

Activity Report 2002-03

Fisheries Joint Management Committee

What is the FJMC?

The Inuvialuit Final Agreement sets out the terms of the contract between the Committee for Original Peoples' Entitlement, representing the Inuvialuit of the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, and the Government of Canada, representing all citizens of Canada.

As outlined in that Agreement, the Fisheries Joint Management Committee was established to provide advice to the Inuvialuit and Department of Fisheries and Oceans on fishery management and related issues within the Inuvialuit Settlement Region.

During the reporting year the Fisheries Joint Management Committee continued to work closely with government agencies, renewable resource user groups, and resource councils and committees established under the Agreement and by other land claim settlements on a variety of activities and programs. The Committee maintains an office at the Joint Secretariat in Inuvik, receives administrative



Long time FJMC member, Billy Day and FJMC resource biologist, Kevin Bill on their way to the June IGC meeting in Holman.

support from that organization, and employs one resource biologist to manage its programs.

This report provides a summary of the Committee's activities for the fiscal year commencing April 2002 and concluding March 2003.

Committee Activities

Consultation & Planning

In keeping with the co-management philosophy of the

IFA, consultation with local Hunters & Trappers' Committees (HTCs), the Inuvialuit Game Council (IGC), Fisheries & Oceans Canada, and other government agencies formed an important part of the Committee's activities. The Committee held 5 regular meetings and 6 teleconferences, as well as public meetings in Aklavik, Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk to discuss with hunters and fishers issues of concern related to fish, marine mammals, and research priorities for the region. One of the regular meetings was held in Winnipeg at Fisheries & Oceans Canada's Freshwater Institute to facilitate information exchange and project planning with the Department's scientific and management staff. The process by which the FJMC sets its research priorities and develops a workplan is unique among Inuvialuit Joint Implementing Bodies. Community meetings in November, discussions with scientific staff at the Freshwater Institute in January and Committee planning sessions in March, all comprise the essential elements in the Committee's annual work plan and budgeting cycle for the next fiscal.

After two years of development the FJMC Strategic Plan, formerly titled the FJMC Vision Statement, is in press. The Strategic Plan, based in part on results of the Beaufort Sea 2000 conference, is intended to direct the FJMC's activities for the first decade of the new millennium. This important document contains a set of guiding principles, a clear vision for the future of fish and marine mammal management in the Beaufort Delta region of Canada's Western Arctic, and a set of milestones for the next decade.

Research & Monitoring

The FJMC was active in numerous research, monitoring, and management programs in 2002-03. A total of 31 projects were conducted through joint efforts between the FJMC and DFO

Support continues for charr monitoring projects in Paulatuk and Holman that provide information for existing community-based charr fishing plans for the Hornaday and Kuujua rivers near Paulatuk and Holman respectively. Also in support of the Hornaday plan, the Committee continues to contribute to a baseline water quality and quantity monitoring project for that river system.

The FJMC continued to support the West Side Working Group in its efforts to develop a community-driven integrated fishing plan for the Yukon North Slope and West Side rivers from the Big Fish River west to Fish Creek near the Alaskan border. The Working Group continues to assemble critical scientific and traditional knowledge information on North Slope fisheries, information that will form the foundation of the developing management plan. The traditional knowledge study completed in 2001-02 is currently being finalized for publication. The West Side Working Group was established in 2000-01 and includes representatives from the Aklavik HTC and

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Elders Committee, FJMC, DFO, and Parks Canada Agency.

Support of a multi-year program to assess the ecology and fisheries resources of Husky and Sitidgi Lakes continues to be a priority of the Committee. These lakes support important local subsistence and recreational fisheries. In coming years, the Committee anticipates growing pressures associated with accelerating hydrocarbon development on

In co-operation with the HTC's, the FJMC delivers the beluga harvest monitoring program. Local Inuvialuit whale monitors employed by HTC's are stationed in each of the active whaling camps within the ISR. They collect biological information from each harvested whale. Committee staff provided training, program and logistic support, co-ordination of special sample collections, and data collation. Monitors also keep track of aircraft traffic over whale camps and submit detailed incident reports in cases where aircraft may



FJMC summer meeting. From left: Robert Bell, Billy Day, Max Kotokak Sr., Don Dowler, Burton Ayles, DFO liaison Stephen Charlie and FJMC biologist, Kevin Bill

surrounding lands and increased public access through seasonal ice roads and a proposed all-weather road to Tuktoyaktuk.

The FJMC continues to allocate funds in support of a satellite telemetry program to monitor the movements of ringed seals. The multi-year tagging program in the Cape Perry area near Paulatuk continued this year. The Committee also contributed to an ongoing project designed to monitor the reproductive status and condition of ringed seals in Amundsen Gulf. The quality of country foods also continues to be a significant concern for the communities. In addition to the allocation of funds for research involving the collection of samples from harvested marine mammals (including ringed seals and beluga) for contaminant and disease analysis, the Committee organized and facilitated a workshop focusing on the increase in mercury levels in beluga whales in the western arctic. The workshop was held in October of 2002 at the Freshwater Institute in Winnipeg. A group of 20 professionals from a variety of fields discussed possible reasons for the increase and proposed possible future research to increase the understanding of the primary factors involved in the increase.

In addition to annual research project funding, the Committee also supported long-term harvest monitoring programs that provide essential harvest data required by the Committee and DFO biologists as a basis for making sound management decisions.

have harassed or disturbed whales and/or harvesters. At season's end, these harassment incident reports were turned over to DFO Conservation & Protection for follow-up with air charter companies as required.

Following the cancellation of the Inuvialuit Harvest Study, the Committee continued its support of the collection of Inuvialuit subsistence fisheries harvest data by DFO in 2002-03.

In accordance with Section 14.(64) of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement, the Committee continued with FJMC's Private Lands Sport Fishing Registry. Recreational anglers fishing within the Inuvialuit Settlement Region were not surveyed in 2002-03, but plans are underway to conduct the survey again in 2003-04. Data collected in 2000 and 2001 is currently being analyzed and a technical report is to be completed soon. The promotional campaign initiated in 2001-02 to better educate the fishing public was continued with the renewing of large wall displays at major air and road travel gateways into the ISR; the provision of private lands wall maps for all fishing licence vendors and HTC's in the region; the reprinting and distribution of information brochures to vendors and HTC's; and the placement of advertisements in NWT Explorers Guide / Guide to Hunting & Fishing in the Northwest Territories and the Beaufort Delta Attractions Guide.

In order to facilitate the distribution of information related to research within the ISR, the FJMC Technical Report series is currently being re-activated. Recent

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FJMC members with guest of honour Brian Wong of DFO Ottawa, recipient of the FJMC's annual Cooperator award. The picture was taken at a presentation dinner for Brian. Also in attendance were IGC alternate appointees to the FJMC, Esther Price and Donald Inuktalik, first and second from the left.

projects funded by the Committee, beginning with the Possible Impacts on Overwintering Fish of Trucking Granular Materials Over Lake and River Ice in the Mackenzie Delta Area (Stewart, 2001), will be published and distributed, as well as posted on the Committee's website.

Hydrocarbon Development

The FJMC continues to be well positioned to provide sound advice on issues related to accelerating oil and gas industry activities in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region. The Committee and staff have been regular participants in pre-submission community and agency consultations by industry. Prior to every Screening meeting, the Committee continues to review all proposals before EISC that have the potential to impact on fish, marine mammals, and/or aquatic habitat in the ISR, including those related to oil and gas.

In order to follow up on a successful informal meeting between field level biologists and regulators from the Northwest Territories, Yukon, and Alaska that was

initiated by the FJMC and DFO in 2002, FJMC members and staff participated in the second Canada/Alaska Oil & Gas Environmental Regulators Gathering, held in Fairbanks March 19-20, 2003. This year, the gathering expanded to include wildlife and other regulatory agencies from the Northwest Territories and Yukon and their counterparts in Alaska. In addition, some of those attending participated in a tour of several oil production facilities on the North Slope of Alaska.

The Committee was also directly involved with the Environmental Impact Review Board's (EIRB) public review of the WesternGeco Mackenzie Delta Marine 2D Seismic Program 2003. This program has the potential to impact fish harvesting in the Mackenzie Delta. The Committee enlisted the services of a technical expert to ensure that any potential impact on Inuvialuit harvests would be mitigated, and that any concerns would be investigated.

Beluga Management and Pilot Marine Protected Areas

The FJMC continued its support of the Beaufort Sea Integrated Management Planning Initiative (BSIMPI) in co-operation with Fisheries & Oceans Canada. This multi-stakeholder initiative is being facilitated through a Working Group that includes representatives from FJMC, DFO, Inuvialuit Game Council, Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, Indian and Northern Affairs, and the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers. The group conducted community consultations throughout 2002-03 to determine support for a pilot marine protect area under the Oceans Act.

Emerging Commercial Fisheries

In response to increasing interest by business entities from outside the region to develop a commercial fisheries in the Beaufort Sea, the Committee has continued to work closely with Fisheries & Oceans Canada and the Inuvialuit Game Council to lay the foundations for developing a regionally managed, sustainable commercial fisheries in the Beaufort that will benefit Inuvialuit economically while not adversely impact traditional subsistence harvesting activities.

COSEWIC and Species-at-Risk Legislation

With the Species at Risk Act given Royal Assent on December 12, 2002, the Committee has begun to take a more active role in ensuring Inuvialuit involvement in the bureaucratic processes related to the protection of endangered fish and marine mammal species. The FJMC will continue to work with COSEWIC to better define the Committee's role in the federal assessment process for endangered species under the Committee's jurisdiction. The Committee participated in the preliminary stages of re-assessment of several species, including the fourhorn sculpin, beluga whale and pighead prickleback.

Communications

The FJMC continues to develop its existing website (www.fjmc.ca) as a means to better inform beneficiaries, the public, government, and industry about FJMC and fisheries co-management in the ISR. A variety of FJMC reports and other materials are available on the site for downloading by interested parties. The FJMC also reaches Inuvialuit beneficiaries within the Inuvialuit Settlement Region through its annual ISR community tour and regular contributions to the Joint Secretariat-Inuvialuit Renewable Resource Committee's newsletter, the JS Common Ground. The newsletter is distributed to every registered Inuvialuit beneficiary each summer

and winter.

Student Mentoring Program & Inuvialuit Youth

The FJMC's Student Mentoring Program returned for its 6th successful season in 2002-03. The Program hosted 4 students (4 from Inuvik, with 3 completing the term), enjoyed new work placement partnerships (including Fisheries & Oceans Canada, Parks Canada, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Government of the Northwest Territories- Department of Resources & Wildlife, Kavik AXYS, and Inuvialuit Environmental & Geotechnical), continued funding relationships with GNWT Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE), Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, and Enbridge Inc. and completed the Boot Lake aquatic science training module featuring a new study manual developed by Fisheries & Oceans Canada. As part of an effort to recruit new students for the 2003-04 Program, FJMC staff and one past mentoring student participated in a community tour to Holman, Paulatuk, and Sachs Harbour, organized by the GNWT Education, Culture and Employment division in Inuvik. This tour involved representatives from ECE, Aurora College, Beaufort Delta Self Government, and the Canadian Military. Presentations were given to local high school students, as well as to the general public. The FJMC Mentoring Program is offered in partnership with DFO and is designed to encourage Inuvialuit youth to finish high school and continue with their studies in the sciences so that they can become the ISR's future resource managers and biologists.

The FJMC also participated in a regional career fair - Career Quest 2003- with an FJMC tradeshow display. A past mentoring student, accompanied by Joint Secretariat staff, was available to answer questions about the Mentoring Program from junior and senior high school students from around the Beaufort-Delta region.

