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Nunavik Inuit Perspectives on Beluga Whale Management in the Canadian Arctic

Martina Tyrrell

In the Arctic, there has long been a strong relationship between Inuit and beluga whales. As well as being considered sentient creatures, Inuit value these small white toothed whales for nutritional, economic, social, and cultural reasons. They are a staple food for many Inuit, and in the complex set of social activities that surround the hunting, butchering, and sharing of belugas, Inuit knowledge, skill, identity, and kinship are enacted and reproduced. Since the mid-1980s the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) has endeavored to restore and maintain beluga populations in Nunavik, northern Quebec. In the past decade, these conservation practices have increasingly impinged on the hunting of belugas by Inuit and, by extension, the social and cultural practices within which beluga hunting is situated. While DFO regards the management of belugas as one of biological conservation, Inuit situate this management within narratives of cultural imperialism. To ensure greater involvement by Inuit in the formulation and enactment of management policy, government at all levels must become aware of the broader historical and political processes that Inuit perceive to be at the root of current management practices. As the co-management institutions of the fledgling Nunavik government take shape, can it take lessons from other more successful regimes across the North American Arctic?

Key words: beluga whales, Canada, co-management, conservation, Inuit

Introduction

Ranging across the circumpolar world from eastern Siberia, across Alaska and northern Canada, to Greenland, beluga whale hunting is deeply embedded in the social and cultural lives of Inuit.[1] These small white whales[2] are valued nutritionally and economically for their skin, blubber, meat, and internal organs, as a source of food for both people and sled dogs. The actual hunting of beluga whales is merely one aspect of a richly complex set of activities involving extended families and communities and includes the informal training and enskilment of young hunters, the preparation and maintenance of hunting tools and equipment, and the distribution, sharing, and processing of the harvest. Each of these is reliant on webs of social relationships that exist within communities, as large numbers of kin participate in and benefit from the hunt. Beyond this, beluga whales, like all Arctic animals, are accorded a sentience and sociality by Inuit, and appropriate relationships of respect must be maintained in order to ensure the continued participation of belugas in the hunt. The deep, empirical knowledge of belugas possessed by Inuit is founded on seasonal engagement with these animals within the marine environment and the sharing of knowledge and skill within the home and broader community (Tyrrell 2005). This practical knowledge of belugas is inseparable from cosmological beliefs regarding the relative roles of humans and animals in the world, and in the contemporary Arctic, there exists an evident syncretism between Christian and non-Christian beliefs about animals.

In recent decades, beluga whales have been subject to scientific research and conservation management practices. In general, the conservation of wildlife resources has been a contentious issue in the Arctic where management of resources has been viewed, variously, as essential to the maintenance of robust stocks of northern wildlife, as a threat to the cultural integrity of indigenous peoples and as a form of cultural and ideological imperialism. Across the Arctic, the emergence of cooperative (co-) management of wildlife resources has met with varying degrees of success, while land claims settlements have led to indigenous peoples' involvement in southern[3] forms of management of the animals upon which their economies and cultures are based.

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The conservation of marine species has faced even greater difficulties than that of many terrestrial species. Indigenous authority over the marine environment is far more fragmentary than over the terrestrial environment (Mulrennan and Scott 2001), and the more elusive nature of marine species renders consensus over population numbers and behavior far more difficult to attain. Added to this is the role played by marine mammals, and in particular whales, in the popular imagination. Nuttall (1998:98) writes that "whales and whaling have assumed symbolic potency" as indigenous peoples attempt to retain control over their subsistence hunt and its attendant cultural practices. Ironically, this symbolic potency is also a feature of animal rights activism (cf. Einarsson 1993; Stewart 1995; Watson 2003).

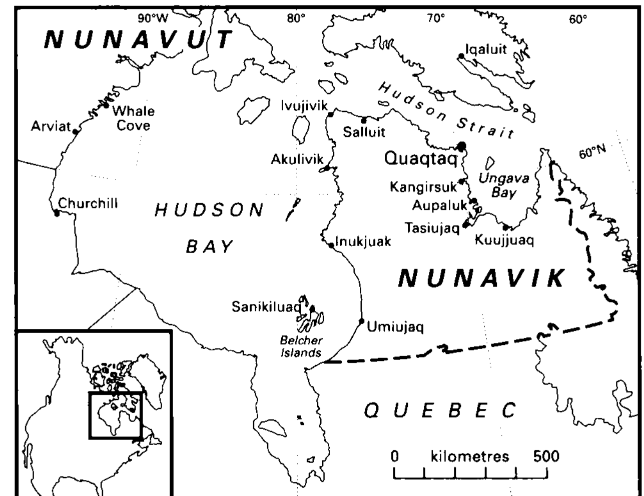
One of the most contentious wildlife management issues current in the Arctic concerns the stocks of beluga whales in the waters off Nunavik, northern Quebec, Canada (see Map 1). Since the mid-1980s, beluga whales in Nunavik waters have been managed by the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO). In the past 10 years, restrictions on hunting have grown tighter, as the hunting quota has been successively reduced. DFO dictates open and closed beluga hunting seasons and sets out guidelines for the training of novice hunters, appropriate hunting methods, and hunters' codes of conduct (Tyrrell 2007). As a result, relations between DFO and Nunavik Inuit are on a downward trajectory, as the imposition of these management practices is perceived by Inuit to have adverse economic, nutritional, social, and cultural impacts and has led to a creeping criminalization of the hunt. While precedents exist for the cooperative management of both marine and terrestrial species in other regions of the Arctic, the management of beluga whales in Nunavik has been an unmitigated disaster.

Many Nunavik Inuit are distrustful of the federal government, comparing the current management of beluga whales to other perceived wrongs perpetrated against them throughout the 20th century. The absence and invisibility of DFO scientists and managers in the north strengthens Inuit perceptions of cultural imperialism and leads to greater distrust and unwillingness to participate in the co-management of belugas. But can this distrust be overcome so that co-operation and meaningful co-management can evolve? In December 2006, a Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement was signed, paving the way for greater levels of Inuit political and social autonomy and greater Inuit control of the offshore area. Following this, what lessons can Nunavik Inuit and DFO learn from more successful co-management regimes involving Inuit elsewhere?

Research Aims and Methods

In 2006, I conducted anthropological research in the village of Quaqtaq, Nunavik[4] in order to explore the social and cultural impacts of the conservation management of beluga whales. Quaqtaq is a village of 400 people situated where the northwest coast of Ungava Bay meets Hudson Strait (see

Map 1. Hudson Bay and Surrounding Territory



Map 1). Prior to 2000, Quaqtarmiut[5] harvested an average of 33 whales per year (based on statistics in Lesage and Doidge 2005), but since 2001 the legally permitted harvest has fallen from 35 to 8 whales. Using a combination of in-depth interviewing and participant observation techniques, I gained an understanding of Inuit perspectives of beluga whale management and its impact on hunting and other social practices. I interviewed a broad range of individuals across the community and engaged in informal conversation with people in a range of private and public spaces. Undertaking participant observation throughout, I visited some of the important whale hunting places dotted along the coastline and participated in the life of the family with whom I lived. Through all of these activities, and building on a much longer involvement with beluga hunting on the west coast of Hudson Bay, I gained an insight into the central role played by beluga whales in Inuit family and village life and how these roles have changed in recent years due to beluga management practices.

Quaqtarmiut and Beluga Whales

It is no coincidence that the Quaqtaq village logo consists of a beluga whale with its back arched out of a blue sea towards a bright orange sun. Iconography of the beluga whale is everywhere in evidence in public and private spaces throughout the village, from the large wall hanging gracing the mayor's office, to children's drawings at the elementary school, to the mugs and thermos flasks on sale at the co-operative store. Quaqtaq identity is intimately linked with beluga whales.

Belugas migrate past the village twice each year—in spring as they migrate west into Hudson Bay and in autumn on their return migration to Hudson Strait. Throughout the rest of the year, there are more sporadic sightings of belugas, but spring and autumn mark the high points of hunting activity.

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Until recently, belugas were hunted from the land fast sea ice in spring, but an earlier retreat of winter sea ice in recent years means that this type of hunting is now no longer as feasible as it once was. A current harvest of only one or two belugas in spring compares to 15 or 20 a decade ago or less. Autumn hunting continues to take place from the shoreline. At both times of the year, hunting traditionally took place at a variety of locations in the vicinity of Quaqtaq. Permanent seasonal hunting camps, consisting of clusters of wooden cabins, dot the coastline, and prior to the current management of belugas, extended families travelled to these camps for weeks on end. The main priority at these camps was the hunting and processing of belugas, but this was accompanied by other opportunistic activities, such as seal and walrus hunting, mussel picking, and seaweed gathering.

Boys (and less often girls) began accompanying their older relatives on beluga hunting trips from as young as age eight. Many men told me that they killed their first beluga before they were 10 years old, and gradually acquired their skills through trial and error in the company of other hunters of various age and skill levels. Safe and successful hunting requires a detailed knowledge of beluga behavior (and the behavior of other animals such as orcas and sea birds), combined with knowledge of the physical characteristics of the marine environment and a detailed understanding of winds, tides, sea ice, etc. This rich and varied knowledge grows throughout a hunter's lifetime as he engages seasonally with belugas within the marine environment while in the company of other people (Tyrrell 2005). Quaqtaq hunters pride themselves on their knowledge of whales, distinguishing belugas based on age, sex, and origin. I shall return to the importance of this latter distinction later in the paper. Further, beluga hunting is dependent on a complex set of social activities that includes the manufacture, maintenance, repair, and sharing of hunting tools and equipment (boats, harpoons, rifles, etc.) and the construction and maintenance of hunting cabins.

Beluga hunting has long been the most social of all hunting activities in Quaqtaq, and those not immediately involved in the hunt have usually been involved in the processing and sharing of the harvest. Hunting that took place near the village or at hunting camps was closely observed by women, children, the elderly, and the disabled, many of whom then participated in or led the butchering and sharing of harvested whales. Across the Arctic, formal and informal rules govern the sharing of belugas and other harvested animals (cf. Bodenhorn 2000; Dahl 2000; Jolles 2002), ensuring that, village-wide, people have access to the bounty irrespective of their personal involvement in the actual hunt.[6] In Quaqtaq, the entire beluga is valued as a source of food. *Maktaq*, the thick white skin and thin layer of fat underneath, is consumed fresh (raw or cooked) or is fermented or frozen for use throughout the year. Beluga flukes form the centrepiece of women's feasts. *Misiraq*, the rendered fermented fat, is used as a condiment, comparable to southern use of ketchup or mayonnaise. Beluga meat is eaten fresh, after it has been drained of excess blood, or is dried, fermented or frozen for use throughout the year. The intestine is split, cleaned out, boiled, and dried, and consumed throughout the year. The internal organs were eaten in the past, although much less so today. Beluga is highly nutritious, with maktaq, meat, and blubber all rich sources of protein. Dried beluga meat is a rich source of iron, while blubber is rich in omega-3 fatty acids. In the past, too, back sinew was transformed into thread to sew skin clothing, although this has declined with the advent of store-bought alternatives.

Despite only two short whaling seasons each year, belugas are an important year-round food source, and participation in all aspects of the hunting complex, from the preparation of clothing and equipment, to hunting, butchering, and sharing, to processing, eating, and feasting, are all deemed integral aspects of Inuit life. Beluga hunting facilitates travel out from the village at certain times of the year. It also facilitates and helps maintain certain social and kin relationships, and relationships with certain places along the coastline. Belugas are spoken of as "neighbors" who visit at certain times of the year and are accorded the same respect one accords a human neighbor. In Quaqtaq, the beluga whale is more than a village logo; it is a willing partner in the social and material reproduction of village life.

Managing Nunavik's Beluga Whales

At the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, Canada was one of 189 countries to adopt the International Convention on Biological Diversity. This convention called for development, at the national level, of strategies for conservation and biodiversity and expanded an already growing philosophy of sustainable use of natural resources. The Convention is guided by the precautionary principle of biodiversity conservation, as signatories are encouraged, in the absence of full scientific certainty, to undertake measures to minimize threats to species and ecosystems. Building on this, Canada has pursued its own biodiversity policies, and in 2003, the Species at Risk Act (SARA) was passed. An integral component of SARA is the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), an independent body of experts that designates species at risk. In accordance with the Convention on Biological Diversity and SARA, and under the guidance of COSEWIC, the DFO seeks to reduce the threats to beluga whale populations throughout Canadian waters.

Based on summer habitat, DFO divides Canada's belugas into seven distinct stocks (DFO 2005a:1). Three of these stocks migrate each year around Hudson Bay, James Bay, Hudson Strait, Ungava Bay, and Davis Strait (Map 2) and have traditionally been hunted by Nunavik and Nunavut Inuit. These three stocks are managed by DFO in the waters surrounding Nunavik:

- Western Hudson Bay stock, the world's largest beluga population, estimated at 57,000 whales (DFO 2005b). COSEWIC has advised SARA to list this population as "special concern" (COSEWIC 2004);[7]

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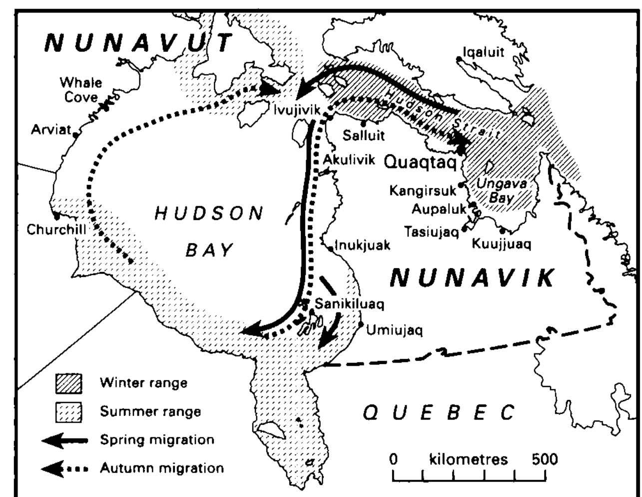
- Eastern Hudson Bay stock, estimated at 3,100 in 2007, and assigned "endangered" status by COSEWIC;
- Ungava Bay stock, estimated to be less than 200 animals in 2007, and also assigned "endangered" status.

Beginning in the 1750s, beluga whales were hunted in Canadian waters by commercial whalers from Britain and the United States. Marine biologists believe that beluga stocks never recovered from this prolonged and large-scale slaughter, and that some stocks continue to decline, despite no commercial whaling occurring since the early 1900s (Hammill et al. 2004). A number of factors are believed to be responsible for this continued decline, including continued over-exploitation by Inuit of the Eastern Hudson Bay population (Bourdages et al. 2002; Hammill 2001), disturbance from outboard motors, the hunting of beluga in estuaries (Doidge 1994), and the expansion of the Greenland halibut fishery into beluga winter habitat. Inuit express concern regarding habitat degradation in estuaries due to noise disturbance and hydroelectric projects (Doidge, Adams, and Burgy 2002).

In 1996, following a decade of research and concern that subsistence hunting would lead to a further decline in Eastern Hudson Bay and Ungava Bay stocks, DFO implemented its first five-year beluga management plan in Nunavik (DFO 2005b). The management plan, however, did not make a distinction between the hunting of Western and Eastern Hudson Bay belugas. As mentioned above, the Western population of belugas, at 57,000, is the largest in the world, while the Eastern consists of a mere 3,100 animals. A blanket quota was imposed, as DFO believe the two stocks are indistinguishable when they migrate together through Hudson Strait. Quaqtarmiut, however, disagree and are confident in their ability to distinguish Eastern belugas (which, they say, migrate a few weeks earlier, are larger in size, and travel in smaller pods) from their Western counterparts. This local knowledge of whales has been consistently ignored in the formulation of policy.

In 1996, a quota was set for 240 belugas per year for the entire region (which consists of approximately 14,000 people in 14 villages). Inuit surpassed the quota by an average of 42 belugas in each if those five years (Tyrrell 2007). When the next management plan was introduced in 2001, the quota was further reduced to 125 belugas per year, but in the first year alone Inuit reported harvesting 395[8] (Kishigami 2005). The next management plan, in 2005, clearly stated that "actions to ensure compliance with the management plan and applicable Regulations *[sic]* will be taken as necessary" (DFO 2005c: iii). In 2005, each of the 14 Nunavik villages, irrespective of population size or beluga hunting tradition, was equally allocated a quota of 15. This decision regarding allocation was not made exclusively by DFO, but involved consultation with Inuit members of a fledgling co-management board.[9] Levels of compliance varied from village to village. Salluit harvested 23 belugas, Akulivik 28, and Ivujivik 37. Five belugas were harvested from Ungava Bay and one from Eastern Hudson Bay, both areas off-limits to the hunt (Nunatsiaq News 2005). As a result, three Nunavik hunters faced poaching charges.

Map 2. Migration Patterns of Beluga Whales



The 2006-2008 beluga management plan warned that harsh measures would be taken to deal with over-hunting. Villagers were warned in 2006 that over-hunting would lead to a further quota cut (George 2006). The plan also stated that hunters were "absolutely forbidden to hunt" in Eastern Hudson Bay and Ungava Bay (ibid.). Ignoring the regulations once again, hunters in various communities took more than their allowed harvest. In August 2006, the hunting season was declared closed by DFO, effectively denying belugas to those villages whose hunt had not yet begun. Seven hunters from across the region are currently under investigation for poaching in 2006. If guilty, each hunter faces a maximum fine of $250,000, or five years imprisonment. In 2007, hunters exceeded the quota by 45, and DFO stated that these will be subtracted from the 2008 quota. DFO has also stated that it may send enforcement officers to villages in 2008 to "make sure the quotas are respected" (Siku News 2007). It appears that increasing levels of DFO regulation are matched by increasing Inuit defiance.

"The Quota": Material and Emotional Impacts of Beluga Management

Quaqtarmiut believe there have been marked local social and cultural changes since the imposition of these management plans, including changes to hunting and sharing practices, to the enculturation and enskilment of young people, and increased dependence on store-bought foods. The management of belugas has also had a strong emotional impact. Quaqtarmiut express their frustrations in the public and private spaces where they meet and over the local FM radio station. "The quota" is a regular topic of conversation, exercising the imagination and indignation of many. Some communities have taken pains to adhere to the quota, and Quaqtaq is one of those. The local Renewable Resources Officer[10] told me, "If

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we can show that we are capable of managing the whales on our own, then maybe they'll [DFO] leave us alone." However, Quaqtarmiut are increasingly frustrated by the ever-tightening restrictions on the hunt and its increasing criminalization and, as with other Nunavik communities, are becoming more defiant (George 2007).

Since the imposition of the management regime, beluga hunting no longer occurs at the traditional hunting places dotted along the coastline, and families no longer move out to their cabins for beluga hunting (although some still do so for other hunting activities). As a result, women, children, and the elderly are effectively excluded from the complex of activities that previously surrounded the hunt at these locations.[11] Hunting now occurs in one location—on the beach in front of the village. The reasons for this are two-fold. Firstly, by hunting together, individuals or groups of hunters reduce the risk of inadvertently surpassing the quota on the same day in different locations. Secondly, because the quota is now so small, hunters cannot risk being absent and losing the opportunity to take a share in the harvest.

In the past, beluga season might last for weeks, with hunters taking care to choose which animals to harvest based on age, size, etc. Now the quota is often filled in one day. Hunters stand shoulder to shoulder along the beach, their rifles aimed at the water. Many express concern for safety with the eagerness to land a whale often getting in the way of due care and attention (to both people and belugas):

> They used to wait for whales at the Point. Now everyone runs down [to the beach] with their guns and trucks, and they start shooting from every direction. They stand around, and they're not supposed to. You're supposed to lay low and wait for the whales to come in. (RE, personal communication, May 11, 2006)

As a result, some people have dissociated themselves from the hunt. Some formerly active hunters now choose to stay away, concerned by the behavior of others:

> My husband didn't get any whales last year. He's the type who wouldn't go down there when there're so many people and they try to fight over it. (RE, personal communication, May 11, 2006)

These changes in practice impact on knowledge and skill. With most hunting now occurring close to the village, the knowledge and skill related to those other places is increasingly lost:

> It's not just so much having or hunting the food, but also losing the abilities to hunt because [it takes] skill and [it takes] time. Being able to do this is part of our survival. (BD, personal communication, May 15, 2006)

The cultural and historical knowledge generated through the continued use and habitation of these places is lost, and they become less important to community life:

> We used to go camping for weeks at a time. But it's not worth it now. There's no more work to do. (JO, personal communication, April 19, 2006)

The enskilment and enculturation of young people has also suffered. Before the quota, boys were involved in the hunt from a young age, and making mistakes and learning through trial and error were part of the process of growing into the role of competent and successful hunter. But in the presence of quotas, there is little room to make mistakes, and with each family relying on its most skilled hunter to harvest a beluga, a young unskilled boy is a hindrance these days. But excluding young people from the hunt in this way denies them the opportunity to acquire these important skills:

> One time a whale came and [my son] shot it and caught his first whale. But now, you're not able to teach them when everyone's rushing down and trying to get their whales all at once. They have no time to say, 'Ok, shoot it now.' (RE, personal communication, May 11, 2006)

This exclusion of children is unique to the beluga hunt. Parents regularly take their children seal, goose, or ptarmigan hunting, and children are also involved in hunting activities through the formal education system. Teenagers and young adult men also said they hunt many other species but have no involvement in the beluga hunt.

Sharing the harvest has also changed. Since the imposition of the quota in Quaqtaq, maktaq from the first whale is divided equally amongst all 72 houses in the village. This new rule ensures that everyone receives at least a token of the harvest. Following this formal distribution, the remaining quota is distributed on a first-come first-served basis:

> The sharing has changed. Now we fight over one whale to try to get a piece for ourselves. Before, everyone would get a piece from the whales and nobody would fight. Now we fight over it, which is not our tradition. (RE, personal communication, May 11, 2006)

Some prefer to go without meat, maktaq, and misiraq rather than be involved in ugly scenes of grabbing and fighting over, what has now been transformed into, a scarce resource:

> Because some of us don't like to fight over food, we back off and just get a piece from the first whale. (RE, personal communication, May 11, 2006)

Reduced availability of beluga means that Quaqtarmiut must now rely more on store-bought food. The tiny co-operative store is stocked with over-priced foods, often of low nutritional value with high fat and food additive content. Replacement foods at the co-op, such as beef, pork, or chicken, are only available pre-frozen and are prohibitively expensive, having been imported from southern Canada. With less of this nutritious traditional food on hand, people say they are forced to rely more on store-bought alternatives. And many poorer families must rely on the cheapest of these foods:

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> If they're going to take away our food source, then they need to replace what they took away from us by providing the people the opportunity to get nutritious food. (JO, personal communication, April 19, 2006)

Beyond these material implications of beluga management, cultural and emotional impacts are palpable as many people express feelings of great sadness and loss. Once the quota has been filled, Quaqtarmiut say they are now obliged to stand by and watch as thousands of whales migrate past their shores. Some say they find the temptation to hunt almost too powerful, and only the fear of legal action prevents most from acting on their feelings:

> Last fall it was hard. When we reached the quota we were just watching the whales. It was sad. I even tried going down in the morning. I saw some whales close by. Another guy came by with his rifle too. We didn't shoot. We were just watching. It was too hard. (EA, personal communication, April 24, 2006)

For many, the survival of Inuit culture itself is threatened. Instead of shooting whales with guns, Quaqtarmiut say they now shoot them with cameras:

> After the quotas had finished last year they just had their cameras down there and everyone was like a *qallunaq* [non-Inuit, person of Euro-American origin] taking pictures. No guns. We were just watching the whales and there was nothing in our freezer for the winter. That was sad. That's happened for two years now. (RE, personal communications, May 11, 2006)

However, one unforeseen outcome of the management of beluga whales is the arrival in Quaqtaq each autumn of hunters from five Ungava Bay villages. Under the management plan, Ungava Bay is closed to the hunt, yet villages in the region are allocated a quota that they can only fill by travelling elsewhere. The Hunter Support Programs[12] of these villages fly four or five hunters each to Quaqtaq to fill their quota there.[13] This has certain advantages for Quaqtarmiut. It provides revenue to those families who provide room and board, and rent their hunting equipment to visiting hunters. And beluga meat, being both too expensive to freight and the least favored part of the whale, is often left behind in Quaqtaq for local use.

Some people from these villages have a long tradition of coming to Quaqtaq each year to hunt various animals, and strong kin and reciprocal relationships exist. But Inuit from the more distant villages are, for the most part, new to Quaqtaq, and they are believed to bring their own set of problems. There is a perception amongst Quaqtarmiut that most of these villages lack a beluga hunting tradition, and they only recently began to hunt whales due to the management plan.[14] As a result, many of these hunters are seen to lack the necessary skills to safely and effectively hunt belugas. The arrival of these hunters causes increased tensions at the hunting site, leads to conflict around butchering and sharing, and increases danger due to the perceived unsafe hunting practices of these individuals.

For these social and economic reasons, Quaqtarmiut feel aggrieved at the continued management of the beluga hunt, as it impinges on their relationship with belugas, with the environment in which they live, and with one another.

Conservation or Cultural Imperialism?

Why, in the space of a few short years, has open subsistence hunting become a potentially criminal act that has transformed abundant belugas into scarce resources? As indigenous subsistence hunters with a long tradition of beluga hunting, most Inuit believe they are being punished for exercising their right to hunt belugas in their own culturally appropriate way, and that each year's quota reduction is reactionary, rather than based on sound policy based on improved scientific findings. They are angry at being told when, where, and how to hunt and see these rules as a direct attack on their way of life. As such, resistance to management and attempts to carry on hunting as normal are viewed as means to cultural survival. Inuit are also scathing in their criticism of the science upon which management policies are based. From the Inuit perspective, the research conducted by DFO scientists is flawed, with scientists conducting beluga population counts in the wrong places, at the wrong times of year, and using inappropriate methods. As the scientists are themselves DFO employees and are, in some cases, responsible for the development of policy, the objectivity of their science is questioned. Inuit anger is tied to a deepening sense of disillusionment as hunters feel their voices are muted, and their concerns regarding the quota, their suggestions for better scientific practice, and their in-depth knowledge of beluga behavior are ignored. Inuit say belugas are abundant in the region and are, therefore, highly suspicious of DFO's motives, believing there may be a strong animal rights influence that seeks to put an end to Inuit hunting culture.

Managing Inuit

In Quaqtaq the management of belugas is embedded within a broader narrative of Canadian colonialism. The link between beluga management and grievances from previous generations is clear in the minds of many Quaqtarmiut. "Inuit are suspicious because of past government activities," said one man. "Because we have always pictured Europeans as domineering people, we're always suspicious that the government is trying to dominate us and control us" (JO, personal communication, April 19, 2006). Irlbacher-Fox (2005) has found a similar grounding in the past during Dene discussions regarding land claims and the provision of social services in the Northwest Territories.

In 1999, Canadian Inuit elders made allegations concerning Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) treatment of sled dogs between the 1950s and 1970s. Inuit elders allege

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that their dogs were systematically slaughtered in an attempt to prevent Inuit from living on the land, thus forcing them into permanent settlements. The RCMP says it was forced to kill some dogs for health and safety reasons. The dramatic decline in dog numbers at the time, says the RCMP, coincided with a series of canine epidemics, the decline in the fur trade, a move away from Inuit reliance on the land to a greater reliance on the market economy, and the beginning of the shift to motorized transport technology (RCMP 2006). Dogs were often slaughtered, they say, at the request of Inuit dog owners. Inuit also allege there was a conspiratorial cover-up, whereby all documents relating to the dog slaughter were destroyed. The RCMP strenuously denies any such conspiracy.

This debate has become a hot topic across the North and is cited by many Inuit as an example of southern Canadian imperialism, highlighting the power imbalance between Inuit and government at the time. One Quaqtaq man said, "When they eliminated all the dogs, it was a way to control the people, to make sure they didn't travel too much. They eliminated their mode of transportation" (JO, personal communication, April 19, 2006). Quaqtarmiut regularly compared the dog slaughter to the current management of the beluga hunt.

Another perceived historical wrong was the resettlement of northern Quebec Inuit to the High Arctic in the 1950s. Again, Inuit and the Canadian federal government disagree about the reasons for the relocation. Makivik Corporation[15] claims that Inuit were forced to move and were "used" by the federal government to strengthen Canadian sovereignty (Tester and Kulchyski 1994). From the government viewpoint, Inuit were relocated for humanitarian reasons and all relocatees moved voluntarily (ibid.).

Recent Inuit narratives of these events could be considered revisionist, with contemporary sensibilities informing the reconstruction of past events. It is beyond the scope of this paper to consider whether these were, in fact, attempts by the government to subdue Inuit culture (cf. Tester and Kulchyski 1994). However, this perception of previous wrongs continues to color Nunavik Inuit relations with and suspicion of the government. In the eyes of many Nunavik Inuit, DFO, as representative of the federal government, cannot be trusted because its management of beluga whales is, in fact, an attempt to manage Inuit in ways similar to the slaughter of their dogs and the relocation of their relatives.

The invisibility of DFO scientists is an important contributing factor in the construction of this imperialist narrative. There are no resident scientists or federal wildlife managers in a small community such as Quaqtaq, nor are scientists present at the times and places when Quaqtarmiut witness tens of thousands of belugas migrating past their shores.[16] This absence has led to a general lack of understanding of DFO methods and motivations, and through a lack of contact and communication, the construction of DFO as the agent of an imperialist agenda. One individual in Quaqtaq told me that over the years he had become acquainted with some DFO scientists who had begun to be supportive of the Inuit perspective and to appreciate Inuit knowledge of belugas. But, he said, when these individuals expressed their pro-Inuit views to their superiors they were removed from their assignments:

> A lot of DFO guys have been fired because they favor our information. People we were starting to get close to were put away to work somewhere else, away from here. (HO, personal communication, April 25 2006)

The perception amongst some Quaqtarmiut, therefore, is that individuals sympathetic to Inuit viewpoints were quickly removed to prevent any dilution of the government agenda. Quaqtaq's Renewable Resources Officer said that the high turnover of DFO staff working on beluga management was a deliberate attempt to prevent good working relationships developing between Inuit and DFO employees.

There is also a strong contention by Inuit (not exclusive to this region or issue) that their knowledge is not taken seriously. Quaqtarmiut believed the techniques used by scientists to determine beluga population numbers were faulty, but their attempts to assist scientists to improve their techniques fell on deaf ears. Hunters said that scientists conducted aerial surveys in places and at times of the year that resulted in low population estimates. But despite Inuit informing scientists of more appropriate places and times, the scientists continued on their own path. Some scientists argue that there are logistical impediments to acting on Inuit recommendations, and that Inuit do not understand what DFO is trying to achieve. But many Inuit feel this dismissal of Inuit knowledge is a deliberate attempt to undermine Inuit rights to hunt:

> DFO never want to believe what hunters are saying. They have their own beliefs, their own findings. They don't want to know what we know. (HO, personal communication, May 5, 2006)

Nuttall (1998) sees scientific environmental management as a form of continuing imperialism, as indigenous peoples are forced to adhere to Western ideologies of conservation and environmentalism. As the subsistence hunting of belugas becomes increasingly criminalized in Nunavik, Inuit perception goes beyond this, hinging on a narrative of cultural imperialism that revolves around animal rights activism and Western urban relationships with animals.

Privileging Whales?

It is now 17 years since George Wenzel published *Animal Rights Human Rights* where he detailed the impact of the European seal skin ban on the Canadian Inuit economy (1991). The cultural and ideological impacts of the seal skin ban were as strongly felt amongst Inuit as were the material impacts. The conflicts that accompanied the ban impacted on Inuit identity and on Inuit perceptions of government, science, and animal rights activism. Seventeen years on, across Inuit homelands there is a feeling that what lies at the heart of wildlife management conflicts is a vast ideological and cultural chasm between Inuit who live alongside *animals* and

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southern scientists and government officials who attempt to protect and conserve *resources* (Tyrrell 2007). In some regions and with relation to the conservation of some species, Inuit and southerners have taken positive steps to overcome these differences and are working together in ways that are acceptable to most. Clearly, this has not been the case in Nunavik with regard to beluga whales. Many in Nunavik believe that DFO scientists are strongly influenced by both the ideology of animal rights and by the powerful animal rights lobby which, they say, funds scientific research and influences government policy.

A recurrent theme throughout my time in Quaqtaq was the animal rights movement. While living in Quaqtaq, every new acquaintance I met invariably asked, "Are you Greenpeace?" or "Are you animal rights?" Having established that I was neither, everyone was happy to discuss beluga hunting with me. However, I was denied any visual representations of hunting or butchering. I was told that other southerners before me had been asked to not take photographs or video footage of beluga hunting, and one man told me he had confiscated camera film from a *qallunaq* at the previous year's hunt. There was a general fear that southerners might give such images to organizations such as Greenpeace, who would use them to incite public outrage at Inuit hunting practices.[17] Quaqtarmiut regularly talked about Greenpeace and Sir Paul McCartney. In March 2006, McCartney and his wife appeared on newspaper covers and television news bulletins across the globe, lying on a Canadian ice floe beside a harp seal pup, as they campaigned against Canada's seal fur industry. Many Canadians viewed this as the unwanted intrusion of outsiders into Canadian life. For Inuit, however, it recalled the seal protests of an earlier era and the eventual European ban (Wenzel 1991). Quaqtarmiut were most unhappy with McCartney's actions and throughout our conversations linked this event to their own struggle with beluga management.

Nunavik Inuit believe they are fighting a global ideology against which they are powerless. Over the past three decades, the activities of animal welfare groups have provoked an impassioned response from Inuit (Nuttall 1998). Some Quaqtarmiut expressed the opinion that DFO, and the Canadian government in general, enjoys the financial backing of the animal rights lobby which influences the research and policy agenda:

> The animal rights group, they're a powerful organization based in the [United] States. All the migrating marine mammals are controlled from the States and the laws are passed on to the Canadian wildlife departments. They get their money from the animal rights groups to work on animals. (HO, personal communication, April 18, 2006)

This statement is echoed by Freeman (1995:9) who claims that large organizations such as Greenpeace or the International Fund for Animal Welfare "are not only commercially very successful, but are able to use their considerable financial resources to seek to exert political influence nationally and internationally."

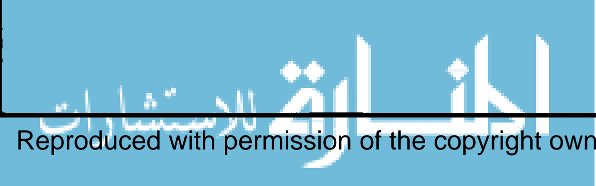
It is easy to see why Inuit believe that the animal rights movement is influential in research and policymaking processes. With internationally renowned celebrities such as McCartney lending his name to well-known organizations, Inuit feel that their beliefs and traditions are overshadowed by those of societies far removed from the natural world. Even though most animal rights organizations do not speak directly to indigenous subsistence hunting, their highlighting of hunting in general negatively effects how governments and their scientists deal with subsistence practices. As many Inuit see it, this is a form of intellectual and ideological imperialism, whereby the philosophies and ideologies of the environmentalist tradition seek to replace those of indigenous cultures. As one man put it:

> They talk about whales becoming endangered, but what about Inuit? I think we will become endangered. We will be white people in Inuit bodies. I think that's what they want—that we all become vegetarians, wear synthetic clothing. (JO, personal communication, April 19, 2006)

As many Inuit see it, scientists are driven by an agenda that promotes "saving the whale" and that views the environment as being at risk from human actions (cf. Caulfield 1997; Freeman 1990). There is a contention that the hegemonic ideology of conservationism and animal rights is influential in the DFO decision-making process. Most scientists I have met in the north consider themselves independent-minded, with the best interests of a certain species, or the ecosystem as a whole, at heart. Inuit, on the other hand, are often of the opinion that the role of the scientist is to push the government agenda. Fernandez-Gimenez et al. (2006:1) write that many Alaskan Inuit perceive science as "a tool of state control," and the influence the animal rights lobby holds over government is seen to be reflected in the research and management agenda.

Power and Voice

Since 2004, beluga whales in Nunavik have been co-managed by an inter-regional and intercultural board called LUMAQ (George 2006). This committee consists of Inuit representatives from Nunavik and Nunavut and one representative from DFO. The board is jointly chaired by a representative of Makivik Corporation and the Minister for Fisheries and Oceans. As partners in the co-management of belugas, why do the people of Nunavik still feel excluded from the management process? Scholarly literature on the co-management of wildlife resources in the Arctic and sub-Arctic has been, at times, highly critical of the aims and outcomes of co-management and of the meaningful and successful inclusion of indigenous peoples in the co-management process (Cruikshank 2001; Fernandez-Gimenez et al. 2006; Fienup-Riordan 1999; Kishigami 2005; Nadasdy 1999, 2005; Peters 2003). The co-management of beluga whales in Nunavik would appear to be at the lower end of a spectrum of meaningful inclusion of indigenous



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resource-users in various processes from setting research agendas to formulating management policy. Caulfield (1997:4) writes, "Co-management can too easily become co-optation; a situation one indigenous leader disparagingly characterises as '*we* cooperate and *they* manage.'" Nunavik Inuit insist that they are forced to go along with DFO's management decisions and say they are part of the co-management process in name only (Kishigami 2005; Tyrrell 2007).

At present, LUMAQ lacks the formal authority of other northern co-management institutions such as the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board or the Inuvialuit Fisheries Joint Management Committee. DFO, despite having only one representative on LUMAQ, continues to set the research agenda and to set recovery targets for its designated beluga populations. Inuit representatives are only responsible for distributing DFO's quota amongst the 14 Nunavik villages. DFO spokespersons admit bafflement at the continued lack of Inuit support for the management plan (George 2007) and say that if the quota was divided differently, based on community needs rather than the current equal division, there would be less dissent amongst hunters. And indeed, DFO makes a good point. One of the biggest criticisms I encountered while in Quaqtaq was the fact that, in 2006, all villages were allocated a quota of 15, irrespective of village population or hunting tradition. Many in Quaqtaq said they would be happier if the Ungava Bay quota of 75 whales was redistributed amongst the villages of Hudson Strait.

It is difficult to say why the quota has been allocated this way. It is possibly an attempt to be fair to all and not deny anyone the right to hunt whales. Indeed, evidence from research I have conducted on the west coast of Hudson Bay suggests that (with regard to other species) when quotas are put in place, hunters begin to express their "right" to hunt, irrespective of their previous tradition of hunting that particular species. The equal distribution of the beluga quota across Nunavik ignores varied village sizes and regional differences across Nunavik, with Hudson Strait communities historically having a much bigger reliance on a greater abundance of belugas. This equal distribution also inadvertently places a burden on the Hunter Support Programs of those villages that fly their hunters elsewhere to fulfil their quota. Money that would normally support other hunting activities and provide food for the elderly and disabled is now spent on flying a few hunters north in order to bring a small amount of maktaq home.

Individual village representatives on LUMAQ are perceived by Quaqtarmiut as not being forceful enough in expressing themselves on the co-management board. One man said that the people who represent the villages do not speak up about the impact that management has on Inuit lives. Nor are they forceful enough in putting Inuit knowledge and expertise on the table. Peters (2003) has written that in Nunavik there are differing perceptions of the role of Inuit on co-management boards. While DFO perceives Inuit board members as having the authority to speak for their entire communities, Inuit themselves do not perceive board members in this light. Community consultation, writes Peters, is preferred and expected by Inuit, allowing everyone an equal opportunity to express his or her opinion. This has not happened. DFO, and the Inuit members of LUMAQ, act without any real consultation with local hunters.

Discussions about beluga management take place in private and public places in the villages but rarely make it to the co-management table (cf. Irlbacher-Fox 2005). The disjuncture between the cultural milieu of village meeting places (home, store, church, school, on the land) and co-management meeting rooms make translation between the two extremely difficult. The concern, disillusionment, and sadness of the informal conversation, or the detailed knowledge of beluga whales shared in a casual way, is not easily translated into the formal language of co-management. Therefore, strong emotions and embedded knowledge remain outside the door. Nadasdy (2003) uses Bourdieu's concept of linguistic habitus in his discussion of the acceptable linguistic register of co-management. The language of the hunter and of the village is excluded from the co-management table, while the language of management, policy, and science are privileged. In this rational space, the discourse of beluga stock recovery is louder than the voices of individuals and families who have been criminalized by this discourse.

Reclaiming the Right to Participate

Attempts at land claims and self-governance in northern Quebec have long fallen short of Inuit expectations, and many continue to feel an imbalance in the relationship with provincial and federal governments. When the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement was signed in 1975, its main objective was "to protect the environment and secure a way of life based on harvesting activities" (Peters 1999:395). However, the Agreement did not meet the expectations of Cree and Inuit in the region. Provisions under the Agreement cover only the terrestrial environment, but as Mulrennan and Scott (2001:79) point out, 70 percent of Nunavik traditional foods come from the sea and, therefore, most Inuit harvesting activities are excluded. To make matters more difficult for Inuit in their attempts to run their own affairs, the neighboring Inuit territory of Nunavut controls Nunavik's entire offshore area (including islands). Therefore, any wildlife decisions that involve these waters must be in accordance with Nunavut regulations through the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (ibid.).

However, in December 2006, the Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement was signed. One important feature of the Agreement is that it gives Inuit far greater control over the offshore area. One provision of the Agreement is the establishment of a wildlife management board, similar to that of the neighboring Nunavut Wildlife Management Board. While belugas are ultimately under the federal authority of DFO, Inuit potentially have a greater say in research and policy agendas and in the entire decision-making process regarding beluga management.

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Nunavik Inuit are hopeful that the fledgling co-management board will soon enjoy greater power, allowing Inuit a more equal footing with DFO. But the land claim agreement should also instil in Nunavik Inuit greater feelings of confidence and autonomy. The "government" will no longer be far distant in Quebec City or Ottawa. Nunavik's Kativik Regional Government will now have greater authority, similar to that of the Nunavut Government, and the setting up of a co-management board, it is hoped, will provide Inuit with greater power to manage their own wildlife resources in more culturally appropriate ways (although the privileging of southern knowledge and voice remains problematic).

But what of the suspicion Inuit feel towards DFO as agents of cultural imperialism? Even with this increased political authority, Inuit still have to work in collaboration with DFO on the issue of beluga management. Perhaps both Inuit and DFO can seek inspiration from other co-management regimes. Anthropological literature has tended to focus more on the faults and failings of co-management, pointing to the power imbalances and the cross-cultural chasm regarding the relational positions of humans and animals in the environment (Cruikshank 2001; Nadasdy 1999, 2003, 2005). However, there are some examples of levels of co-management success that are grounded in specific social and political contexts which have led to far greater levels of collaboration and trust between all parties. Co-management regimes are far from flawless and even the most successful have their detractors. Like all committees, they do not run smoothly, and debates, arising from both inter- and intra-cultural perspectives, continually arise. But the success of these regimes lies in the ability of all parties involved to debate openly and in relationships of trust and understanding.

Ideally, successful co-management can only occur when all parties trust each other and when all are open to the possibilities of other ideologies and knowledge systems. Trust can take a long time to develop and rarely exists from the start. Disputes and disagreements will always exist, but these are healthy and necessary components. Debate over scientific and traditional knowledge and debate over best management practices, if conducted in an open manner, can only lead to further improvements in the conservation of a species or ecosystem. However, agreement must exist regarding the aims and objectives of management. If one party suspects the other of harboring imperialist motives, as is the case in Nunavik, then there can be no hope of success. The sharing of all aspects of management is also important, with both sides agreeing on research agendas, goals, and the implementation of policy. None of these currently exists in the case of Nunavik beluga management. Not only must scientists be open to the knowledge systems of indigenous peoples, but indigenous peoples must be open to scientific knowledge practices. Successful co-management regimes are those where indigenous hunters and scientists work side-by-side, learning from each other and sharing methods and techniques. In this way, Inuit gain a greater understanding of scientific method, and scientists, in turn, learn that the knowledge possessed by Inuit is not based solely on spirituality (as indigenous knowledge is often mistaken to be) but is rather based on rigorous observation, on trial and error, and on the heightened perceptual skills that come from long-term engagement within one particular environment.

The Alaska Beluga Whale Committee (ABWC), Inuvialuit Fisheries Joint Management Committee (FJMC), and the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) are three such regimes, enjoying varying degrees of success. In Alaska, hunters participate in all phases of beluga whale research, and have expressed ownership over the products of that research (Fernandez-Gimenez et al. 2006). Scientific knowledge has become part of the local knowledge base. This has led to greater understandings amongst hunters of the reasons behind and value of scientific research. Working together allows both sets of people to see each other as human beings. Outside of the co-management board, scientists and villagers work together, combining their skills to achieve their common goals. Through spending time in villages, scientists have become more aware of the social consequences of conservation management, and as a result, there exists on both sides a greater willingness to engage with each other as human beings and collaborators rather than as "natives" and "government."

The two Canadian examples of the FJMC and NWMB are both cases of indigenous self-governance leading to local resource users working in partnership with federal government agencies. Both Inuvialuit and Nunavut Inuit contract scientists to conduct ecosystem and species research. Whittles (2004) writes that Inuvialuit embrace techno-science, yet reserve the right to interpret findings based on their own knowledge systems. He argues that Inuvialuit have had to struggle to prove the legitimacy of their knowledge and their control over natural resources, and the emergence of self-governance has provided them with far greater levels of authority. The creation of NWMB was at the heart of the Nunavut Land Claim. It has a certain level of control over Nunavut's wildlife research agenda, the management of species, and even the listing of species at risk. It reserves the right to veto any scientific wildlife research projects it deems inappropriate, too invasive, or not in the best interests of a species.

I am not suggesting that any of these co-management institutions is flawless. To engage with science and government, Inuit have had to adopt the language of science and conservation management, and in most cases, have had to strip their own environmental knowledge of all its embedded cultural and social meaning. Inuit have had to come far more than halfway in order to meet science and policy. There is still a long way to go before Inuit knowledge of animals and Inuit ways of thinking about and with animals is fully accepted and acknowledged as being equal to and as valid and authoritative as scientific knowledge. How Inuit interpret the role of co-management boards is also an issue that has not yet been resolved. However, what these three co-management institutions have in common, and what makes them at least partially successful, is that they have provided a voice to Inuit and have opened a space where Inuit and scientists/policymakers can work together to understand each other's viewpoints. As a

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result, once quotas are set and management guidelines laid out, transgressions rarely occur. This has not been the case with beluga management in Nunavik. As Nunavik co-management begins to take shape, Inuit and federal government board members have the opportunity to take advantage of the lessons learned in other co-management arrangements across the North American Arctic. Whether they make the most of this opportunity is yet to be seen.

Conclusion

It is relatively easy to quantify the effects of the beluga management regime on Nunavik Inuit. The changes that have occurred to hunting and sharing practices are all too obvious, and the economic impacts can be seen in how little maktaq and misiraq families have in their larders. The emotional impacts are also palpable, as Inuit speak of sorrow and loss, not only over their right to hunt belugas, but over an entire way of life. The joy of the harvest and the cultural importance of sharing as an expression of kinship and community have been replaced by a frenzied grabbing of whatever can be taken, with little regard for the needs of others who may not have access to the hunting site.

The management of beluga whales is perceived, by Nunavik Inuit, in a wholly negative light, and anger and frustration continue to grow as regulations become ever more restrictive. With each passing year, resistance increases, and one Quaqtaq man believes Inuit and DFO are moving towards a Burnt Church-type stand-off.[18]

It appears that the greatest impediment to co-operation is a lack of communication. Inuit say they never see DFO scientists or managers in the villages, and research is conducted without any input from Inuit hunters. They are understandably suspicious, therefore, of DFO's motives. Inuit contextualize the current management of beluga whales within the framework of political and ideological imperialism, and they express distrust towards and powerlessness against a government that has proven itself historically to be untrustworthy, has broken promises, and generally attempted to deny Inuit their human rights. As long as this perception of government persists, Inuit will not participate willingly and openly in beluga management.

What must DFO do to prove that their intent is not to destroy Inuit culture? A greater degree of openness combined with greater visibility would go a long way to putting Inuit minds at ease. As examples from other regions of the Arctic have shown, trust and understanding can only come about through people working together. Only when DFO realizes that the lives of belugas and the lives of Nunavik Inuit are intimately linked will they understand that the well-being of one relies on the well-being of the other. New co-management arrangements offer DFO the opportunity to get to know the value of Inuit knowledge and the role belugas play in the lives and identities of Inuit, and offer Inuit opportunities to gain a better understanding of the motivations and methodologies of DFO. Only time will tell if these barriers to communication and collaboration can be overcome.

Notes

[1]I employ the generic term "Inuit" here to denote all those peoples across the circumpolar world who belong to the Eskaleut language family, but who variously refer to themselves as Eskimo, Inuit, Inupiat, Yupik, Kalallit, etc. The people at the center of this paper are Inuit.

[2]Adult males measure 3.65 m—4.25 m and adult females measure 3.0 m—3.65 m (Richard 2001:42).

[3]I employ the word "southern" throughout to denote the peoples, knowledge systems, and conservation regimes that are not indigenous to the Arctic and sub-Arctic (known collectively as "the north").

[4]See Dorais (1997) for a detailed ethnography of Quaqtaq.

[5]Quaqtarmiut: The people of Quaqtaq.

[6]In recent decades, this sharing of the beluga harvest has extended beyond the north, with care packages of beluga maktaq, misiraq, and meat sent south to family members living in Montreal and other southern cities, where it is further shared amongst Inuit friends within the urban setting.

[7]COSEWIC recommendations, however, have been contested by the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board and other northern stakeholders, and there has been no listing under SARA of any beluga whales in Nunavut/Nunavik waters.

[8]It was suspected, by DFO and Inuit wildlife authorities, that many more harvested and struck-and-lost whales were not reported.

[9]Perception within Quaqtaq was that Inuit voices on the co-management board were not loud enough. This was seen to be the fault of Inuit participants.

[10]Renewable Resources Officers are local Inuit wildlife officers.

[11]See Nuttall (2001) for an in-depth discussion of memory and place in the Arctic landscape.

[12]Hunter Support Programs exist in all Nunavik communities. Through regional government provisions, hunters are paid to harvest country food which is then stored in a community freezer, accessible to elders, widows, the disabled, and others without access to their own source of country food.

[13]Due to the high cost of northern air travel, Quaqtaq is the chosen location for these Ungava Bay hunters, as it is the closest village outside of the Ungava Bay exclusion area and, therefore, cheapest to fly to.

[14]Records from 1974 to 2000 show that overall, these villages harvested fewer belugas than Hudson Strait villages, but most harvested at least one beluga every year (Kuujjuaq landed 102 belugas in 1976). There has been a marked decline in whaling in Ungava Bay since the mid-1980s (Lesage and Doidge 2005).

[15]Makivik Corporation is the development corporation mandated to manage the heritage funds of the Inuit of Nunavik provided for in the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA).

[16]DFO do not deny that there are thousands of belugas. What they stress is that those pods contain a mix of Western and Eastern Hudson Bay belugas, and that, in managing the hunt, it is the threatened latter stock that is being protected.

[17]The contrast with my other field site, on the west coast of Hudson Bay, could not be more striking. There, I have often been encouraged

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to take photographs of beluga hunting and butchering, and there is a general sense of celebration of this aspect of Inuit culture. In Quaqtaq, people were fearful that their much-loved hunt would be misrepresented to a hostile southern public.

[18]In 2000-2001, a series of stand-offs occurred between members of the Mi'kmaq First Nation, non-aboriginals, and police in Burnt Church, New Brunswick, due to Mi'kmaq lobster harvesting practices. The stand-offs led to violence and a number of arrests.

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