



Information Summary for Consultations on the Proposed Listing of Northern Bottlenose Whale (Davis Strait-Baffin Bay-Labrador Sea population) as Special Concern Under the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA)

As part of the consultation process, the Government of Canada would like to hear your comments on the potential impacts of listing Northern Bottlenose Whale, Davis Strait-Baffin Bay-Labrador Sea population (*Hyperoodon ampullatus*), as special concern under the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA). Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) has prepared this summary to provide information on the state of the Davis Strait-Baffin Bay-Labrador Sea population of Northern Bottlenose Whale.

What is the *Species at Risk Act*?

As part of its strategy for the protection of species at risk, the Government of Canada proclaimed SARA in 2003. One of the purposes of the Act is to provide for the legal protection of wildlife species and the conservation of biological diversity. The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) has the mandate to conduct assessments on the status of wildlife species and categorize them according to their level of risk for extinction (extinct, extirpated, endangered, threatened, or special concern). The Government of Canada considers the scientific evidence, the comments received from Canadians during consultations, and the potential socio-economic impacts before making a decision whether or not to include the species on the List of Wildlife Species at Risk under SARA. Recovery planning is undertaken for all listed species, and prohibitions are put in place protecting species assessed as extirpated, endangered or threatened, from being harmed.



Figure 1 Northern Bottlenose Whale

About the Northern Bottlenose Whale

The Northern Bottlenose Whale, *Hyperoodon ampullatus*, is a medium-sized beaked whale found in the northern North Atlantic. It is dolphin-like in appearance, though it is much larger than most species of dolphin. The Northern Bottlenose Whale has a pronounced forehead which is bulbous in mature females and immature whales and squared off and often white in mature males. Its colours range from chocolate brown to

light grey. It can range in size from seven to nine metres with males usually one metre longer than females.

There are two populations of Northern Bottlenose Whales found within Canadian Waters, the Scotian Shelf population and the Davis Strait-Baffin Bay-Labrador Sea population. These two populations are genetically distinct from each other. The Scotian Shelf animals are smaller in size, and may breed later in the year. The Davis Strait-Baffin Bay-Labrador Sea population is found in north-eastern Canadian waters at depths greater than 500 metres.

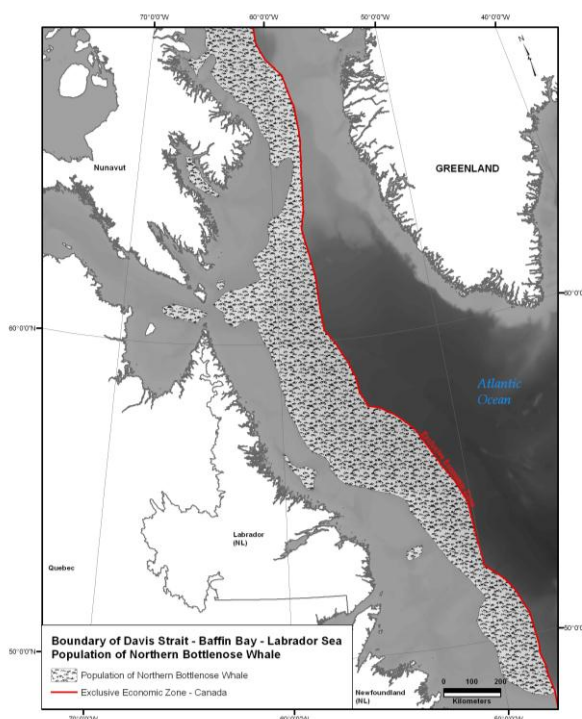


Figure 2 Map showing the boundary of the DS-BB-LS population of Northern Bottlenose Whale



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Proposed SARA Status: Special Concern

The level of protection and recovery actions undertaken for a species listed under SARA depends on its assessed level of risk for extinction. Northern Bottlenose Whale, Davis Strait-Baffin Bay-Labrador Sea population has been assessed by COSEWIC as a species of special concern. This is the lowest level of risk category and indicates that this species is not presently endangered, but is considered to be sensitive to human activities and natural events due to biological factors and/or threats. COSEWIC designated the population as special concern for three reasons: the population was likely severely reduced due to whaling in the 1960s and early 1970s, there has been no evidence of a trend in population size since that time, and the threats from fishery interactions are documented and ongoing.

Threats to the Species

COSEWIC states that Northern Bottlenose Whales in Canadian waters face two principal threats, entanglement in fishing gear and anthropogenic underwater noise from seismic exploration or Navy sonars. COSEWIC notes that both of these threats are actual but the extent of harm is uncertain.

Special Significance of the Species

A large portion of the northern range of the Northern Bottlenose Whale lies within Canadian waters. These whales are among the deepest divers of all mammals, known to dive to depths greater than 800 metres for periods up to 70 minutes. They are also known to be inquisitive, often seen approaching vessels.

Protection and Recovery of Species under the SARA

If the Northern Bottlenose Whale, Davis Strait-Baffin Bay-Labrador Sea population is added to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk as a species of special concern, it will not be subject to restrictions under SARA; however, DFO will be required to produce a management plan for the species in an effort to ensure that it does not become further at risk due to human activity. A SARA management plan will include conservation measures for the species and set goals and objectives for maintaining sustainable population levels.

Possible Management Measures

If the Northern Bottlenose Whale, Davis Strait-Baffin Bay-Labrador Sea population, is listed under SARA, DFO will, in collaboration and consultation with stakeholders and partners, use the best available information to develop a management plan.

The Consultation Process – Your Comments

As part of the consultation process, the Government of Canada would like to hear your opinions on listing Northern Bottlenose Whale, Davis Strait-Baffin Bay-Labrador Sea population, as

special concern under SARA, and any comments on the potential positive and negative impacts this listing would have on you, your industry, and/or the ecosystem. Your answers to the following questions will be used to help inform the decision whether or not to list the species under SARA:

1. What would be the environmental, social, cultural, and economic impacts of listing this population under SARA?
2. Do you support listing the Northern Bottlenose Whale, Davis Strait-Baffin Bay-Labrador Sea population as special concern on the List of Wildlife Species at Risk under SARA? Why or why not?
3. Do you represent an industry, community, Aboriginal community or organization, or other group? If so, which group or sector do you represent?

To submit answers to the above questions or share your comments, please contact:

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For a copy of the COSEWIC assessment for this species, or for other general inquiries, please visit the [SARA Public Registry](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca/status/status_e.com)

Reference

COSEWIC. 2011. COSEWIC assessment and status report on the Northern Bottlenose Whale *Hyperoodon ampullatus* in Canada. Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada. Ottawa. Xii + 31pp.
(www.sararegistry.gc.ca/status/status_e.com)

Fisheries and Oceans Canada
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Aquatic Species at Risk Web Site:
www.aquaticspeciesatrisk.gc.ca

SARA Public Registry
www.sararegistry.gc.ca



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