

NEWS RELEASE



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Narwhal Tusk Trade Restriction Partially Lifted

(Dec. 19, 2011 – Iqaluit, Nunavut) Nunavut Tunngavik Vice-President James Eetoolook announced that Department of Fisheries and Oceans partially lifted international trade restrictions on narwhal tusks this week.

“This is excellent news,” said Eetoolook. “When DFO imposed the narwhal tusk trade ban on 17 Nunavut communities last year, the decision was based on questionable scientific data derived from partial aerial surveys in 2003. The reversal of that decision is based on an aerial survey done in Admiralty Inlet near Arctic Bay in 2010. This means Inuit in Arctic Bay, Clyde River, Qikiqtarjuaq, Pangnirtung and Iqaluit can now resume international trade in narwhal tusks and are no longer going to be economically penalized by DFO’s former data,” he said.

When DFO set the trade restriction in Dec., 2010, NTI was not made aware of the restriction prior to it being imposed, and Inuit were not consulted. DFO’s actions violated the Government of Canada’s legal obligation to adequately and meaningfully consult with Inuit. NTI launched legal action, but halted that process when DFO agreed to participate in consultations, and to work with Inuit on decisions affecting narwhal management and trade.

DFO’s decision to partially lift the trade restrictions was announced this week after DFO released 2010 and 2011 positive non-detrimental findings (NDF) reports on four of the six summering stocks of narwhal in Nunavut. Restrictions will continue on tusks harvested from summering stocks of narwhal in the Jones Sound and North Hudson Bay-Foxe Basin populations.

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