

Terms of Reference
National Peer Review Meeting (by videoconference)

Review of the latest data/analyses available on the status of two Bowhead Whale (*Balaena mysticetus*) populations in the eastern Canadian Arctic in preparation for the upcoming recovery potential assessment

March 9, 2006 (from 10:00 am to 4 pm – Winnipeg/Central Standard Time)

Chairperson: P. Simon

Context

The status of the two eastern Arctic bowhead whale populations in Canadian waters was reviewed by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) in May 2005 and both were assessed as Threatened. A Recovery Potential Assessment meeting is planned for April 7, 2006 to provide scientific advice to the Recovery team and to the Minister.

Most of the information on the status of the two populations has already been peer reviewed in 2005 (prior to the COSEWIC assessment; see Proceedings Series 2005/001) but new information/analysis are available on satellite tracking, aerial survey and molecular genetics of bowhead. The objective of this videoconference is to peer review this new information in order to have up-to-date information that will be used in the Recovery Potential Assessment in April 2006.

This peer review may be considered as part of the work done by the National Marine Mammal Peer Review Committee (NMMPRC).

Meeting Objectives

The following working papers related to bowhead status will be submitted for review:

1. Update on investigations of bowhead whale (*Balaena mysticetus*) movements in the eastern Arctic, 2003-2005, based on satellite-linked telemetry. (L. P. Dueck)
2. Results of Aerial Surveys of Bowhead Whales (*Balaena mysticetus*) in the eastern Canadian Arctic from the three year aerial-survey program (2002 to 2004): updated calculations.
3. Molecular genetic support of a single population of bowhead whales (*Balaena mysticetus*) in Eastern Canadian Arctic and western Greenland waters. (L. Postma, L. Dueck, M. Heide-Jørgensen, and S. Cosens)

The working papers should be made available to all participants by March 2.

Output of the meeting

The output of the meeting will be a CSAS proceedings report with a list of key conclusions. These will support the development of a Recovery Potential Assessment for eastern Arctic bowhead and an updated Science Advisory Report.

The scientific information/advice issued from this meeting should be made available by the first week of April and will be available for other meetings (e.g. International Whaling Commission meetings) if necessary and if agreed at the meeting.

Participation

The participants invited to this meeting include DFO Science, DFO Fisheries and Aquaculture Management, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration/NMML.