 there was a total of 19 (of 35 licences) Moose harvested in the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area (11 Male; 8 Female), for a success rate¹ of 54%. Success rates varied between MMAs, with 50% in Nain (3 of 6), 67% in Kaipokak (12 of 18), and 36% in Rigolet/Backway (4 of 11).
- In 2012-13 there was a total of 34 (of 35 licences) Moose harvested in the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area, for a success rate of 97%.
- There has been no attempt to quantify or qualify effort (other than spatially), and there is therefore no means of assessing whether the success rates are a true proxy measure of abundance, or whether they are instead a reflection of the licence administration system, the weather, or social, cultural, and/or economic choices.
- Jawbone analysis is an important method used throughout the Province to draw inferences of population health, structure, and trends. There has been no effort to collect or analyze jawbones in Nunatsiavut. Jawbone analysis is a source of information that, together with traditional knowledge and harvest surveys, can build a clearer understanding of the population, in the absence of aerial surveys.

3.3 Food Security

- The Board has recently adopted a five year strategic plan that identifies food security as a core value. Since the establishment of a TAH in 2011, Moose have become an increasingly important component of diversified livelihood strategies across Nunatsiavut. It is the Board's understanding that the Nunatsiavut Government will be able to supplement the harvest in the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area with licences in Gros Morne National Park.

3.4 Consultation

- In October of 2013 the Torngat Wildlife and Plants Co-Management Board decided to request input into its 2014-15 Moose TAH decision. A consultation request was released on October 8th and was shared via the Secretariat website, Twitter, Facebook, OKâlaKatiget Society Radio, email distribution lists, and printouts posted throughout Nunatsiavut. The Secretariat specifically requested input from the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Environment and Conservation. The comment period closed on October 28th; the Board received six comments, including the initial recommendation of the Nunatsiavut Government (all comments attached as Appendix A).

¹ 'Success rates' throughout this document refer simply to the number of Moose harvested, divided by the number of licences issued, and expressed as a percentage. Success rates in Nunatsiavut are not directly comparable to those in the rest of Newfoundland and Labrador due to differences in how licences are administered.

- Respondents expressed concern about the sustainability of current harvest levels (4), recognized a need for more research into abundance and trends (2), and shared observations of increasing predation (3).
- Recommendations regarding TAH levels are tabled below. Most respondents expressed concern about current harvest levels, and recommended that the TAH of 35 be decreased or remain the same and be carefully monitored.

Table 1.0 Consultation Comments

Name	TAH Decrease	TAH Status Quo	TAH Increase
Nunatsiavut Government			X
Makkovik	X		
Rigolet		X	
Upper Lake Melville			X ²
Upper Lake Melville	X (Northern Zones)	X (Southern Zones)	
Makkovik	X		

4.0 Meetings

- The Board met on 26 November, 2013, via teleconference, and developed this decision and recommendation.
- Moose were an agenda item at Board meetings held in Nain in May of 2013, and in Happy Valley – Goose bay in October of 2013.

5.0 Summary and Conclusion

- Given the management principles entrenched in the Agreement, and considering the goal of increased food security in the region, and considering also feedback through consultation, there is no information presently available to warrant a departure from the TAH of 35. There are, however, means of increasing available information going forward, and these

² This comment is specific to Schedule 12-E, which is not included in this TAH decision. Licences in 12-E are allocated per rules of general application – there are no special allowances for beneficiaries, other than fees are waived



should be pursued. Specifically, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador should collect and analyze jawbones. The Board is available to support this initiative.



APPENDIX A

Consultation Comments



1. Makkovik, October 8, 2013

It is my opinion that we should have a proper survey done of moose populations within Nunatsiavut. Postville used to have an area (52 I believe it was) for 5 moose. The last couple of years the Postville hunters were coming out to Makkovik area to hunt. Probably due to hunting pressure over the years in that area killing off the moose in that area.

There are some moose in the Makkovik to Cape Harrison area but I don't know if it can sustain a hunt of 5 or more animals per year. As things stand now if no moose are in an area around Makovik I can hunt in Rigolet Nain etc. This kind of hunting pressure I think can damage the populations over time.

2. Rigolet, October 8, 2013

Moose is not a native species. Not a big population. Could be easily depleted. Some people are saying the population is being thinned out. Wouldn't want to see any increase. Status quo – and even keep an eye on that. A lot of moose in double mer in 1980, then a licence system and wolf predation has decreased it considerably.

3. Upper Lake Melville, October 15, 2013

As a follow-up to our discussion yesterday about looking into the possibility of establishing a harvest limit of moose for area 12-E. Due to the decline of the George River Caribou Herd, more and more beneficiaries are turning to moose as the alternate meat source. According to local hunters and cabin owners, there are more moose sighted in this area. An NG harvest for this area would benefit our members in Upper Lake Melville.

4. Upper Lake Melville, October 8, 2013

Slight decrease in the Northern zones. No increase elsewhere until there is more science.

5. Makkovik, October 11, 2013

Seems like less moose since the hunt was opened. Should be 1-2 per community (one for freezer). Small area, small population. More wolves, fewer caribou is leading to more wolf predation on moose.



NUNATSIAVUT
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Lands and Natural Resources

May 30, 2013

Via email; Jamie.snook@torngatsecretariat.ca
Ron Sparks, Chairperson
Torngat Wildlife and Plants Co-Management Board
PO Box 2050, Station B
Happy Valley, NL
A0P-1E0

Dear Dr. Sparks:

Moose Allocation for 2013-2014 Labrador Inuit Settlement Area

The Nunatsiavut Government is requesting that the Torngat Wildlife and Plant Co-Management Board (TWPCMB) recommend to the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador that the allocation of moose licences for the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area (LISA) be increased from 35 to 50 for the 2013-14 harvesting season. The total allocation of licences for LISA should also be given to the Nunatsiavut Government to manage.

Given the current ban on harvesting of George River caribou, and Labrador Inuit reliance on country food, we believe that additional access to moose will help address food security issues now experienced by our people. The Nunatsiavut Government is still uncertain whether the current allocation of 35 moose is actually a Total Allowable Harvest (TAH) as defined under the Labrador Inuit Land Claim Agreement (LILCA), as the process to establish a TAH was not followed. We recognize that moose are extending further and further in to LISA and, with the severe decline of caribou, are becoming more important as a source of food.

We also understand that the TWPCMB has collected some data with regards to moose in some areas. Traditional knowledge is showing that the current moose population seems to be healthy. Our success rate in harvesting moose last season was also very good. We feel our request to increase the allocation from 35 to 50 in LISA is reasonable. We also feel the current population can sustain this increase.

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We hope the TWPCMB will agree with us and make this recommendation to the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador as soon as possible.

If further information is required, please have you staff contact our Director of Renewable Resources, Todd Broomfield.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Darryl Shiwak".

Darryl Shiwak
Minister