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EYYOU MARINE REGION WILDLIFE BOARD  
CONSEIL DE GESTION DES RESSOURCES  
FAUNIQUES DE LA RÉGION MARINE D'EEYOU  
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## FY 2021/2022 Annual Activity Report

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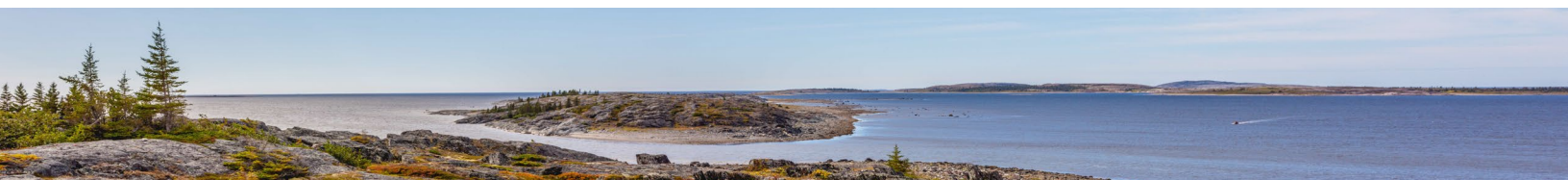
**Eeyou Marine Region Wildlife Board**

**Submitted To: Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada**

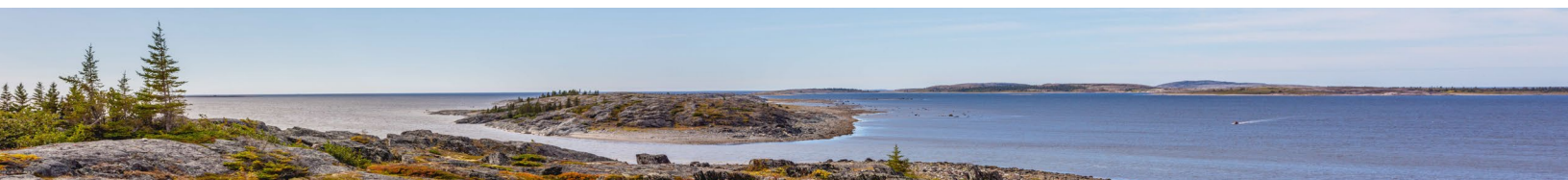
**August 1, 2022**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	ACRONYMS.....	4
2.	INTRODUCTION .....	5
3.	MANDATE, FUNCTIONS, AND PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES .....	5
4.	BOARD MEMBERSHIP.....	6
5.	BOARD MEETINGS.....	7
6.	BOARD OPERATIONS.....	9
7.	STAFFING & HUMAN RESOURCES.....	9
a.	EMRWB Staff & Training .....	9
b.	Human Resources & Benefits.....	10
c.	EMRWB 10-Year Projection Plan.....	10
8.	ACTIVITY REPORTING .....	11
a.	Annual Activity Report 2020-2021 .....	11
b.	Midterm Activity Report 2021-2022 .....	11
c.	Annual Workplan and Budget for 2022-2023 .....	11
d.	Internal reporting.....	11
9.	WEBSITE AND COMMUNICATION .....	12
10.	DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM .....	16
11.	RELATIONSHIP BUILDING .....	17
12.	WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT.....	19
a.	Eastern Hudson Bay Beluga Stock Management .....	19
b.	Establishment of a Total Allowable Take and Non-Quota Limitations for the SHB polar bears.....	20
c.	Quebec-NMR-EMR Polar Bear Management Plan.....	22
d.	Other Species At Risk Management Decisions – Killer Whale .....	22
e.	Other Species At Risk Management Decisions – Bank Swallow .....	22
f.	Other Wildlife Management Activities.....	23
13.	WILDLIFE RESEARCH AND PROJECTS.....	24
a.	Filling Data Gaps and Gathering Traditional Ecological Knowledge for Avian Species at Risk in the Eeyou Marine Region (Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk) .....	24
b.	Shorebird and Bird Species at Risk Survey .....	27
c.	EMR Motus Tower Status.....	28

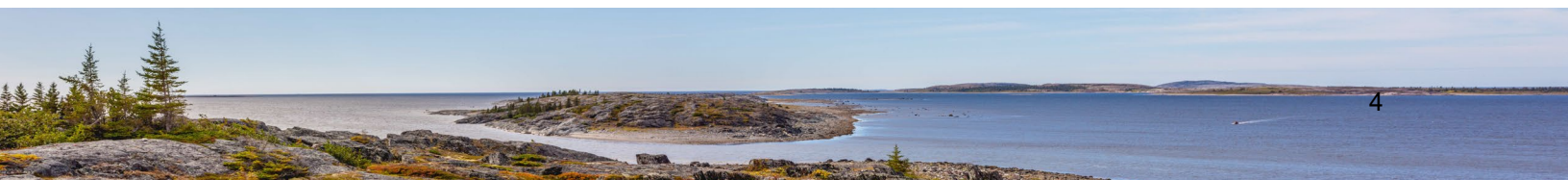


d. Autonomous Recording Unit (ARU) Pilot Project.....	28
g. Fostering Indigenous Small-scale Fisheries for Health, Economy and Food Security Project .....	30
h. Ascribing the importance of Atlantic brant staging areas for holistic conservation planning.....	33
i. Community-research partnership to assess migratory waterfowl use of habitats of eastern James Bay, Quebec, Canada .....	34
j. James Kennedy Expedition – William Kennedy Vessel .....	35
k. Coastal Ecosystem Change in the Hudson Bay Complex Project.....	39
l. National Geographic Pristine Seas .....	42
m. COTA/FaunENord Non-timber Forest Products .....	42
n. Twin Islands Bird Survey.....	43
o. Polar Bear Ecology in the Eeyou Marine Region.....	43
p. Bat ARU Project.....	46
q. Wildlife Observation Reporting.....	47
r. Polar Bear Defence of Life and Property Kills and Reporting.....	50
s. Wildlife Viewing Protocols for Tourism Ventures in the EMR .....	51
t. Youth Outreach – Mission eDNA.....	52
14. WILDLIFE RESEARCH FUND .....	55
15. CREE TRAPPERS’ ASSOCIATION .....	56
APPENDIX A – STATEMENTS OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES (FY 2021/22) .....	58
APPENDIX B - 2021-2022 EMRWB ANNUAL WORKPLAN.....	59
APPENDIX C - 2021-2022 CTA-EMR ANNUAL REPORT.....	60



## 1. ACRONYMS

AON.....	Aon Hewitt
ARU.....	Autonomous Recording Unit
BNL.....	Basic Needs Level
CHCRP.....	Coastal Habitat Comprehensive Research Project
CHRSC.....	Coastal Habitat Research Steering Committee
CIRNAC.....	Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada
CNG.....	Cree Nation Government
COTA.....	Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association
CTA.....	Cree Trappers Association
DLP.....	Defense of Life or Property
ECCC.....	Environment and Climate Change Canada
EMR.....	Eeyou Marine Region
EMRIRB.....	Eeyou Marine Region Impact Review Board
EMRLCA.....	Eeyou Marine Region Land Claims Agreement
EMRPC.....	Eeyou Marine Region Planning Commission
EMRWB.....	Eeyou Marine Region Wildlife Board
IA.....	Industrial Alliance
IPG.....	Institution of Public Government
HFTCC.....	Hunting, Fishing, and Trapping Coordinating Committee
GN.....	Government of Nunavut
NILCA.....	Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement
NMRWB.....	Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board
NQL.....	Non-quota Limitation
NWMB.....	Nunavut Wildlife Management Board
PBTC.....	Polar Bear Technical Committee
TAA.....	Total Annual Allocation
TAT.....	Total Allowable Take
TEK.....	Traditional Ecological Knowledge
SAR.....	Species at Risk
SHB.....	Southern Hudson Bay



## 2. INTRODUCTION

This annual activity report of the Eeyou Marine Region Wildlife Board (EMRWB) covers the period from April 1, 2021, to March 31, 2022 (subsequently referred to as FY 2021/22). This report outlines the activities as well as the revenue and expenditures of the EMRWB during this period, in fulfillment of its mandate as set out in the Eeyou Marine Region Land Claims Agreement (EMRLCA).

## 3. MANDATE, FUNCTIONS, AND PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Eeyou Marine Region Wildlife Board (EMRWB) is an Institution of Public Government (IPG) established under the Eeyou Marine Region Land Claims Agreement (EMRLCA); an agreement between the James Bay Cree of Quebec, Government of Canada, and the Government of Nunavut, for the islands and resources within eastern James Bay and portions of southeastern Hudson Bay, a region known as the Eeyou Marine Region (EMR). As set forth under Chapter 13 of the Agreement, the EMRWB shall be the main instrument of wildlife management in the EMR and the main regulator of access to wildlife. Accordingly, the primary functions of the EMRWB include:

- Establishing, modifying, or removing levels of Total Allowable Take (TAT) for a species, stock, or population of wildlife;
- Ascertaining and adjusting the Basic Needs Level (BNL) for a species, stock, or population of wildlife;
- Establishing, modifying, or removing Non-quota Limitations (NQL);
- Participating in research;
- Cooperating with other wildlife management institutions which deal with species that are harvested in the EMR;
- Providing advice to any other management institutions as requested on all matters relating to management, conservation, protection, and regulation of wildlife and wildlife habitat.

In addition to its primary functions, the EMRWB may perform discretionary functions, including:

- Approve the establishment, disestablishment, or changes to boundaries of Protected Areas and Marine Protected Areas (except for National Parks, National Parks Reserves, National Marine Conservation Areas, National Marine Conservation Area Reserves, or Territorial Parks);
- Identify Wildlife management zones and provide recommendations to the EMR Planning Commission (EMRPC) with respect to planning in those areas;



- Approve plans for management and protection of Wildlife species or population of Wildlife and Wildlife habitats or critical habitats including areas within Protected Areas;
- Approve designation of species at risk (SAR).

Further to these functions, the EMRWB is responsible for identifying research requirements and deficiencies pertinent to wildlife management and the rational utilization of wildlife resources, and for promoting and encouraging research aimed at meeting requirements and overcoming deficiencies. The EMRWB is responsible for the management and administration of a five (5) million-dollar Research Fund.

Finally, in accordance with section 12.6 of the EMRLCA, the EMRWB shall provide funding to the local Cree Trappers Association (CTA) to enable the CTA to fulfill the powers and functions of the CTA in the EMR set forth under section 12.1 of the Agreement.

#### 4. BOARD MEMBERSHIP

The EMRWB consists of seven members, including the Chairperson. Three (3) members are appointed by the Grand Council of the Cree of Eeyou Istchee (GCC(EI)); one (1) member is appointed by the federal Minister responsible for fish and marine mammals (DFO<sup>1</sup>); one (1) member is appointed by the federal Minister responsible for the Canadian Wildlife Service (ECCC<sup>2</sup>); one (1) member is appointed by the Minister responsible for wildlife under the Government of Nunavut (GN). The Chairperson is nominated by the EMRWB members and is appointed by the federal Minister responsible for fish and marine mammals in consultation with the federal Minister responsible for the Canadian Wildlife Service and jointly with the Minister of Wildlife of the Government of Nunavut.

The EMRWB experienced several changes in membership during FY 2021/22. Heading into the new fiscal year, two out of seven Board appointments remained vacant. In November of 2020, Aurélie Bourbeau-Lemieux resigned from the Board upon her departure from her job with the Cree Nation Government (CNG). The term of Cree Member Robbie Tapiatic expired on December 12, 2020. The term of Cree Member Fred Tomatuk expired on September 10, 2021. On October 25, 2021, The GCC(EI) reappointed Mr. Tomatuk and Mr. Tapiatic for new four-year terms. Jamie Moses was appointed as a new Cree

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<sup>1</sup> Fisheries and Oceans Canada

<sup>2</sup> Environment and Climate Change Canada



Member for a four-year term by the GCC(EI) on November 23, 2021. The EMRWB membership list as of the end of the FY 2021/22 is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. EMRWB Membership as of March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022**

Nomination party	Position	Incumbent	Length of term	End of term
DFO <sup>3</sup> /ECCC <sup>4</sup> /GN <sup>5</sup>	Chairperson	Gordon Blackned	4 years	June 20, 2022
ECCC	Vice-Chairperson	Peter Hale	4 years	September 3, 2023
GCC(EI)	Member	Jamie Moses	4 years	November 19, 2025
GCC(EI)	Member	Fred Tomatuk	4 years	September 11, 2025
GCC(EI)	Member	Robbie Tapiatic	4 years	December 13, 2024
DFO	Member	G.Daniel Caron	4 years	February 5, 2023
GN	Member	Elijassie Kavik	4 years	May 20, 2024

## 5. BOARD MEETINGS

According to the EMRLCA (section 14.2.3), the Board "shall meet at least twice a year, and may meet as often as it deems fit". The meeting schedule and format for FY 2021/22 continued to be impacted by both travel and community restrictions resulting from the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. The majority of all in-person meetings, workshops, and conferences were either canceled or adapted to a videoconference or teleconference platform. The EMRWB held three (3) regular meetings, one (1) special meeting, four (4) joint-EMR meetings, and five (5) joint-NMRWB meetings in FY 2021/22 (Table 2).

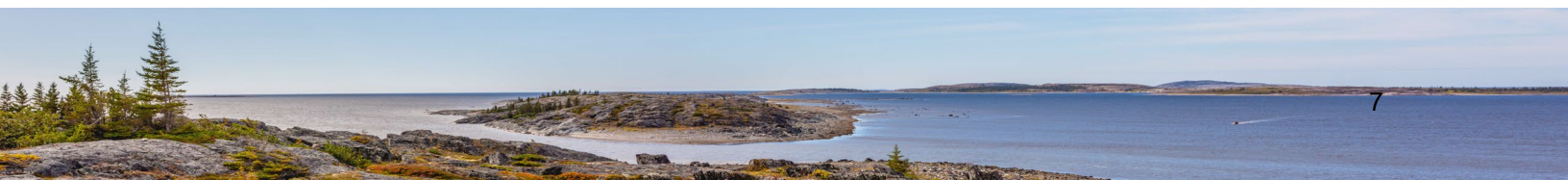
### Regular Meetings

The regular meeting in August was the only in-person Board meeting of the year and was held in Waskaganish. EMRWB members and staff enjoyed a half-day boat excursion into Rupert Bay and for some members, this was their first venture into the marine environment of the EMR. Regular meetings were also held in October and February via videoconference.

<sup>3</sup> Fisheries and Oceans Canada

<sup>4</sup> Environment and Climate Change Canada

<sup>5</sup> Government of Nunavut



### Special Meetings

Only one special meeting was convened in FY 2021/22. The EMRWB met on May 21, 2021, via videoconference to discuss the findings of the EMR Organization Structural Review, and to review and approve research fund applications.

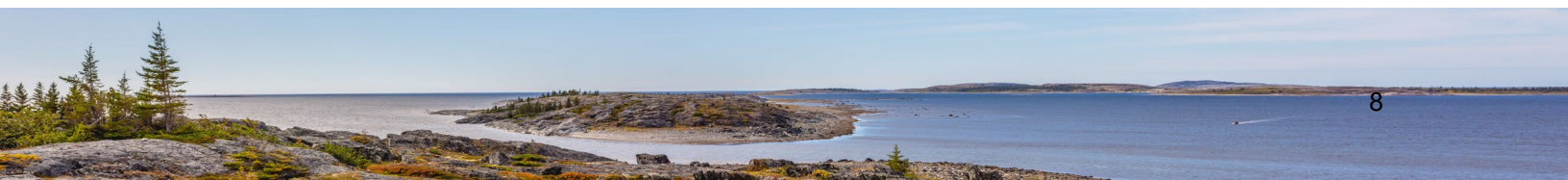
### Joint Meetings

A total of nine joint meetings were held via videoconference or teleconference in FY 2021/22. The three EMR Boards met jointly on June 17 and July 5 to discuss the findings of the EMR Organization Structural Review. The conversation focused on the future of shared resources and the creation of new positions under the next 10-year funding agreement. The three EMR Boards also met on December 15 and January 13 to discuss the correction of the Cree syllabics found in the four EMR logos.

The EMRWB met jointly with the Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board (NMRWB) on five occasions to discuss shared management files on the Eastern Hudson Bay beluga, killer whale, and bank swallow.

**Table 2. EMRWB FY 2021-2022 Meeting Dates and Locations**

<b>MEETING TYPE</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
Joint-NMRWB	April 16, 2021	Teleconference
Special	May 21, 2021	Videoconference
Joint-EMR	June 17, 2021	Videoconference
Joint-EMR	July 5, 2021	Videoconference
Regular	August 3-5, 2021	Videoconference
Regular	October 21-22, 2021	Videoconference
Joint-NMRWB	October 28, 2021	Teleconference
Joint-NMRWB	November 17, 2021	Teleconference
Joint-NMRWB	December 15, 2021	Teleconference
Joint-EMR	December 15, 2021	Videoconference
Joint-EMR	January 13, 2022	Videoconference
Regular	February 22-24, 2022	Videoconference
Joint-NMRWB	February 24, 2022	Teleconference





## 6. BOARD OPERATIONS

To increase operational awareness and efficiency, several Board policies were updated or created in recent years, including the EMRWB Governance Policy, EMRWB Meeting Guidelines, the EMRWB Finance and Administration Policy, EMRWB Research Fund Application Guide, and Form and the Research Fund Spending Policy. As such, the only outstanding policies that needed further work were the EMR HR Policy (refer to Section 7. b) and the EMRWB Investment Fund Policy (refer to Section 14).

In FY 2021/22, the 5-year lease agreement for the EMR office space at 6 Chief Isaiah Salt Road in Waskaganish was set to expire on September 30, 2022. The EMR Boards exercised their option to renew the Agreement of Lease for an additional three years without a rate increase, as per Article 3.3. of the Lease Agreement with the Cree Nation Government.

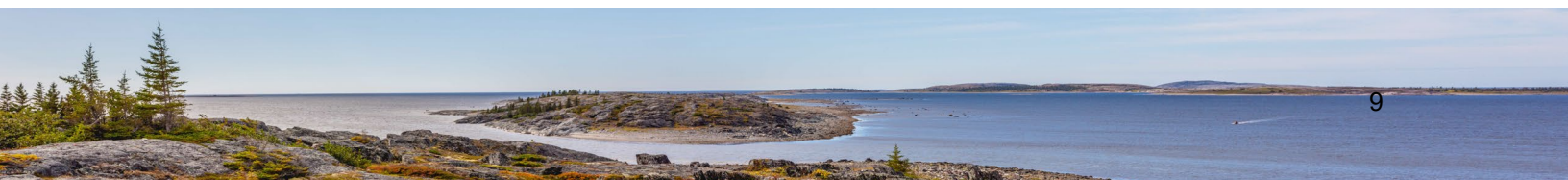
## 7. STAFFING & HUMAN RESOURCES

### a. EMRWB Staff & Training

#### Staff Updates

There were no changes to staffing in FY 2021/22. Angela Coxon has continued in her role as Wildlife Management Director since her original hire date in July of 2018. Felix Boulanger (Waskaganish) and Stephanie Varty (Eastmain) remain in their roles as Wildlife Management Biologists since April 2017 and September 2020, respectively. In recent years, the EMRWB has recognized the need for the creation of a second Wildlife Management Biologist to address a lack of capacity needed to complete annual work plans and support as set forth under the EMRWB mandate. Given the need for the EMRWB to work closely with the CTA-EMR Wildlife Liaison Officer and taking into consideration the shortage of available housing and office space in Waskaganish, a decision was made to establish the new Wildlife Management Biologist in Eastmain, QC. Leases for a two-bedroom housing unit and office space were successfully negotiated and signed in FY 2020/21. Under the efforts of two biologists, in FY 2021/22 the EMRWB successfully supported its highest number of research projects, other initiatives, and management decisions to date.

The EMRWB has an Agreement with the Eeyou Marine Region Planning Commission (EMRPC) and the Eeyou Marine Region Impact Review Board (EMRIRB) to share administrative staff. The three EMR entities share an Administrative Assistant and an Accounting Administrator. The position of Administrative Assistant is co-funded and co-managed by the EMRPC and the EMRIRB. The position of Accounting



Administrator is funded and managed by the EMRWB. Priscillia Wesley has remained in her position as the EMR Administrative Assistant since September 2016 and Susan Esau has remained in her position as the EMR Accounting Administrator since May of 2019. In addition to their EMR duties, both Priscillia and Susan hold positions on the local Cree School Board, and Susan also sits as a Councillor on the local Waskaganish Band Council.

**b. Human Resources & Benefits**

The current EMR HR Policy is severely deficient in information and detail, proving to be of little use for guiding staff and management. In FY 2021/22 a new EMR HR Policy was to be drafted by the EMRWB Director with assistance from an HR consultant. However, after some discussion, and in light of the fact that the three EMR Boards will continue to share staff and resources under the next 10-year funding agreement, the development of a new EMR HR Policy will be conducted jointly by each EMR Board Director in assistance with an HR consultant. A quote for this work was obtained and will begin in FY 2022/23 to allow the EMRPC and EMRIRB to set aside funding in their annual budget.

Regular staff benefits continued uninterrupted in FY 2021/22. A new group health benefits contract was negotiated with Sun Life Financial for FY 2021/22, while the group RRSP/TFSA continued to be provided by Canada Life (formally Great-West Life). The Northern Allowance benefit was increased for the first time in 10 years.

**c. EMRWB 10-Year Projection Plan**

In the previous FY, the three EMR Boards hired a consultant to conduct a review of the EMR Organization Structure. The main objective of the review was to closely examine the current operation and resource-sharing practices of the three EMR Boards to determine if the current organization structure allowed the boards to operate efficiently, or if it presented challenges that needed to be addressed through a series of recommendations for change. The review also presented an opportunity to identify the lack of capacity across all three boards and make recommendations for the creation of new staffing positions to address this challenge. The findings of the Review were presented to the Boards at a joint EMR meeting held on June 17, 2021. The Boards discussed the various recommendations, and during a second joint EMR meeting held on July 5, 2021, decided to continue to share resources under the next 10-year funding agreement. In addition to new staff positions recommended for each Board, the Boards also accepted the



recommendation to create two new shared staff positions; Office/HR Manager, and Communications Officer.

The decisions made by the Boards provided a foundation for each Board to develop a 10-year projection plan (“Plan”) for the second phase of implementation of the EMRLCA. The Plan will be presented to the GCC(EI) as part of the renegotiation of the 10-year Funding Agreement between the EMR Boards and the Government of Canada. A consultant was hired in the Fall of 2021 to develop a Plan for each board. A detailed forensic audit will be performed on the EMRWB and CTA-EMR to develop a Plan that clearly communicates the respective mandates of the EMRWB and CTA-EMR, the projected future context and implications for the work of each organization, past activities, the sufficiency of past resources, expected future activities, and future resource needs.

It is expected that the Plans will be completed by the end of Q3 in FY 2022/23.

## 8. ACTIVITY REPORTING

### a. Annual Activity Report 2020-2021

The EMRWB Annual Activity Report and Financial Variance Report for 2020-2021 were drafted on July 31, 2021, reviewed and adopted by the Board on August 3, 2021, and submitted to CIRNAC on August 5, 2021.

### b. Midterm Activity Report 2021-2022

The EMRWB Midterm Activity Report for 2021-2022 was drafted on October 15, 2021, reviewed and adopted by the Board on October 21, 2021, and submitted to CIRNAC on November 26, 2021.

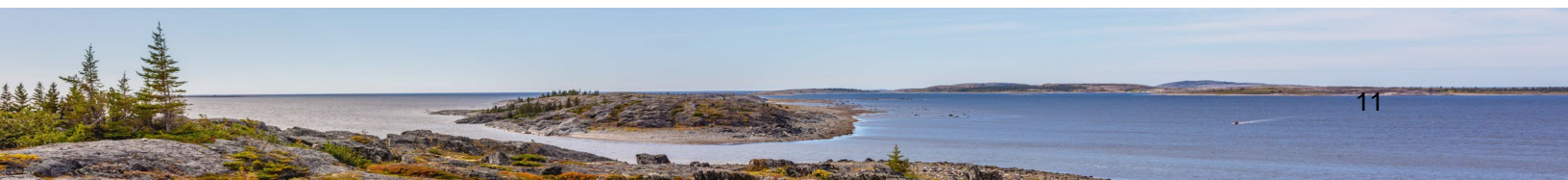
### c. Annual Workplan and Budget for 2022-2023

The Annual Workplan and Budget for FY 2022/23 were drafted on February 15, 2022, and reviewed and approved by the Board on February 24, 2022. The documents were then converted into a template provided by CIRNAC and the report was submitted to CIRNAC on March 7, 2022.

### d. Internal reporting

#### Board Members

Periodic briefing notes on certain topics are provided to the Board members for Decision and also as “For Information” topics at each regular meeting. The Director provides an update at the start of each regular



Board meeting on relevant operations and staff activities that are not listed on the meeting agenda. The Directors' Update also includes a review of the most recent quarterly financial report and a review of the action item tracking table that has been updated since the last regular Board meeting.

### Staff

Quarterly financial reports were submitted to the Director by the Accounting Administrator. Daily planning and communication were carried out between the Director and the Biologists throughout the year, and regular weekly or bi-weekly meetings were held to discuss project updates, task assignment and reprioritizing of tasks as needed. Additional meetings and/or reporting were scheduled with specific staff to monitor productivity and time management.

### EMR

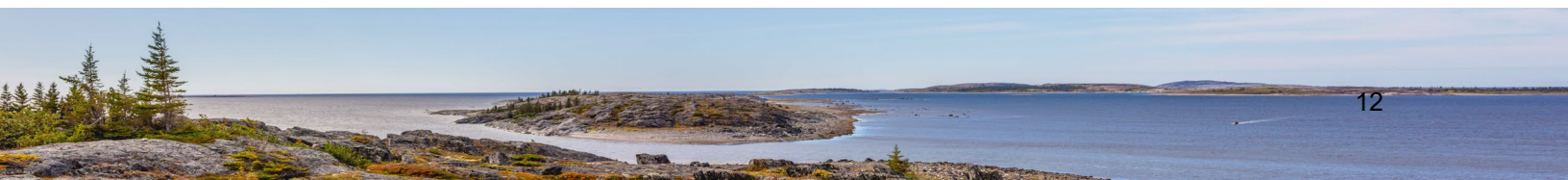
In an effort to remain aware of the ongoing activities and priorities of the other EMR Boards and to discuss common needs, monthly videoconference meetings were held between the Directors of the EMRWB, EMRPC, and EMRIRB, and staff.

## 9. WEBSITE AND COMMUNICATION

### Social Media

EMRWB staff completed website training in FY 2020/2021, and staff have been maintaining and updating the website with current events and public notices (Figure 1). Additionally, EMRWB staff have added more content under the 'Research', 'Wildlife', 'Public Information', and 'Resources' headings. Under the 'Wildlife' heading, EMRWB staff have added 12 wildlife fact sheets which provide information about species at risk, harvested species, and invasive species in the EMR (Figure 2). Under the 'Resources' heading, EMRWB staff have begun working on curating an educational resources page featuring youth activities, infographics, and recorded presentations for school use (Figure 3). In FY 2022/23 EMRWB staff will work on adding more information to the 'Public Information' tab and maintaining the website.

The EMRWB website can be viewed here: <https://www.emrwb.ca>.



## News and Events



**Virtual Event: Protecting Biodiversity and Indigenous Culture in Coastal Zone of Eeyou Itchee – February 10, 12 pm (EST)**  
 By FBoulanger | February 8th, 2022 | Categories: Uncategorized | Tags: news | Comments Off  
 Virtual Event: Protecting Biodiversity and Indigenous Culture in Coastal [...]

[Read More >](#)



**EMRWB Research Fund is Open for Applications!**  
 By FBoulanger | February 8th, 2022 | Categories: Uncategorized | Tags: news | Comments Off  
 The Eeyou Marine Region Wildlife Board is accepting applications [...]

[Read More >](#)



**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING – Consideration for the Approval of the Recovery Strategy for the Bank Swallow (*Riparia riparia*) in Canada**  
 By FBoulanger | January 24th, 2022 | Categories: Uncategorized | Tags: news | Comments Off  
 NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING - Consideration for the Approval of [...]

[Read More >](#)

**Figure 1: Updated 'News and Events' section of the EMRWB website**

### Wildlife Fact Sheet

#### *Osmers mordax* **RAINBOW SMELT**

**Description**  
 Rainbow Smelt are small fish with a long, slim body. They have an olive green back, a silver belly, and iridescent purple, blue, or pink sides. The smelt's upper body is speckled with black. The defining features of Rainbow Smelt are prominent teeth on the roof of their mouths and tongue, a deeply forked tail, and a small adipose fin.

**Range and Habitat**  
 Rainbow Smelt are native to both Atlantic and Pacific watersheds. Outside of their native range, the Rainbow Smelt is found in the Great Lakes, the Hudson Bay watershed, and other inland lakes. Rainbow Smelt inhabit both fresh and saltwater, residing in shallow coastal waters and moving into freshwater (rivers and streams) during spawning.

Rainbow Smelt spawn when waters reach around 10 °C, attaching eggs to substrate such as gravel, sand, submerged vegetation.

**Importance**  
 The Rainbow Smelt is an invasive species in the EMR and can reduce populations of native fish through competition for food and habitat, including Cisco, whitefish, trout, walleye, and perch. Rainbow Smelt also eat the young of the year of other species.

If you catch a Rainbow Smelt, don't release it or put its guts into the water. Try eating it instead! Rainbow smelt are commonly eaten in their native range.

**Fun Facts**

- Teeth on the tongue of the Rainbow Smelt distinguish it from other species of smelt.
- Rainbow Smelt produce an antifreeze protein to overwinter under the ice in estuaries.

**References**

**Conservation Status**

SARA	NS	SC	TH	EN	EX
Provincial (Quebec)	NT	LD	VU	TH	

**Dimensions**  
 8-12"

**Predators**

**Prey**

### Wildlife Fact Sheet

#### *Riparia riparia* **BANK SWALLOW**

**Description**  
 Bank Swallows are the smallest of the swallow species. They have a plump body, large head, short, pointed wings, and a slightly forked tail. They are brown in colour with white underparts, dark underwings, and are best defined by their thick brown band across their chest. They will often be found flying, with quick wing beats, in search of food. During the breeding period, nesting colonies can reach several thousand individuals.

**Range and Habitat**  
 Bank Swallows are distributed widely throughout North America. As their name implies, they are found near banks of lakes, ocean bluffs, river banks, and sand and gravel pits. Nest burrows are dug into vertical banks. The Bank Swallow home range is relatively small, meaning they will only travel a few hundred meters from their breeding colony to forage. This means that Bank Swallow nests occur near open foraging areas, such as rivers, lakes, oceans, grasslands, cropland, and wetlands.

**Threats**  
 Bank Swallow populations have been rapidly declining over the last 20 years, resulting in a loss of 25% of the population. The reason for this decline is not well understood but is likely due to a combination of factors including reduction of nesting habitat and loss of prey. Nesting habitat has been lost due to development and erosion control, including hydroelectric dams which prevent the development of the steep banks with loose substrate. Loss of prey is due to a mixture of factors including loss of open habitats, pesticide use, and climate change.

**Fun Facts**

- Both male and female Bank Swallows are similar in size and plumage.

**References**

**Conservation Status**

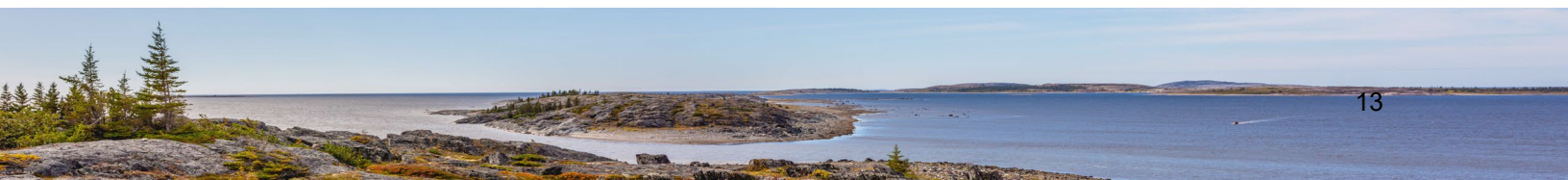
SARA	NS	SC	TH	EN	EX
Provincial (Quebec)	NT	LD	VU	TH	

**Dimensions**  
 12 - 14 cm  
 10 - 19 g

**Threats**

**Prey**

**Figure 2: Examples of new EMRWB wildlife fact sheets under the 'Wildlife' heading on the EMRWB website**



# Educational Resources

On this page, you will find an assortment of educational resources on wildlife in the Eyou Marine Region. Click on the photos below to open a PDF version of each resource.

## Colouring Pages



## Infographics

### Species at Risk Infographics

### What are Species at Risk?

**What are Species at Risk (SAR)?**  
Species at risk (SAR) are plants and animals that are in danger of disappearing from the wild. The federal government has a public registry of species, Schedule 1 of the official federal list of wildlife species at risk.

**What is the Species at Risk Act (SARA)?**  
SARA was passed in 2002 to prevent wildlife species from becoming extinct and to implement the measures needed for their recovery. SARA gives legal protection to SAR on federal lands and migratory birds; this protection can also be applied elsewhere.

<b>Special Concern species</b> Species which may become threatened or endangered because of a combination of biological characteristics and identified threats.	<b>Threatened species</b> Species which are likely to become endangered if nothing is done to reverse the factors leading to their extirpation or extinction.	<b>Endangered species</b> Species facing imminent extirpation or extinction.	<b>Extirpated species</b> Species which no longer exist in the wild in Canada, but exist somewhere in the world.
--	--	---	---

**How do we recover SAR in Canada?**  
Recovery strategies for threatened, endangered or extirpated species are prepared and implemented under the supervision of a team of specialists. The efforts of everyone who wants to help—government, wildlife management councils, Indigenous peoples, non-governmental organizations, business, and individuals—are thus effectively coordinated. Funding for species monitoring and recovery is provided by provincial and federal governments.

### What are Species at Risk?

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**How do we recover SAR in Canada?**  
Recovery strategies for threatened, endangered or extirpated species are prepared and implemented under the supervision of a team of specialists. The efforts of everyone who wants to help—government, wildlife management councils, Indigenous peoples, non-governmental organizations, business, and individuals—are thus effectively coordinated. Funding for species monitoring and recovery is provided by provincial and federal governments.

## Activities

### Shoreline Scavenger Hunts

**SHORELINE SCAVENGER HUNT**

- A Shell
- A Spider or Web
- Lichen or Moss
- A Duck
- A Feather
- A Leafy Plant
- A Flower
- A Bug or Beetle
- A Fish
- A Leaf
- Garbage
- Animal Poop
- A Water Plant
- A Bird
- A Rock
- Something Cool!

**WINTER SHORELINE SCAVENGER HUNT**

- Animal Tracks
- A Rabbit
- A Tree with Needles
- A Willow Branch
- A Branch or Prunings
- An Animal Branch
- Lichen
- A Bug
- Ice
- Wood
- Garbage
- Animal Poop
- A Squirrel
- A Bird
- A Rock
- Something Cool!

Figure 3: EMRWB Website 'Educational Resources' Page

Members of the public were also kept informed of EMRWB activities and news through the EMR Facebook Page, which can be viewed here: <https://www.facebook.com/Eeyou-Marine-Region-469256119875952/>

### News Media

In FY 2021/22, CBC North and other local media reached out to EMRWB staff for comment on several EMRWB initiatives including the 2021 James Bay Expedition and beluga observations in the EMR. News publications were posted on the EMRWB Facebook page.

As part of the effort to increase communication between the EMRWB and the five coastal EMR communities, the third annual EMRWB photo contest was launched in August 2021. Community members and visitors were encouraged to submit their best photos from the EMR in three categories: marine landscape, cultural & harvesting activities, and marine wildlife. The photos submitted in the contest will be used in future EMR communications, the EMRWB website, and the creation of an annual EMRWB wall calendar. Cash prizes were offered for the top three photos in each category (landscape, cultural, wildlife). The contest was advertised by posters throughout each community and on the EMRWB Facebook page. The contest advertisement can be found here: [https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=pfbid02qfWuXFE9NhEvEQwANPmZfaP7AVW8m6u82vH7RBoqLHoqDGUzN7jAHfQyAr5EoqRI&id=469256119875952](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=pfbid02qfWuXFE9NhEvEQwANPmZfaP7AVW8m6u82vH7RBoqLHoqDGUzN7jAHfQyAr5EoqRI&id=469256119875952). The EMRWB received approximately 188 photos submitted by 29 participants. The top photos were chosen by public vote on the EMRWB Facebook page, and the final selections were presented to the board during the October 2021 meeting. The winning photos are displayed on the EMRWB Facebook page and website (November 3, 2021, posting).

The EMRWB selected twelve photos from the contest entries for use in the production of the third annual EMRWB wall calendar (Figure 4). For FY 2021/22, photographs focused on wildlife and cultural practices in the EMR. The 2022 EMRWB calendar included text in both English and Cree syllabics. Calendars were printed and distributed to the EMR communities in December 2021.



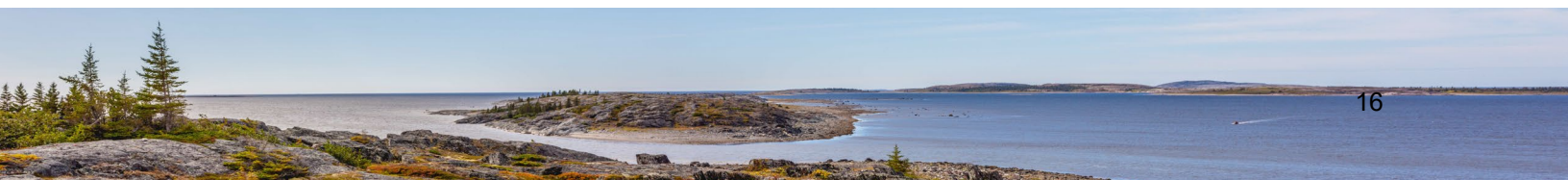


Figure 4. Front page of the 2022 EMRWB Calendar.

## 10. DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The EMRWB is using the various applications offered by Microsoft Office 365 as a potential solution to not only store, share and manage its files and data, but also to improve efficiency and teamwork. All data has been transferred to the cloud-based Teams folders to ensure long-term storage and increase virtual security. Staff has continued to attempt to organize and archive files, but this activity is often neglected for other priorities.

To organize and track in-house documents and resources, EMRWB staff has entered all reports, scientific articles, and texts into the Mendeley Reference Manager software, and continue to do so as new ones become available. In 2021/22, the EMRWB has put more effort in collecting literature of relevance from





other EMR entities to fulfill its mandate. Public reports and research articles have been gathered from Niskamoon and Hydro-Quebec, among others.

In June 2021, the Wildlife Board was approached by the Eeyou Marine Region Planning Commission (EMRPC), as their consultant Synergis was mandated to conduct a Background Report, which included an exhaustive review of existing wildlife-related data and literature. The EMRWB made its wildlife observation data and digital library available to the consultant, and similarly, Synergis gave access to a vast database of articles and reports available to the EMRWB. These articles and reports were added to the Mendeley library.

In October 2021, the consultant WSP, which was mandated to carry out the pre-feasibility study of phases II and III of the La Grande Alliance project, contacted the EMRWB to request any wildlife-related documentation relevant the area targeted by the project. La Grande Alliance aims to develop new transport corridors (road and/or rail) as well as a deep-water port in the EMR. A literature review was prepared by the EMRWB biologists and sent to WSP in March 2022.

## 11. RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Under the provisions of subsection 13.2.1 of the EMRLCA, one aspect of the EMRWB mandate is to “cooperate with other wildlife management institutions which deal with species that are harvested in the EMR and migrate outside the EMR” (paragraph h). Detailed later in this report, the EMRWB held joint meetings with the NMRWB, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB), the Hunting, Fishing & Trapping Coordinating Committee, Government of Canada, Government of Quebec, and other relevant jurisdictions and management bodies to discuss topics including beluga whale management, polar bear management, and other species at risk management actions.

The Consolidated Agreement Relating to the Cree/Inuit Offshore Overlapping Interests Area between the Cree of Eeyou Istchee and the Nunavik Inuit (hereinafter referred to simply as “the Overlap Agreement”) identifies three zones in the overlap area (i.e. the Joint Inuit/Cree Zone, the Inuit Zone and the Cree Zone). For each of these three zones, a unique wildlife management process is provided in the Overlap Agreement, as well as the EMRLCA and the Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement (NILCA). The Board continues to collaborate with the Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board to develop processes and mechanisms necessary to ensure a sound and efficient Wildlife Management Regime between the Inuit



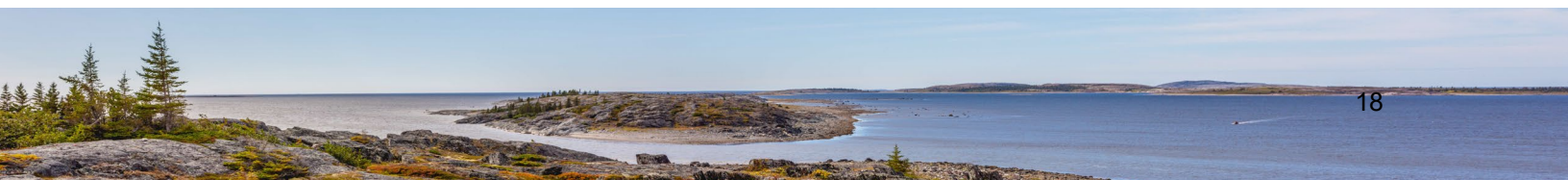
and Cree entities. Although EMRWB staff and Board members were not able to attend an in-person regular meeting of the NMRWB in FY 2021/22 due to Covid restrictions, several joint meetings between the EMRWB and NMRWB related to beluga management, polar bear management, and other species at risk were held by teleconference. The details of these meetings can be found later in this report.

Every year, the EMRWB normally attends and provides activity updates at meetings and AGAs of local Cree entities and relevant stakeholders and will also participate in conferences that provide opportunities for professional relationship building and networking. However, as a direct result of the Covid-19 pandemic, most entities cancelled annual meetings, AGAs, workshops and conferences for a second year in a row. Some annual meetings and AGAs were rescheduled and held via videoconference by invitation only.

The annual ArcticNet conference persevered and successfully held a virtual three-day event on December 7-9. The three EMR Boards created a virtual information booth which provided conference participants with relevant updates and resources from each Board. EMRWB staff and several EMRWB members attended the online event. Once again, the conference provided an invaluable opportunity to not only stay informed on local research initiatives, but also as a networking opportunity for future research ideas and plans.

In the previous FY the EMRWB was granted observer status on the Niskamoon Coastal Habitat Research Steering Committee (CHRSC), which approves, funds, and oversees multiple multi-year research projects and collaborations along the EMR coast on topics such as eelgrass and waterfowl health. The inclusion of the EMRWB on the CHRSC is of particular importance, as it increases our awareness of scientific research and TEK being collected in the EMR and provides an opportunity to identify ongoing research that the EMRWB could continue to support once the Coastal Habitat Research Program wraps up over the next two years. EMRWB staff attended CHRSC meetings via teleconference in May, June, September, November and March during FY 2021/22.

The working relationship between the EMRWB and the CNG/GCC(EI) continues to be a challenge. In recent years, the EMRWB set aside a small budget in hopes that the EMRWB and CNG would agree to hold a strategic planning workshop. The proposed purpose of the workshop was to: a) improve the working relationship between the EMRWB and CNG, and to b) develop a Collaborative Agreement that would



provide clarification of the roles and responsibilities of the CNG to the EMRWB as set forth under the EMRLCA. Although the CNG was initially receptive to the idea, they lacked the capacity to engage further on the matter. It is our hope that the CNG will pursue funding under the next 10-year agreement with Canada to create several new positions within the CNG, including a CNG-EMR Liaison-type position, and a CNG-EMR biologist position in order to focus on joint coastal research. In the meantime, the CNG and three EMR Boards have proposed the formation of an EMR Coastal Council to keep the communities informed of EMR-related activities.

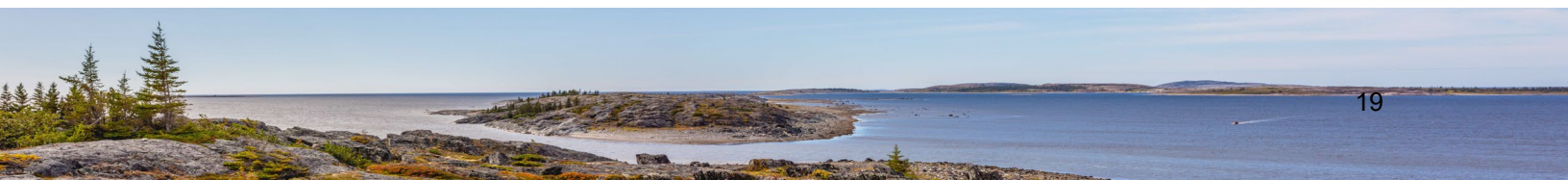
Finally, throughout the year, EMRWB staff participated in planning meetings with several other stakeholders including: McGill University, Laval University, Concordia University, University of Manitoba, University of Saskatchewan, Genome Quebec, Chisasibi Eeyou Research and Resource Institute, Niskamoon Inc., Cree Nation Government, Cree Health and Social Services of James Bay, Cree Nation Youth Council, The Social Indigenous Knowledge Network (SIKU), Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canadian Wildlife Service, Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs (MFFP), Nature Canada, Hudson Bay Consortium, and Oceans North.

## 12. WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

### a. Eastern Hudson Bay Beluga Stock Management

Pursuant to section 30.6 b) of the EMRLCA and section 28.8 of the NILCA, the EMRWB and the NMRWB launched a joint public hearing process in FY 2019/20 for the establishment of a new Total Allowable Take (TAT) and Non-Quota Limitations (NQLs) for beluga whale (Eastern Hudson Bay subpopulation).

This joint decision-making process took nearly two years to complete. A public hearing was held in Whapmagoostui/Kuujuaraapik from January 21-23, 2020. A new management plan was drafted and submitted jointly to the Minister of DFO for approval on May 27, 2020, and at the request of the Minister, an amended version of the management plan was resubmitted to the Minister of DFO on September 28, 2020. In response, and pursuant to section 5.5.12 of the NILCA and section 15.3.7 of the EMRLCA, the Minister varied the Boards' final decision. The most significant variance to the Boards' decision was the reduction of the annual TAT from 24 to 20 Eastern Hudson Bay belugas. The new decisions for 2021-2026 beluga management plan came into effect on February 1, 2021.



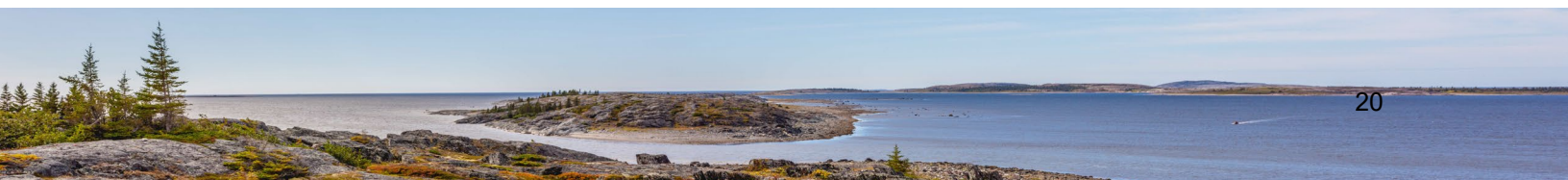
In FY 2021/22 the EMRWB and NMRWB discussed plans to conduct an annual performance review of the beluga management plan. The purpose of the review was to meet with relevant stakeholders to: a) review the results of the 2021 beluga harvest, b) sharing of new knowledge gained, c) discussion on how the existing management plan could be improved within the current Management System, and d) to receive recommendations or requests to the Boards for changes to the Management System. The Boards met jointly on April 16 and October 28 to discuss plans for the meeting. Both Boards and the relevant stakeholders felt strongly that this meeting should be conducted in-person. As such, the meeting date ended up being pushed to April 11-13, 2022 once all Covid-related travel restrictions were lifted. This meeting and its subsequent report will be summarized in the FY 2022/2023 EMRWB Annual Report.

In Spring 2021, the NMRWB received two beluga Limited Hunt Plan submissions for the Little Whale River Estuary located in the Overlap Area of the NMR and EMR. As per the existing management plan, the Boards may consider limited harvests in the Little Whale River Estuary on a case-by-case basis. The EMRWB and NMRWB met on April 16 to review the plan submissions and make a decision on each request. The Boards considered the impact, benefit, and implications of the hunt plans individually, as well as collectively. In accordance with the obligations of the NMRWB and EMRWB as defined in the NILCA and the EMRLCA, and the 2021 Beluga Management Decision as it related to estuary hunts, the NMRWB and EMRWB approved both Estuary Hunt Plans for the Little Whale River Estuary area as submitted by the applicants. The Decisions by the Boards were submitted to the Minister of DFO on May 27, 2021, and approved by the Minister without variation on July 22, 2021.

**b. Establishment of a Total Allowable Take and Non-Quota Limitations for the SHB polar bears**

Pursuant to section 13.2.1 a and h of the EMRLCA, the EMRWB is the management body responsible for the establishment of a new TAT and NQLs for the Southern Hudson Bay (SHB) polar bear subpopulation. Discussions about the creation of a new management plan began in FY 2018/19, and the decision-making process “launched” in FY 2021/22 is expected to take multiple years to complete.

The most recent stakeholder meeting held was a SHB user-to-user meeting led by the federal government February 25-26, 2020 in Montreal, QC. The EMRWB Director participated in the meeting, while two EMRWB members attended as observers. The purpose of the meeting was threefold: 1) for Indigenous right holder representatives to meet with management authorities and receive up-to-date scientific and TEK information from recent studies; 2) for Indigenous representatives to share their views about the



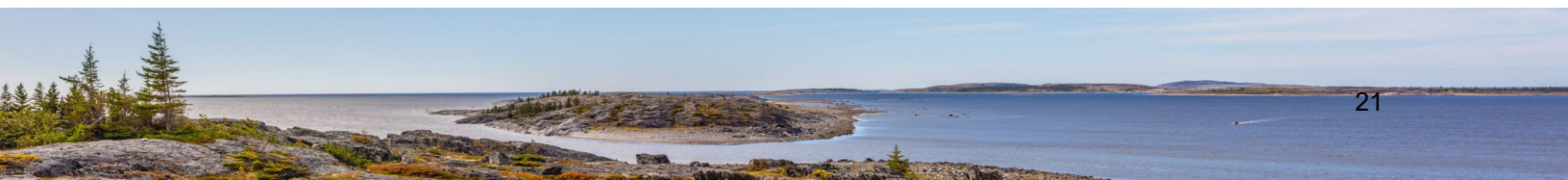
status and management of SHB polar bears, including views related to management objectives, non-quota limitations, harvest needs, and how harvest quotas are shared amongst user groups; and 3) to make consensus recommendations pertaining to management objectives, harvest needs, and harvest allocation, which were included in a report forwarded to the relevant wildlife management boards with authority under existing land claims agreements to establish or recommend new TAT limits and NQLs. The meeting was well-attended with nearly 80 participants from Ontario, Quebec, Nunavik and Nunavut, all generating healthy and passionate discussion. A summary report of the user-to-user meeting was provided by ECCC and presented to the SHB Consultation Working Group for review and comment on June 16, 2020.

On August 7, 2020, the Governments of Canada, Nunavut, and Quebec jointly sent a letter to the EMRWB, NMRWB, NWMB, and the HFTCC Chairs to request that the four management bodies hold a joint decision-making process to reassess the TAT and NQLs for the SHB polar bear subpopulation. The letter of request was accompanied by the most recent SHB Polar Bear Subpopulation Status Report, the Harvest Risk Analysis Report, and the finalized user-to-user meeting summary report.

Between September 2020 and March 31, 2021, the four management bodies and their respective legal counsel met several times to discuss firstly if there was agreement to hold a joint decision-making process, and secondly, what a coordinated approach might look like. All parties acknowledged that the request to hold a joint process between four management bodies is very challenging and complicated because there is no existing framework for how this type of process should be developed and executed.

The EMRWB and NMRWB raised a concern that the upcoming release of the draft Quebec-Nunavik Marine Region-Eeyou Marine Region Polar Bear Management Plan (QC-NMR-EMR Plan) may interfere with the timing and planning of a joint process for the SHB polar bear management plan. Further talks on the establishment of a joint process were postponed until the Spring of 2022, allowing the EMRWB and NMRWB to review the draft QC-NMR-EMR Plan and conduct a joint written public Hearing.

As of the end of March 2022, the four management bodies have resumed discussions on a plan to reassess the TAT and NQLs for the SHB polar bear subpopulation and have agreed to move forward in a joint process. An MOU will be developed in early FY 2022/23, committing the Boards to a coordinated effort.



**c. Quebec-NMR-EMR Polar Bear Management Plan**

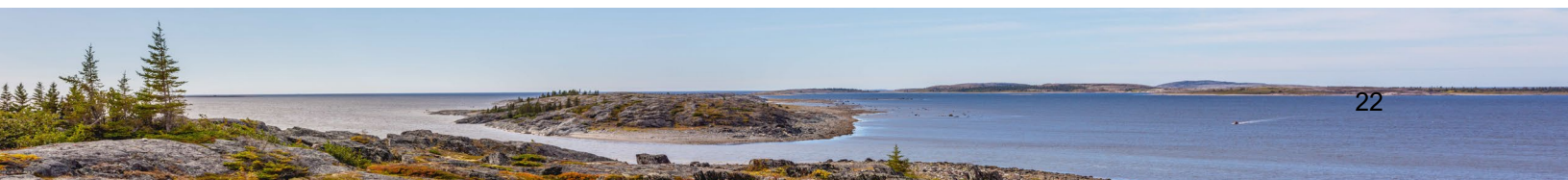
The QC-EMR-NMR Polar Bear Management Plan was sent to the EMRWB, the NMRWB, and the HFTCC on February 8, 2021, for Decision. The management plan was presented to the EMRWB at the March 2021 regular meeting. At that time, the EMRWB passed a Resolution to launch a joint written public hearing process with the NMRWB. EMRWB and NMRWB staff held several technical level meetings in early FY 2021/22 to discuss and plan the hearing process.

Notice was issued on June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021, that the EMRWB and NMRWB were conducting a joint written public Hearing of the proposed QC-NMR-EMR Polar Bear Management Plan to determine whether to approve the plan for application in the Nunavik Marine Region in accordance with s. 5.2.4(d)(i) of the NILCA, in the Eeyou Marine Region in accordance with s. 13.2.2 (d)(i) of the EMRLCA, and in the Cree/Inuit Overlapping Interest Areas in accordance with Part IV of the Agreement Relating to the Cree/Inuit Offshore Overlapping Interest Area. The Hearing process concluded on September 24, 2021. The EMRWB and NMRWB met on October 28, 2021 to review submissions. A list of requested revisions to the management plan was compiled by the Boards and submitted to the Plan authors on December 8, 2021. As of March 31, 2021, the Boards have still not received a final version of the Management Plan from the authors for review and final Decision.

**d. Other Species at Risk Management Decisions – Killer Whale**

During the June 2021 regular meeting of the NMRWB and the August regular meeting of the EMRWB, DFO and ECCC staff presented a request for decisions to the Boards for the listing of three whale species: killer whale, Northern bottlenose whale, and bowhead whale as “Special Concern” under the *Species at Risk Act*. Under the NILCA and EMRLCA, the Boards may, at their discretion, approve designations of species at risk as per Section 5.2.4 (f) of the NILCA and 13.2.2 (f) of the EMRLCA. The EMRWB and NMRWB launched a joint written public hearing from October 29 to December 13, 2021. Of the three species in question, only the distribution of killer whales extends into the areas of overlap and the EMR. As such, the EMRWB made decisions exclusively with respect to the listing of killer whale. The Boards held a conference call with the LNUKS on November 17 to explain the Hearing process and to allow hunters who were not comfortable with a written format to make verbal submissions. The Boards held a joint meeting on December 15, 2021 to issue a final decision on the respective species listings. The Decisions were forwarded to the Minister of ECCC on March 9, 2022.

**e. Other Species At Risk Management Decisions – Bank Swallow**



In March 2021, ECCC staff invited the EMRWB and NMRWB to comment on the draft recovery strategy for the bank swallow as part of the ECCC jurisdictional review phase. In June 2021, ECCC posted a proposed version of the recovery strategy on the Species at Risk Public Registry for a 90-day period for public comment. At this time, a fact sheet highlighting the key sections of the proposed recovery strategy was sent by ECCC to the Cree coastal communities which invited them to provide comments on the proposed recovery strategy.

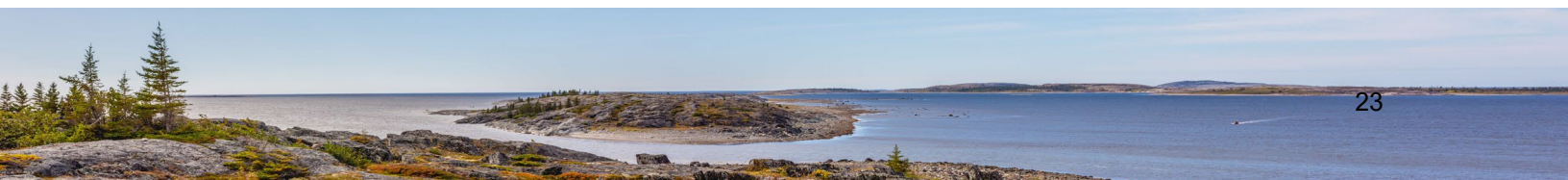
In August 2021, the EMRWB passed a resolution confirming that it would be exercising the Boards' authority under section 13.2. d) (i) of the EMRLCA to consider the recovery strategy for approval and committed to doing so through a joint public hearing with the NMRWB in accordance with the terms of the Agreement relating to the Cree/Inuit Offshore Overlapping Interests Area at schedule 30-1 of the EMLCA.

In December 2021, ECCC finalized the proposed recovery strategy and submitted a formal request to the EMRWB and NMRWB for review and approval of the Recovery Strategy for the Bank Swallow (*Riparia riparia*) in the NMR and EMR in accordance with the 13.2.2(d)(i) of the EMRLCA and the articles 5.2.4(d) (i) of the NMRLCA.

On January 24, 2022, the EMRWB and NMRWB launched a 30-day joint written public Hearing to gather information and submissions from rights-holders in order to consider the approval of the Recovery Strategy. Following the conclusion of the Hearing, the EMRWB and NMRWB held a joint meeting on February 24, 2022, to review, deliberate, and make Decisions for both the Overlap Area and their own respective Regions. These Decisions were submitted to the Minister of ECCC on March 29, 2022.

#### f. Other Wildlife Management Activities

As part of its commitment to the protection of species at risk, the Government of Canada proclaimed the Species at Risk Act (SARA) in 2003. SARA requires that a recovery strategy and/or management plan be developed for each species listed as Extirpated, Endangered, or Threatened, in an effort to reduce known threats and to help species at risk recover. In FY 2021/22, ECCC submitted several requests for comments from the EMRWB on listed species found within the EMR. The EMRWB provided feedback for bank



swallow, barn swallow, short-eared owl, and Hudsonian godwit. Comment submissions aid ECCC in the development of species recovery strategies, review of species threat assessments, and the designation of protected status.

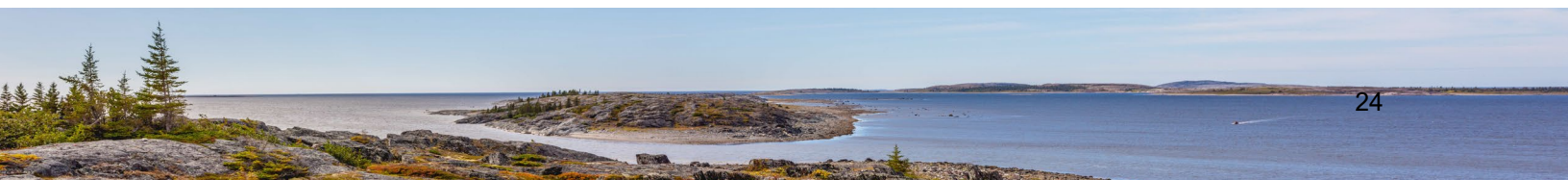
### 13. WILDLIFE RESEARCH AND PROJECTS

#### a. Filling Data Gaps and Gathering Traditional Ecological Knowledge for Avian Species at Risk in the Eeyou Marine Region (Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk)

In March of 2021, the EMRWB applied to the Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk to support research on avian species at risk in the EMR. The objectives of this proposal were to: a) engage with the coastal communities of Eeyou Istchee through training opportunities, educational workshops, and the collection of TEK on important avian species at risk in Eeyou Istchee, and b) to perform shorebird and breeding bird surveys in potentially important avian SAR habitats in Eeyou Istchee to estimate the abundance, density, or occupancy of avian SAR.

In August of 2021, the EMRWB was notified that their application was successful and that they had received \$ 67,515 to support this project throughout the FY's of 2021/22 and 2022/23. Throughout FY 2021/22, the EMRWB participated in meetings with project collaborators from Nature Canada, the CNG, and the CTA-EMR on 19 different occasions. Throughout these meetings, EMRWB staff contributed to the development of outreach and communications materials, workshop development, and field survey planning.

During FY 2021/22, EMRWB staff worked with Nature Canada to develop a series of training guides for the deployment of Autonomous Recording Units (ARUs) which can be used to remotely monitor birds. The EMRWB hired a graphic designer to produce a field guide for the deployment of ARUs (Figure 5) and developed a script for a video training guide. The intention of these materials is to aid in long-term bird monitoring projects by community members and Cree organizations.





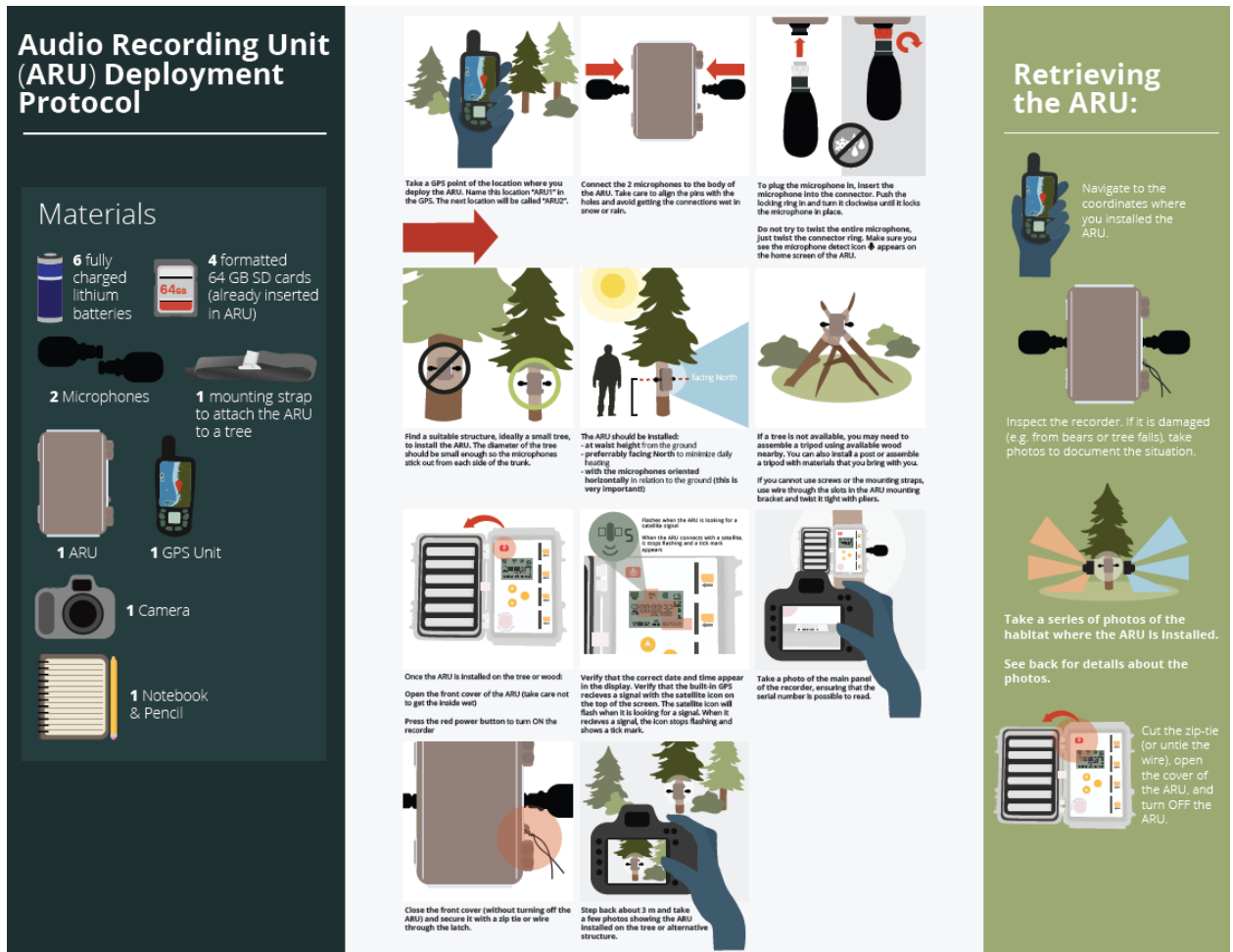


Figure 5: ARU Field Guide for Cree Land Users

Additionally, the EMRWB produced a number of outreach materials including infographics in Cree and English about species at risk (Figure 6), colouring sheets (Figure 7) and a virtual school [presentation](#) on bird species at risk. During the end of FY 2021/2022, EMRWB staff developed a webinar segment, Bird Stories of the Eeyou Marine Region to showcase local bird stories, legends, and perspectives from Cree elders and land users (Figure 8), this segment will be publicly available on EMRWB social media in FY 2022/2023.



# What are Species at Risk?

What are Species at Risk (SAR)?  
**Species at risk (SAR) are plants and animals that are in danger of disappearing from the wild.** The federal government has a public registry of species, Schedule 1 is the official federal list of wildlife species at risk.

What is the Species at Risk Act (SARA)?  
**SARA was passed in 2002 to prevent wildlife species from becoming extinct and to implement the measures needed for their recovery.** SARA gives legal protection to SAR on federal lands and migratory birds, this protection can also be applied elsewhere.

<p><b>Special Concern species:</b> Species which may become threatened or endangered because of a combination of biological characteristics and identified threats.</p>	<p><b>Threatened species:</b> Species which are likely to become endangered if nothing is done to reverse the factors leading to their extirpation or extinction.</p>	<p><b>Endangered species:</b> Species facing imminent extirpation or extinction.</p>	<p><b>Extirpated species:</b> Species which no longer exist in the wild in Canada, but exist elsewhere in the world.</p>
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**How do we recover SAR in Canada?**  
 Recovery strategies for threatened, endangered or extirpated species are prepared and implemented under the supervision of a team of specialists. The efforts of everyone who wants to help—governments, wildlife management councils, Indigenous peoples, non-governmental organizations, businesses, and individuals—are thus effectively coordinated. Funding for species monitoring and recovery is provided by provincial and federal governments.

# Bird Species at Risk in the Eeyou Marine Region

In the EMR, there are 14 bird species at risk. The main cause of bird decline in Canada is **loss of habitat**, including breeding grounds and places where birds stop on their migrations.

Bank Swallow	Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Common Nighthawk	Harlequin Duck
Red Knot	Yellow Rail	Hudsonian Godwit	Herring Gull
Rusty Blackbird	Red-necked Phalarope	Lesser Yellowlegs	Short-eared Owl

● Special Concern Species   
 ● Threatened Species   
 ● Endangered Species

This project was undertaken with the financial support of the people of the Eeyou Marine Region.

Environment and Climate Change Canada   
 Environment et Changement climatique Canada

DESIGN BY ALGON ILLUSTRATION

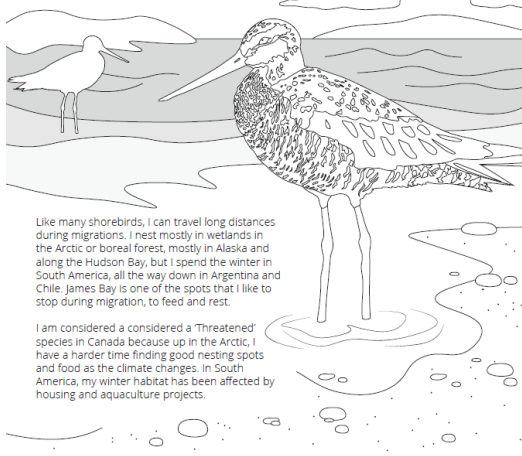
Figure 6: Bird Species at Risk Infographic

## Hi, I'm a Hudsonian Godwit!



I'm a big shorebird bird (about 40 cm tall). You can recognize me if you notice my long bill, long neck and long legs. You will see me feed on small bugs in the mud, sand, or shallow water, that's when my long bill comes handy!

My plumage is brighter during breeding season, and you may notice that my chest will turn reddish.



Like many shorebirds, I can travel long distances during migrations. I nest mostly in wetlands in the Arctic or boreal forest, mostly in Alaska and along the Hudson Bay, but I spend the winter in South America, all the way down in Argentina and Chile. James Bay is one of the spots that I like to stop during migration, to feed and rest.

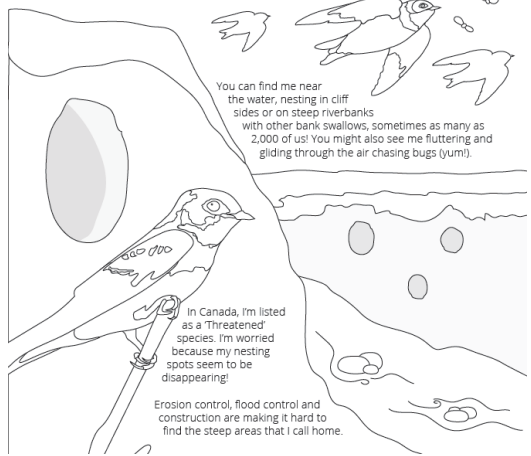
I am considered a 'Threatened' species in Canada because up in the Arctic, I have a harder time finding good nesting spots and food as the climate changes. In South America, my winter habitat has been affected by housing and aquaculture projects.

## Hi! My name is mîcîhkusîs (Bank Swallow)!



I'm a small bird (12-14 cm) about the size of an iPhone. My head, back and wings are brown, but my underside is white. I have a brown stripe across my chest.

I spend my winters in the southern United States or South America. In the Spring, I travel a long distance to breed, all the way to Eeyou itstchee!



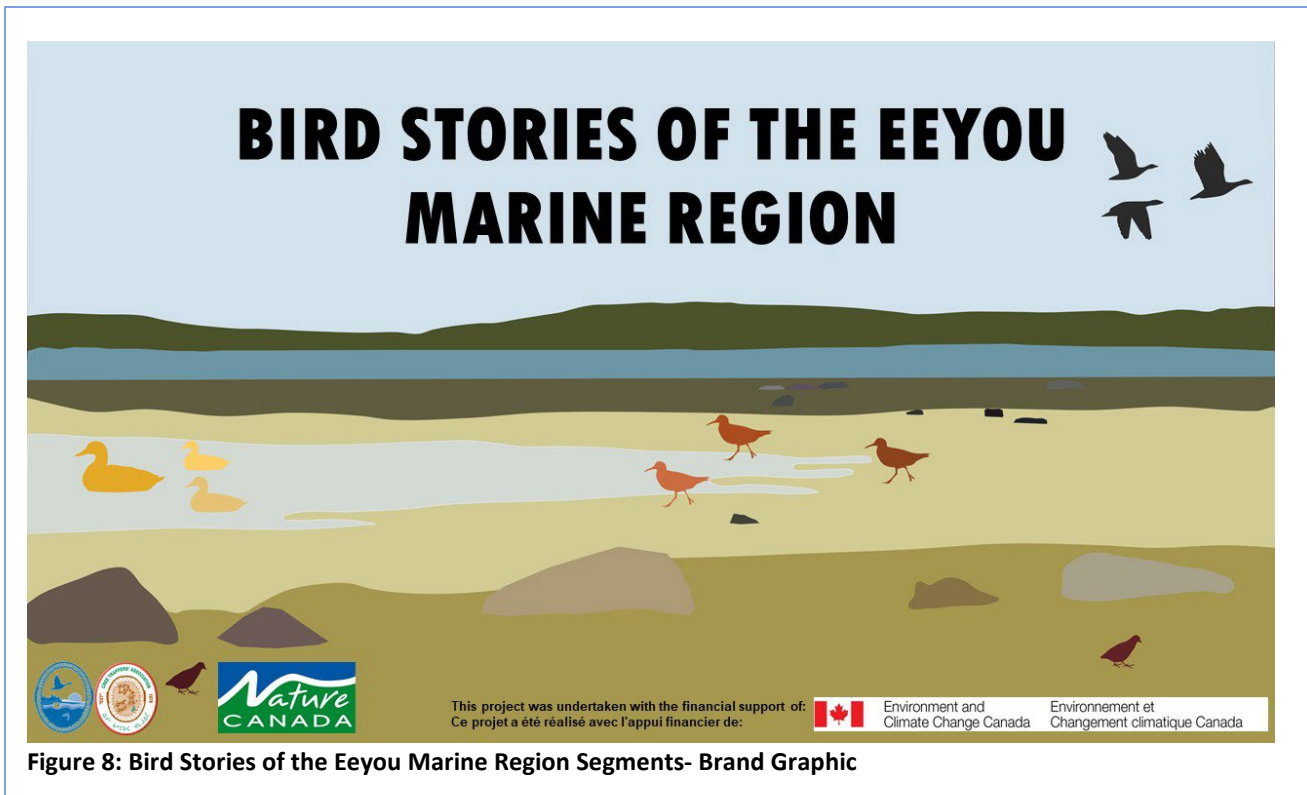
You can find me near the water, nesting in cliff sides or on steep riverbanks with other bank swallows, sometimes as many as 2,000 of us! You might also see me fluttering and gliding through the air chasing bugs (yum).

In Canada, I'm listed as a 'Threatened' species. I'm worried because my nesting spots seem to be disappearing!

Erosion control, flood control and construction are making it hard to find the steep areas that I call home.

Figure 7: Bird Species at Risk Colouring Sheets Example



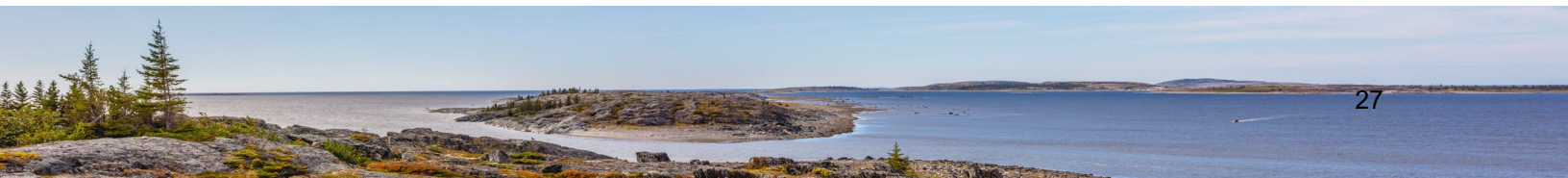


**Figure 8: Bird Stories of the Eeyou Marine Region Segments- Brand Graphic**

In addition to developing materials and planning bird surveys for FY 2022/23, EMRWB staff have managed the finances and reporting (January 2022) for the AFSAR grant. In FY 2022/23, EMRWB staff will contribute to the development and delivery of workshops and planning of three bird surveys in Eastmain, Wemindji, and Chisasibi.

**b. Shorebird and Bird Species at Risk Survey**

In FY 2021/22, the EMRWB had planned to support and participate in a bird survey of the Wemindji and Eastmain areas in partnership with Nature Canada and the CTA-EMR. The survey, initially planned for the summer of 2020, but postponed to 2021 due to Covid restrictions, was anticipated to target shorebirds and species at risk found on the offshore islands and along the coast near the two communities. However, after careful consideration and because of ongoing community access restrictions and other challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, the survey was postponed once again and the EMRWB resumed planning for a survey in FY 2022/23. As a result of this situation, more focus was put on establishing a better collaboration between all entities involved in bird studies in the EMR, such as the CTA, the CNG, the CWS and Nature Canada.



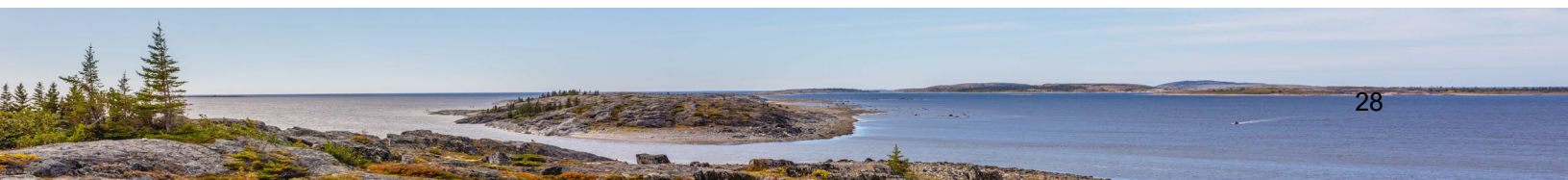
### c. EMR Motus Tower Status

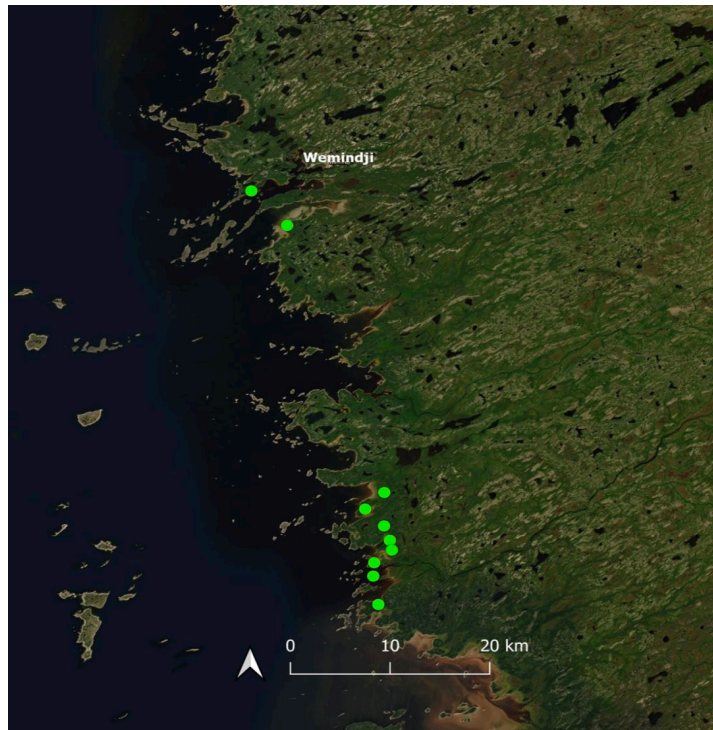
The Motus Wildlife Tracking System (Motus) is an international collaborative research network that uses coordinated automated radio telemetry to facilitate research and education on the ecology and conservation of migratory animals. Motus is a program of Birds Canada in partnership with collaborating researchers and organizations. The EMRWB has been taking part in this project since 2017, in collaboration with the CNG, the CTA and Nature Canada. The number of Motus towers installed in the EMR remained the same in FY 2021/22 – five in total: four in the Waskaganish area and one in Wemindji. Research efforts in the summer of 2021 remained heavily impacted by Covid travel restrictions. For that reason, the CTA-EMR staff did not activate the Motus towers for 2021 and instead focused on making sure that the towers are set up and active prior to the 2022 spring bird migration. An EMRWB biologist provided technical and logistical support in planning the 2022 season.

### d. Autonomous Recording Unit (ARU) Pilot Project

In October 2020, the CWS, EMRWB, and CTA-EMR organized a meeting to establish a stronger collaboration in terms of wildlife research in the EMR. One of the outcomes of this new collaboration was the launch of a pilot project to test the feasibility of using Autonomous Recording Unit's (ARU) in the EMR. These devices, often attached to a tree, can detect noises coming from bird habitats and provide useful information on the presence, distribution, and breeding status of bird populations. The EMRWB biologists participated in six planning meetings between April and December 2021. The objectives of the project were to confirm bird species presence and breeding activity and to identify important habitat in the EMR for breeding birds and bird species at risk. It also aimed at testing methods for future ARU deployments. The collected data will be used for CWS and EMRWB research, youth outreach, and will be shared with the communities.

The EMRWB biologists, CTA-EMR officers, and Canadian Wildlife Service staff worked with Wemindji tallymen to deploy 10 ARU's in April 2021 (Figure 9 & 10).

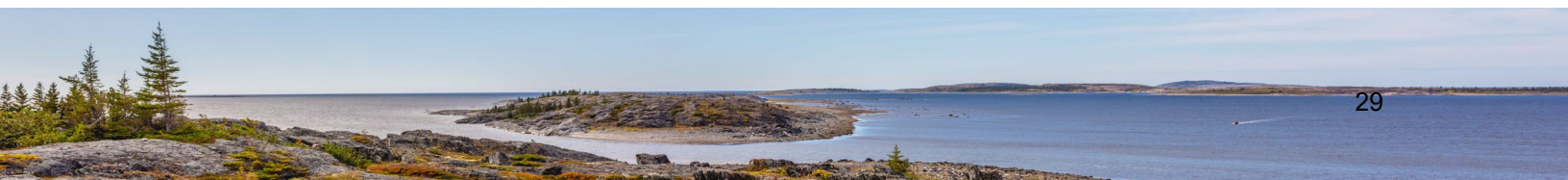




**Figure 9: Locations of the 10 ARUs deployed on the Wemindji area in April 2021.**



**Figure 10: Tallyman, Ernie Hughboy, deploying ARU's in Wemindji**



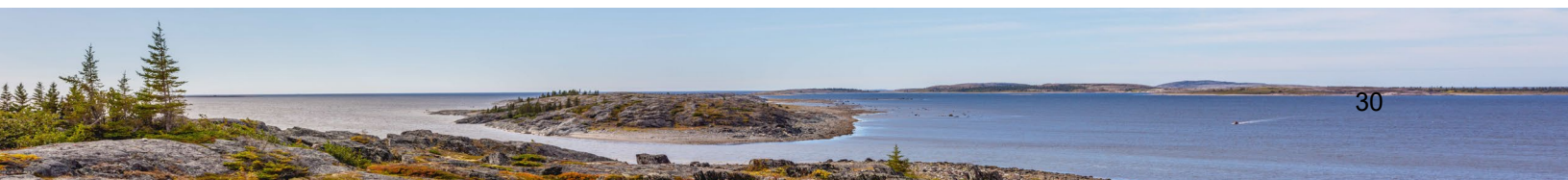
The ARUs were retrieved in September 2021 and were sent to CWS to be analyzed in the winter of 2022. The main challenge was that some of the microphones were found detached from the recording units. As a result, four of the ten units did not record for the full sampling period, but still collected significant data. The units were programmed to record at sunrise and sunset during different intervals. Overall, 153 recordings were randomly selected for analysis by CWS-Quebec birders, and a total of 83 different bird species were identified, including five species listed as Species at risk: yellow rail, common nighthawk, rusty blackbird, olive-sided flycatcher, and lesser yellowlegs. In light of the relative success of this pilot project, it was determined in March 2022 that the deployment of ARUs would resume for the 2022 season. Two traplines in Chisasibi and one in Wemindji were selected and the tallymen were contacted shortly after.

**e. Fostering Indigenous Small-scale Fisheries for Health, Economy and Food Security Project**

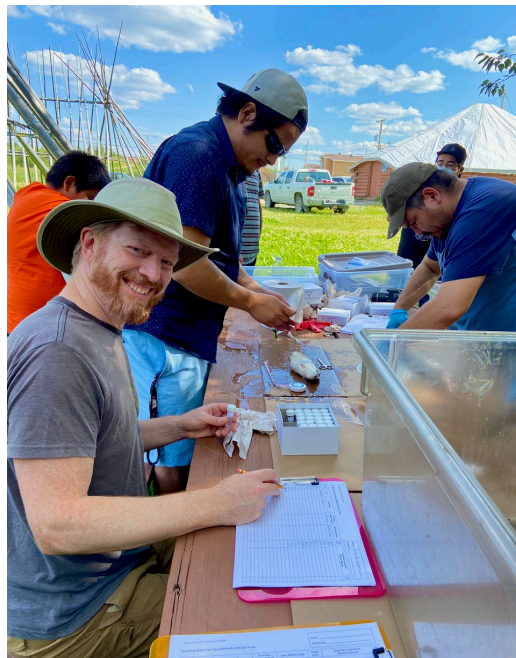
Since May 2018, the EMRWB has been involved in a large-scale genomics research project on fish populations found in Eeyou Istchee, Nunavik and the Northwest Territories. The FISHERS (Fostering Indigenous Small-scale Fisheries for Health, Economy and Food Security) project is led by Laval University, in close collaboration with a large number of entities including Concordia and Carleton Universities, the EMRWB, the CTA-EMR, the CNG, Niskamoon, the Cree Health Board and several Cree communities across the Eeyou Istchee region. The overall objective of the project is to apply genomic approaches in subsistence, recreational, and commercial fisheries sectors to address challenges and opportunities related to sustainable exploitation and food security of the Inuit and Cree nations. The EMRWB provides financial and in-kind support directly to the study and provides funding for project activities to the CTA-EMR. The project received confirmation of matching funds from Genome Canada in July 2019, and fieldwork commenced in 2020.

Several meetings were held by videoconference to plan the 2021 sampling season. In these meetings, the EMRWB and CTA-EMR staff and academic researchers discussed the protocol, logistics and location of the upcoming sampling activities. Planning and logistics meetings for fish sampling were held on April 1, April 9, May 21, June 3, June 8, July 26, and September 21, 2021. The EMRWB Biologists also participated in Regional Advisory Committee (RAB) meetings which allowed collaboration and communication among partners and with other regions of Eeyou Istchee targeted by the project. These meetings were held on April 19, July 9, November 2, 2021, as well as February 25, 2022.

During the sampling season of 2021, EMRWB biologists and CTA-EMR staff worked together to optimize sampling opportunities. During 2021, Covid restrictions permitted one of the EMRWB biologists to travel

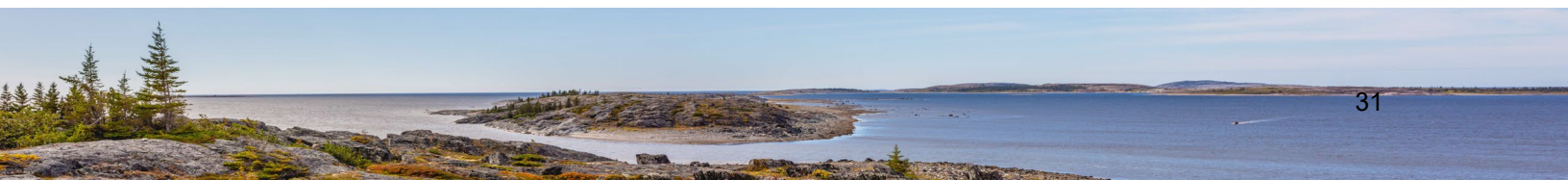


to Chisasibi to assist sampling for one week in August (Figure 11). Additionally, two researchers from the FISHERS team joined the communities for sampling. Dr. Louis Bernatchez joined sampling in Eastmain for one week in July 2021, and Raphael Bouchard joined sampling in Waskaganish for one week in September 2021. The EMRWB, CTA-EMR, and FISHERS researchers were able to sample a total of 2444 fish in James Bay (mixed-stock sampling) and in spawning rivers (source stock sampling) located near Waskaganish, Eastmain, Wemindji and Chisasibi. The sampling efforts employed 51 Cree land users and brought \$93,105 of income directly to land users. Once samples were collected, fish were distributed to residents of the community. Further details of the overall sampling effort can be found in the FY 2021/22 CTA-EMR Annual Report in Appendix C.



**Figure 11: EMRWB Biologist, Felix Boulanger, collecting fish samples in Waskaganish, July 2021**

In addition to sampling fish, the traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) aspect of the FISHERS project commenced in 2021-2022 led by Dr. Monica Mulrennan, Dr. Katherine Scott, and Dr. Stephan Schott. A series of TEK questionnaires were approved by the FISHERS RAB which focused on traditional harvesting practices, family dynamics of traditional fish harvesting, and the role of fishing derbies in traditional harvesting practices. During the summer of 2021, Dr. Monica Mulrennan and Dr. Katherine Scott were able to complete nine TEK interviews in Wemindji.



The EMRWB biologists worked with FISHERS researchers throughout the 2021 sampling season to increase community awareness on the project by developing a web poster (Figure 12), a radio announcement, and frequent sampling updates through the EMRWB Facebook page.

**Fostering Indigenous Small-scale Fisheries for Health, Economy, and Food Security (FISHES) Project - 2021**

**WHO:** A partnership between Laval University, the Cree Trappers Association (EMR), the Eeyou Marine Region Wildlife Board, the Cree Nation Government, Niskamoon, and local band councils.

**WHAT:** CTA-EMR local officers and EMRWB biologists will be working with land users to collect information from cisco, whitefish, and brook trout.

**WHEN:** During the spring, summer, and fall of 2021 to 2024.

**WHERE:** In the rivers and bay near the five coastal communities of Eeyou Istchee.

**WHY:** To identify causes of change in fish harvest over time, for example, changes due to climate warming or resource development. To provide Cree entities with sustainable fisheries management tools.

**What will we be collecting?** Adipose fin and fish length ©Alexandra Langwieder

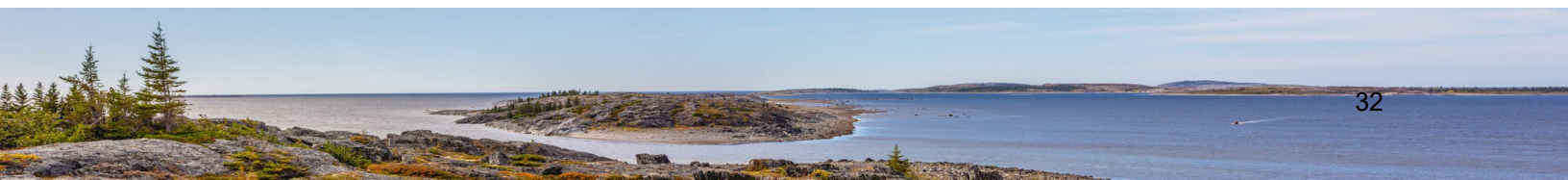
**Cisco (nutimiwasu)**      **Whitefish (atihkamekw)**      **Brook Trout (masimakush)**

**QUESTION 1:**  
Does each river have a different population or do fish from the same population move between different rivers?

**QUESTION 2:**  
Where do the fish harvested in the bay come from and how many come from each river?

For more information contact your local CTA-EMR officer or the EMRWB ([wildlife@eeyoumarineregion.ca](mailto:wildlife@eeyoumarineregion.ca)).

Figure 12: Information FISHERS poster developed by EMRWB Biologist to improve community awareness.



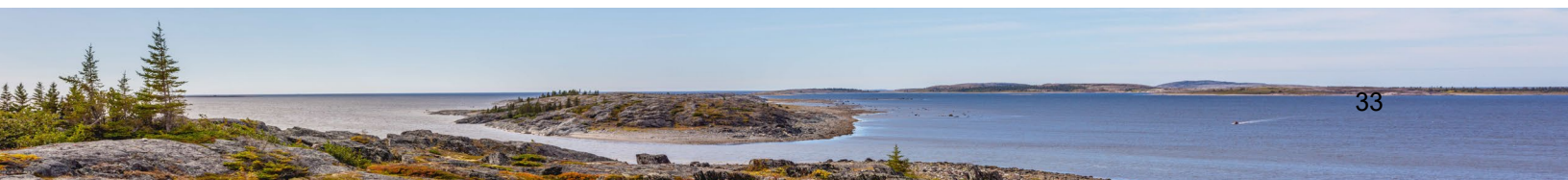


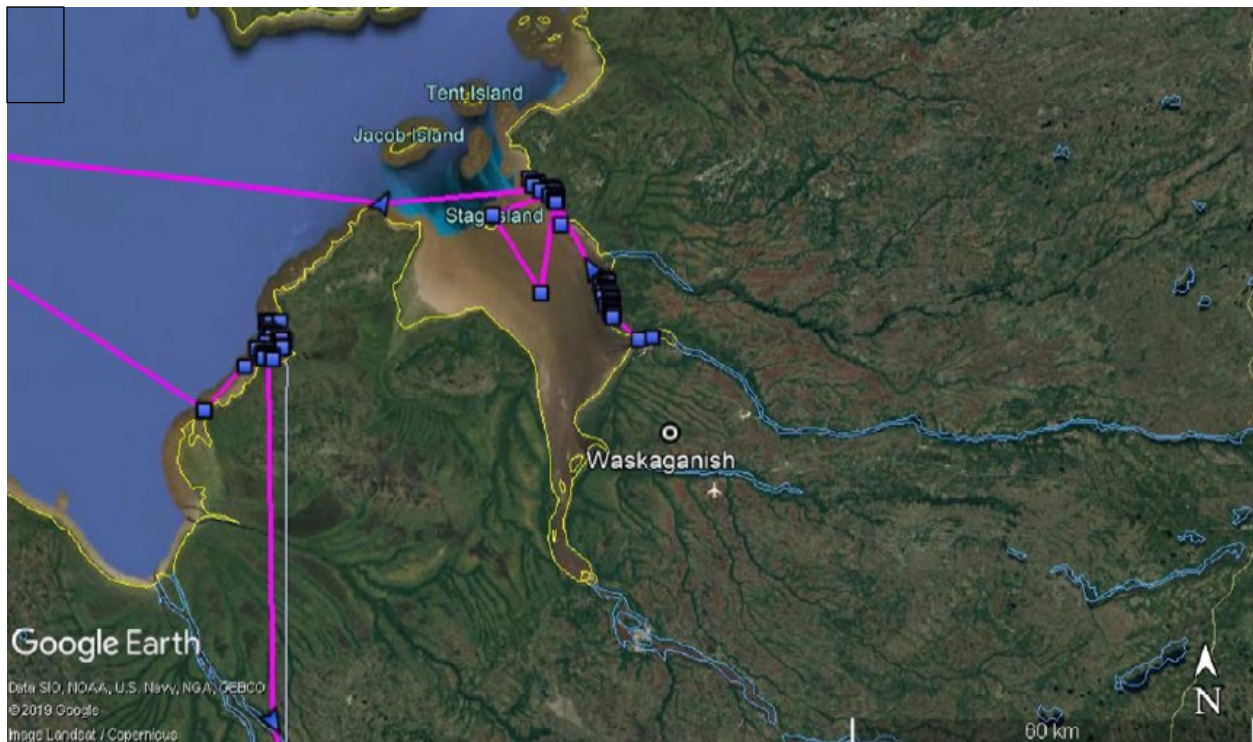
f. Ascribing the importance of Atlantic Brant staging areas for holistic conservation planning

In November of 2020, the EMRWB approved a research fund application to support a University of Saskatchewan led research project that focused on investigating Atlantic Brant (*Branta bernicla*) migration patterns and stopover habitat in the EMR. Atlantic Brant is a locally harvested waterfowl species that has been declining in the EMR. During FY 2021/22, EMRWB financial support was used to hire a PhD student in Dr. Mitch Weegman’s lab. This PhD student, Lindsay Carlson, assisted the New York and New Jersey state agencies in their efforts to capture wintering Brant and deploy 50 GPS-acceleration tracking devices (Figure 13). Additionally, she organized and updated data from the last few years of Brant tracking device deployments and created a variety of maps and data visualizations for internal and external partner presentations (Figure 14). During March 2022, the project proponents began to organize meetings with Cree entities to plan the 2022 field season. Field work will begin in the summer of 2022 in Waskaganish, Eastmain, Wemindji and Chisasibi.



**Figure 13: University of Saskatchewan PhD student, Lindsay Carlson, measuring and deploying a GPS tracker on an Atlantic Brant Goose**

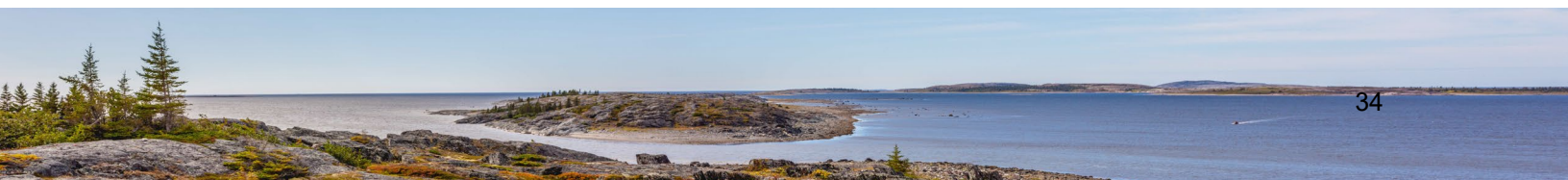




**Figure 14: Example of Atlantic Brant goose migratory stopover site in the EMR. Blue dots and pink lines represent the migratory pathway and resting sites of a GPS-tagged Atlantic Brant goose. (Figure produced by Mitch Weegman).**

**g. Community-research partnership to assess migratory waterfowl use of habitats of eastern James Bay, Quebec, Canada**

In October of 2020, McGill University researchers Mary O'Connor and Melanie Leblanc presented to the EMRWB on their proposed Canada goose research project which would occur as an extension of the CHCRP. This project aims to better understand migratory waterfowl habitat use along the entire eastern coast of James Bay, Canada by better understanding how the availability of eelgrass and other food sources impact the health of Canadian geese. Additionally, this project will provide training to community members and Cree entities to help develop the skills necessary for community-based waterfowl monitoring. Throughout 2021, the EMRWB staff continued discussions with the project proponents as they completed a pilot project in Wemindji to determine sampling methods that worked best for hunters and community members, the group met for further discussion on September 22, 2021. In February of 2022, the EMRWB approved a research funding application for this project. During the FY 2022/23 EMRWB staff will continue to engage in survey planning for the summer of 2022 and will participate in training with the project proponents.

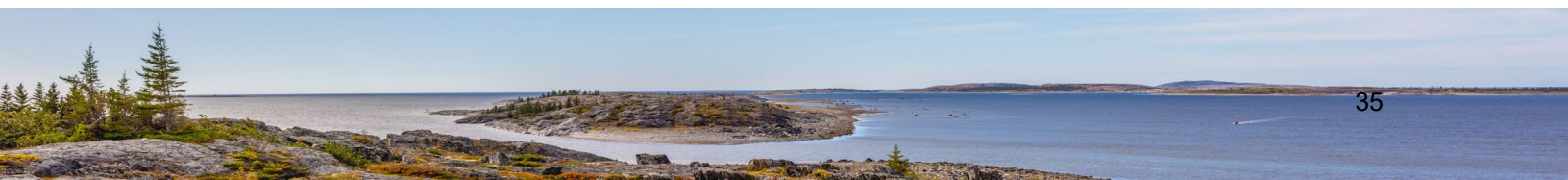


#### h. James Kennedy Expedition – R/V William Kennedy Vessel

In March 2021, representatives from the University of Manitoba and Oceans North presented to the EMRWB on a proposed science cruise in James Bay aboard the William Kennedy Research Vessel. The purpose of the scientific cruise was to update knowledge of the oceanography of James Bay with emphasis on circulation and riverine freshwater distribution, carbon cycling, benthic biodiversity, and productivity at the base of the food web. The EMRWB expressed interest in the project and agreed to support the planning of the project.

EMRWB staff participated in eight ‘Cree Marine Research Needs’ working group meetings with project proponents (University of Manitoba, Oceans North, Parks Canada) and other Cree entities (EMRPC, CNG, CTA, Mushkegowuk Council). Throughout the working group meetings, the EMRWB contributed to developing a list of marine research needs on the eastern and western side of James Bay, developed communications material, and participated in the planning of the 2021 James Bay Expedition.

On February 23, 2022, project proponents presented a research update to the EMRWB summarizing the progress of the first James Bay Expedition. The cruise occurred between August 1 and 17, 2021 throughout western and eastern James Bay (Figure 15). During the cruise, the team successfully deployed seven oceanographic moorings in James Bay to monitor water temperature, salinity, and other biogeochemical tracers (Figure 16). Hydrographic sections were completed that included more than 173 conductivity-temperature-depth (CTD) casts to profile the water column. Additionally, the research team was able to sample sites close to the Eastmain and La Grande Rivers (Figure 17). In addition to water biogeochemistry, the researchers collected sediment cores, phytoplankton, zooplankton, invertebrates (Figure 18), and fish. Throughout the 2021 expedition, Oceans North posted frequent updates and the EMRWB staff shared them on the EMRWB Facebook page. Additionally, Oceans North created a poster for the expedition which was published online and in the coastal communities of the EMR (Figure 19). In FY 2022/23, the EMRWB staff will contribute to the planning year two of the James Bay Expedition and attending working group meetings.



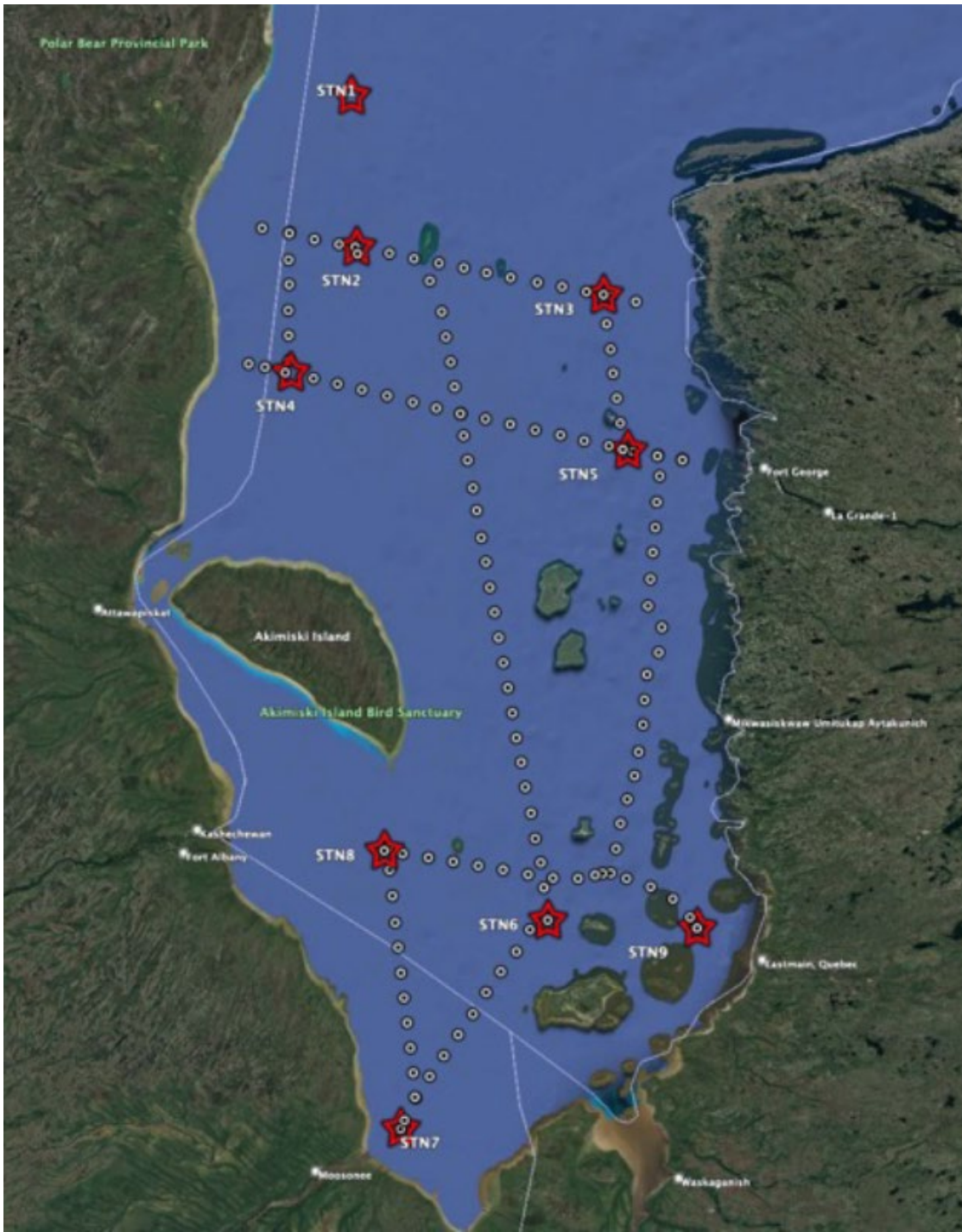
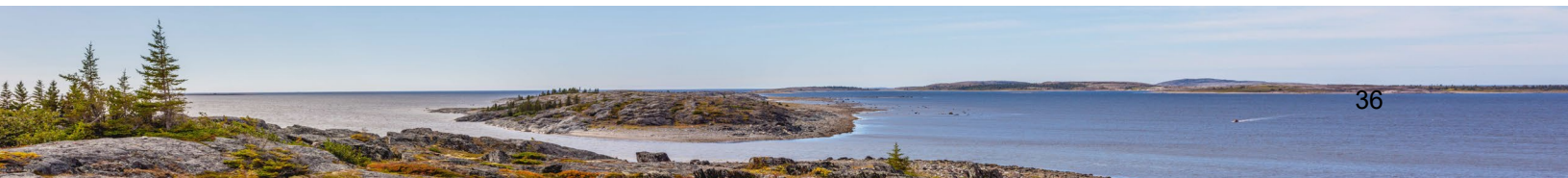


Figure 15: James Bay Expedition Route, August 2021.



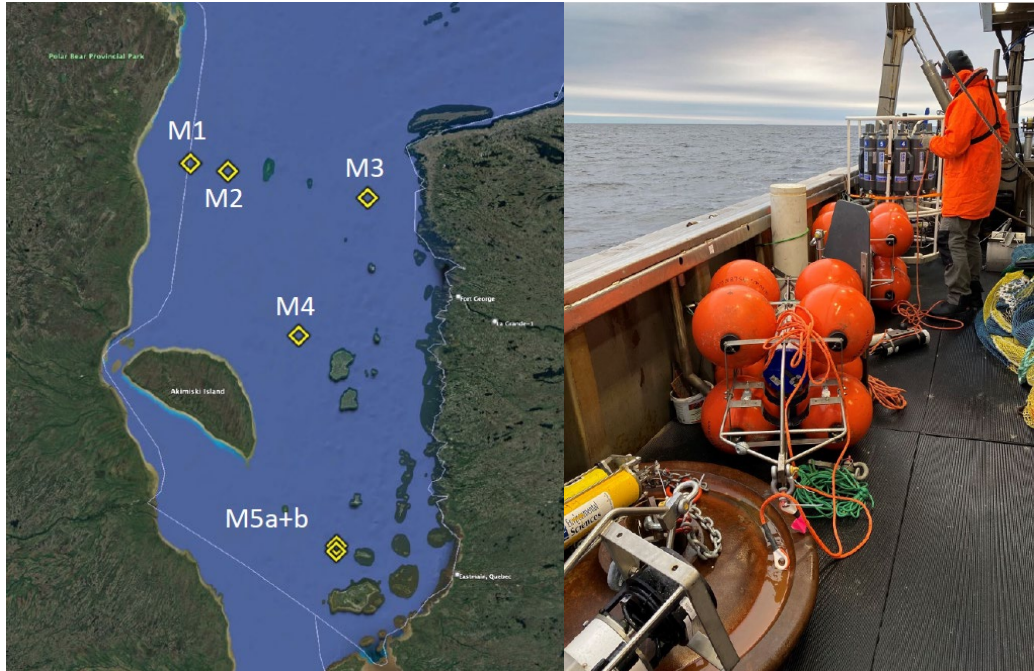


Figure 16: a. Mooring + Physical Oceanography deployment and sampling locations in James Bay b. photo of moorings a water sampling rosette aboard the 2021 James Bay Expedition.

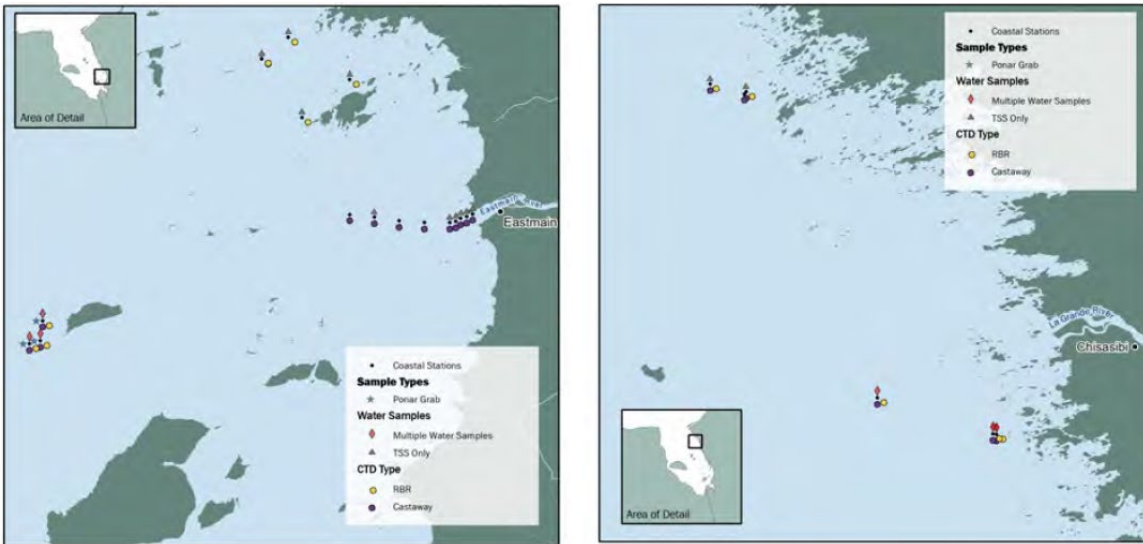


Figure 17: Map showing coastal sample sites near Eastmain River and the La Grande River

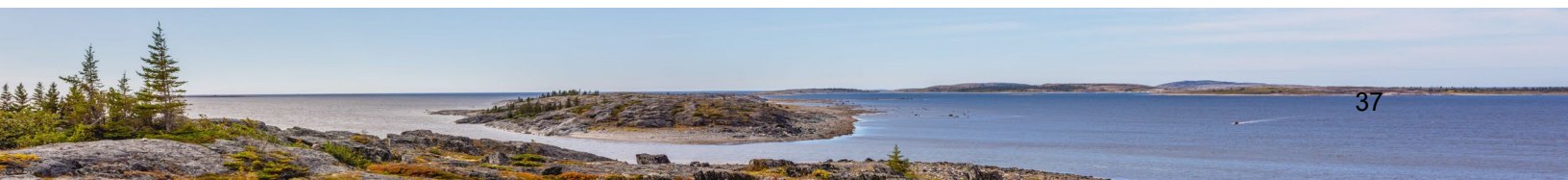
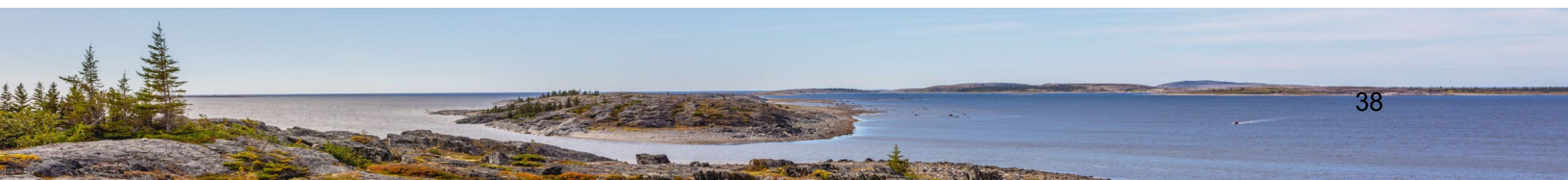




Figure 18: Benthic trawl specimens collected during the 2021 James Bay Expedition



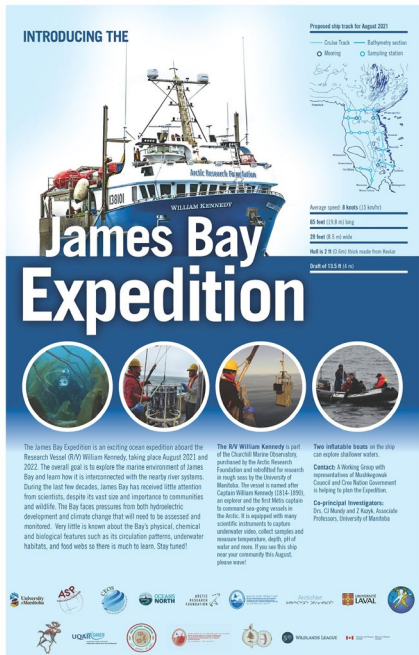


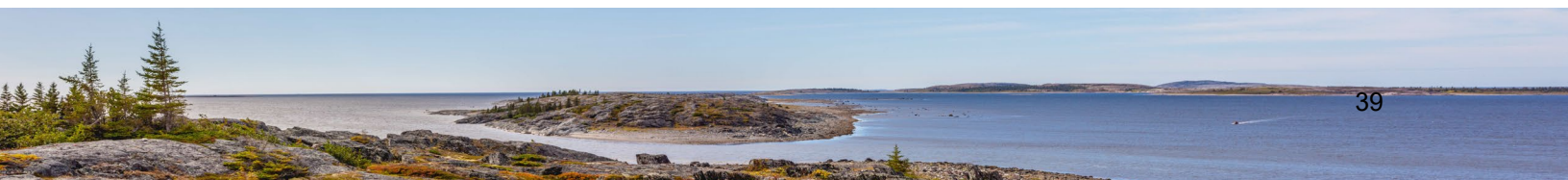
Figure 19: Posters for the James Bay Expedition in English and Cree

i. Coastal Ecosystem Change in the Hudson Bay Complex Project

In November of 2020, EMRWB staff reached out the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to collaborate on future aquatic invasive species work, following an increase in reports of invasive rainbow smelt and double-crested cormorants in the EMR. During FY 2021/2022, the EMRWB staff connected with Kimberly Howland and Erinn Ipsen from the Arctic and Aquatic Research Division of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to align research funding and priorities. Additionally, during FY 2021/22 the EMRWB staff contributed time to an ongoing project between the CTA-EMR and DFO in Whapmagoostui.

At the EMRWB meeting in March 2021, the DFO representatives presented an ongoing project titled Coastal Ecosystem Change in the Hudson Bay Complex, which has been occurring in Whapmagoostui/Kuujuarapik since 2019. The project’s purpose is to combine community-led biodiversity monitoring with experimental physiology testing/distribution modelling for key species of local focus on aquatic invasive species. The EMRWB members indicated that they were supportive of pursuing additional funding for the project in partnership with DFO, but unfortunately the application was not successful.

During the summer of 2021, EMRWB staff collaborated with DFO and CTA-EMR staff to run a trial coastal sampling campaign in Eastmain, and to train the local CTA-EMR officer in new sampling techniques. For



three days, EMRWB staff worked with the local CTA-EMR officer to collect coastal samples including water samples, sediment grabs, phytoplankton and zooplankton samples, and perform transect beach walks to collect invertebrates. During this time, the EMRWB staff were able to train the Eastmain CTA-EMR officer on how to use Niskin bottles (water), Eckman grabs (sediment), plankton nets, and set up coastal survey transects (invertebrates) (Figure 20). Additionally, EMRWB staff trained the CTA-EMR officers in Eastmain and Wemindji to set up crab traps to detect invasive green crabs (Figure 21), the remote training video can be found here: <https://youtu.be/E6szSHS5mtk>. The EMRWB staff also supported the development of communication materials to collect fish samples from community members in Whapmagoostui and to inform the community of Eastmain about the project (Figure 22).



**Figure 20: Eastmain CTA-EMR Officer learning to sample phytoplankton, zooplankton, and coastal invertebrates, with the assistance of an EMRWB biologist**

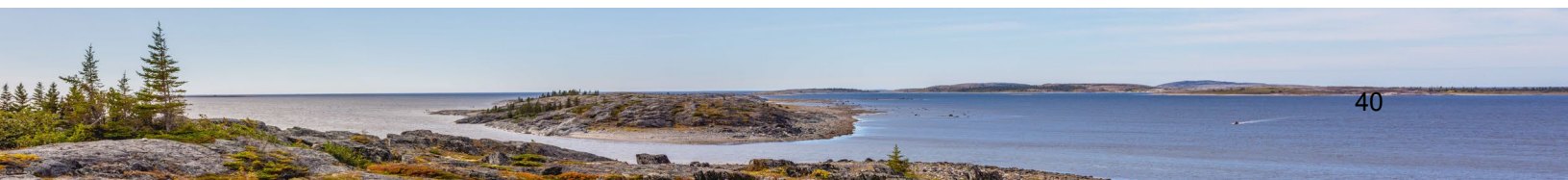






Figure 21: Public demonstration of invasive green crab trap set up in Eastmain, summer 2021

### HUDSON BAY ECOSYSTEM CHANGE

**WHO:** A partnership between the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, the Cree Trappers Association (EMR), the Eeyou Marine Region Wildlife Board.

**WHAT:** Stephanie Varty (EMRWB) and Derek Okimaw (CTA-EMR) will be working with land users from VC32 and RE03A to collect to collect species found along the shoreline. This includes algae, plants, bugs, shellfish, small estuarine fish, plankton, crabs, and anything else we can find!

**WHEN:** During the summer and fall of 2021.

**WHERE:** On two beaches near the mouth of the Eastmain River (see map).

**WHY:** To collect baseline ecosystem data in coastal environments and examine possible effects of change in Hudson Bay Complex by documenting nearshore species, invasive species, and commercial/subsistence species.

**How will we collect samples?**

- Crab traps for out in the bay
- Seine nets for small fish
- Temperature and salt level loggers for the water
- Beach walks for bugs and shellfish

**Cree Trappers' Association**  
414 Whapzotaka Maskip, PO Box 390  
Whapmagostui, Quebec, J0M 1G0  
Tel.: (819) 929-3528

*Arctic Staghorn Sculpin*

*Shorthorn Sculpin*

A gift card of \$50 for **Whalemart** will be exchanged for each Sculpin.

Offer is open to any other uncommon unusual fish or invertebrates.

The Whapmagostui CTA is participating in an Arctic Coast Community-based Sampling project and are requesting sculpin species (or other strange species) caught by local fishers to be submitted for sampling purposes. Fish must be fresh, or frozen fresh, and in good condition.

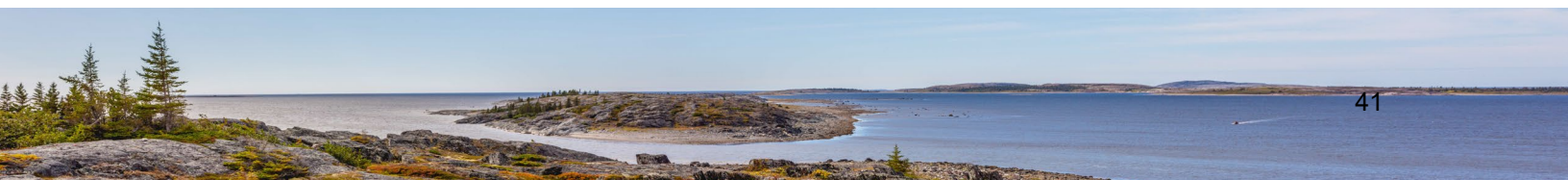
Information needed includes: where fish was caught, who collected it (contact information) and when it was caught.

Sculpine are selected because they are found across the arctic and can be used as an indicator species for climate change.

Please contact Roy Mamansuk, CTA-EMR Local Officer to drop off samples.

**CHI Iniskawit!**

Figure 22: Hudson Bay Ecosystem Change posters for 1) information to Eastmain residents and 2) fish sample collection in Whapmagostui



j. National Geographic Pristine Seas

In January 2022, National Geographic Pristine Seas met with EMRWB staff to present their plan for an expedition to Canada’s northeastern regions in the summer of 2022, focused on aiding the establishment of marine protected areas. The expedition will focus on creating two film documentaries to bring international awareness to the marine region and will include scientific characterization of the marine ecosystem (Figure 23). The expedition will include seven areas of interest, including the Eeyou Marine Region National Marine Conservation Area which is in the feasibility assessment stage. At the February 2022 EMRWB meeting, National Geographic Pristine Seas presented their project to the EMRWB Board Members. During FY 2022/23, EMRWB staff will continue to participate in the planning and review process of this expedition as required.

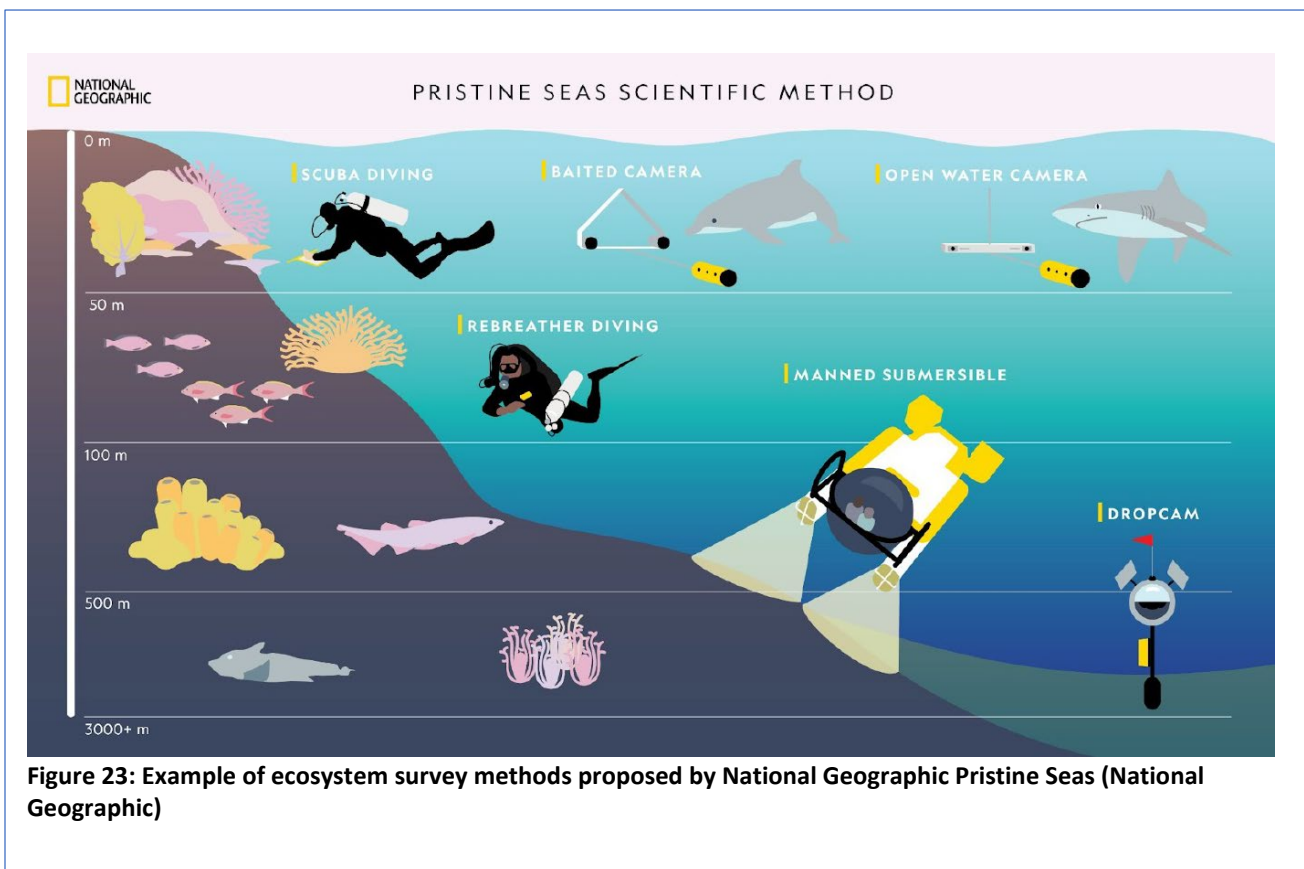
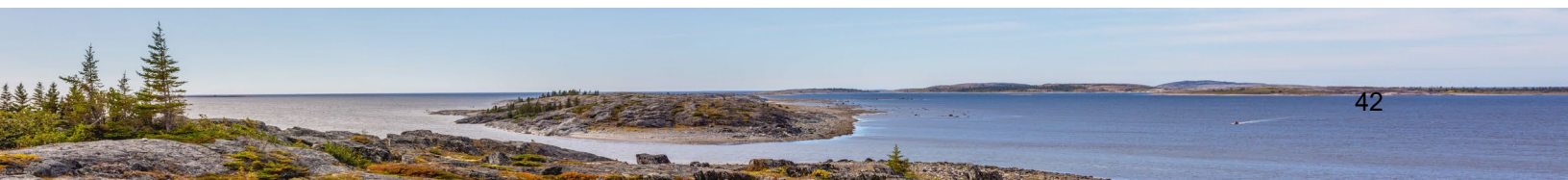


Figure 23: Example of ecosystem survey methods proposed by National Geographic Pristine Seas (National Geographic)

k. COTA/FaunENord Non-timber Forest Products

In January 2022, the Executive Director of the Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association (COTA) contacted the EMRWB to seek support and share resources on an upcoming survey of the offshore islands in



southern James Bay to gain more knowledge of the islands and the resources they offer in terms of ecotourism. The survey targets Non-timber Forest Resources, such as berries, mushrooms, and other edible plants. The EMRWB was invited to join them in the field to do some surveys of its own. The expedition is planned for August 2022 and the EMRWB biologists are exploring options for EMRWB island survey priorities including migratory bird habitat characterization, and bat monitoring which will be described below (Section 7. n).

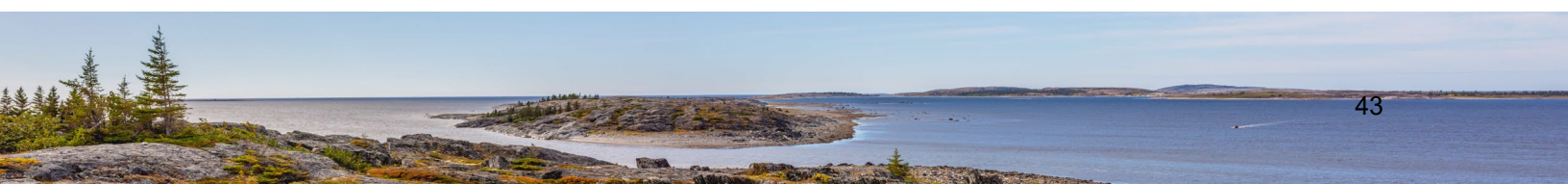
#### I. Twin Islands Bird Survey

On December 16, 2021, a biologist from the Canadian Wildlife Service contacted the EMRWB to express the CWS's interest in conducting a breeding bird survey on the Twin islands in the summer of 2022. These islands are part of the IBA (Important Bird Area) network and are thus considered as an area of international significance for bird conservation, more specifically for some listed shorebird species such as the red-necked phalarope. This study is meant to address the lack of data on the distribution of breeding birds in northern Quebec, as the collected data would be included in the Second Quebec Breeding Bird Atlas Project. An initial planning meeting was scheduled on January 27, 2022. The logistical aspects and safety issues were discussed, as the islands are known to host polar bears. Other meetings were held on February 18, March 1, March 4, and March 15, 2022, to discuss further potential collaboration with the EMRWB and the CTA-EMR regarding funding, project management, safety, transportation, and hiring of local guides and bear guards.

#### m. Polar Bear Ecology in the Eeyou Marine Region

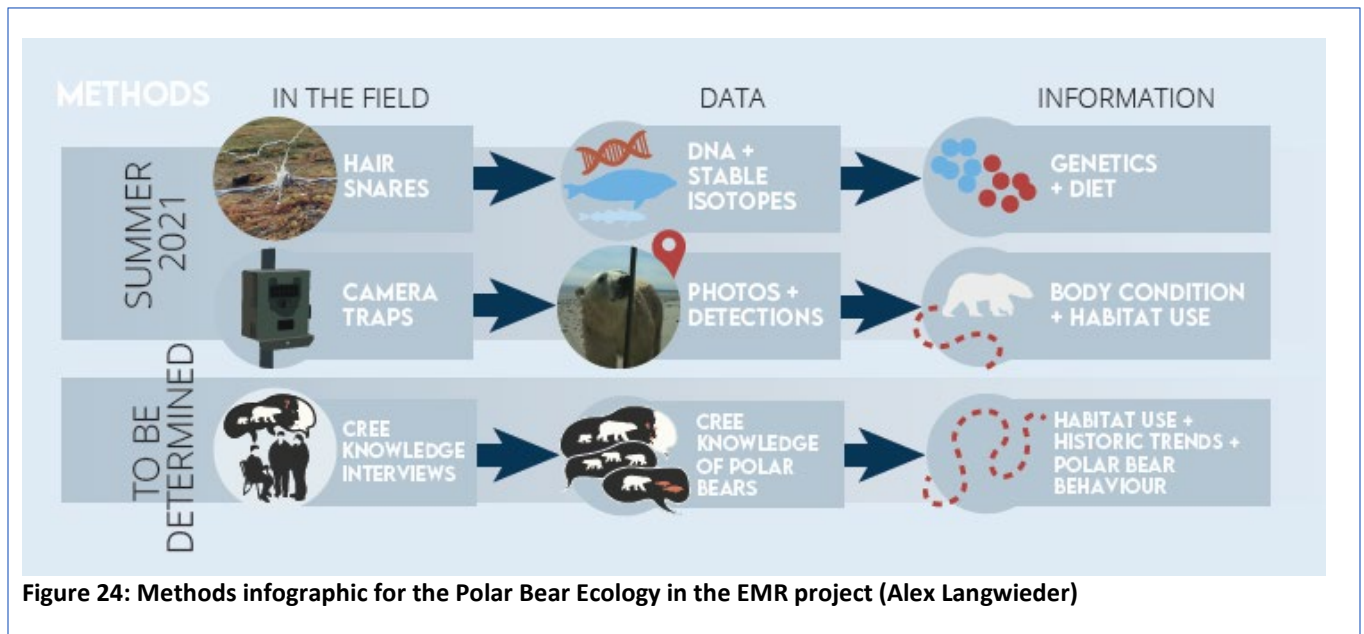
At the November 2020 EMRWB meeting, McGill University researchers Alex Langwieder and Murray Humphries presented a proposed project titled 'Polar Bear Ecology in the Eeyou Marine Region'. The project goals were to understand the James Bay polar bear populations possible genetic distinction from Southern Hudson Bay polar bears, their habitat use, diet, and body condition using non-invasive sampling methods (Figure 24). This project will provide important information for polar bear conservation and management decisions in the EMR.

In May of 2021, the project proponents submitted their project funding application to the EMRWB and received full support from the EMRWB Members. Throughout FY 2021/22, EMRWB staff participated in 11 planning meetings. In the summer of 2021, Alex Langwieder successfully visited the four southern communities of the EMR and deployed 37 sampling stations on the coast and offshore islands (Figure 25). EMRWB staff participated in four fieldwork days throughout the summer. Through these sampling stations, the project gathered 138 polar bear observations and 118 polar bear hair samples used for



genetic and stable isotope analysis (to determine diet). In addition to sampling stations, the polar bear ecology team participated in an aerial survey (spring, 2021) and made field observations of polar bears and polar bear dens.

In addition to fieldwork, the project proponents have been working hard to keep land users informed on their progress by creating infographics (Figure 26), [videos](#), and making regular posts on Facebook. In FY 2022/23, EMRWB staff will continue to work with the project proponents on planning and executing a second field season and arranging Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) interviews with land users.



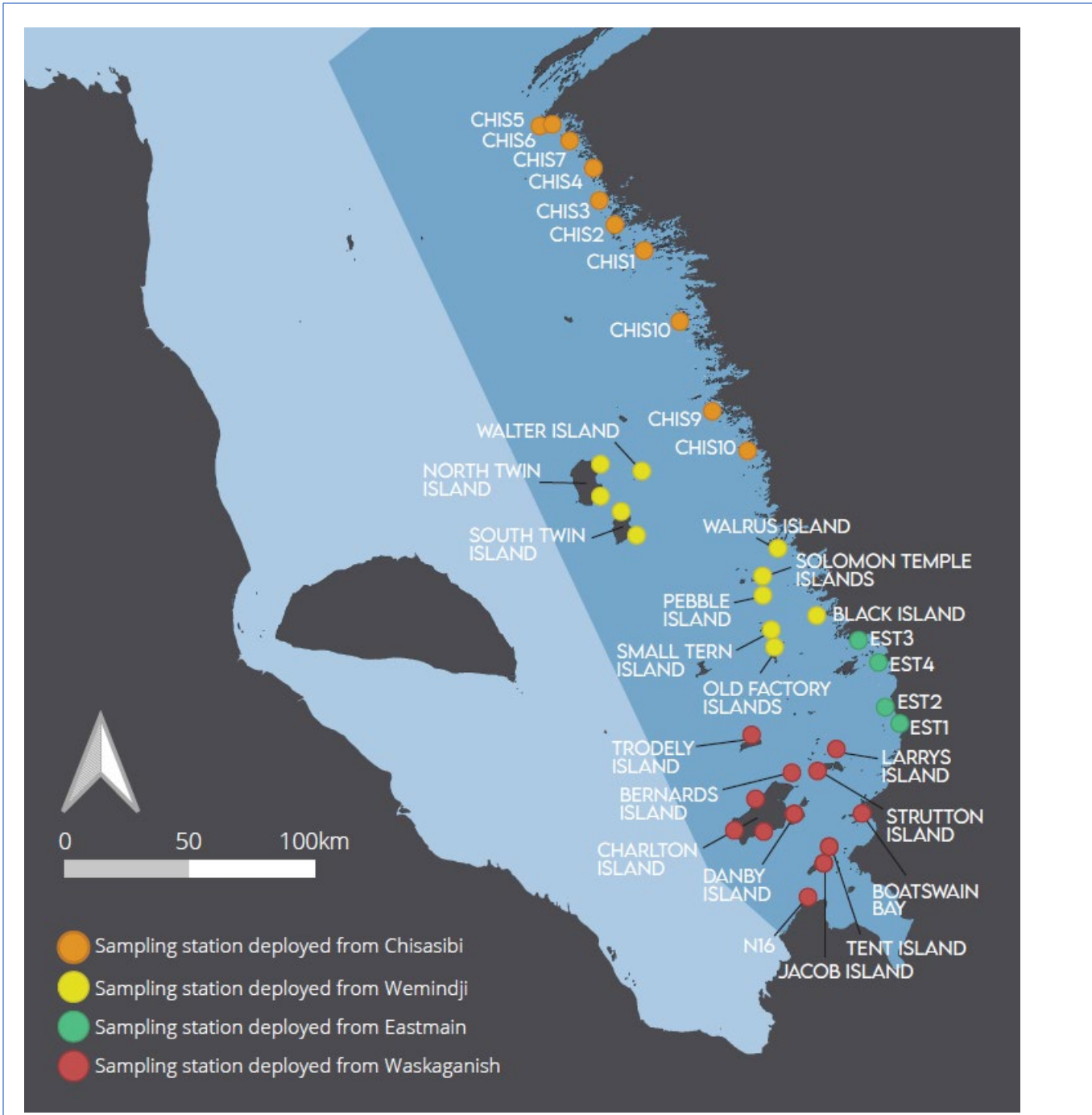
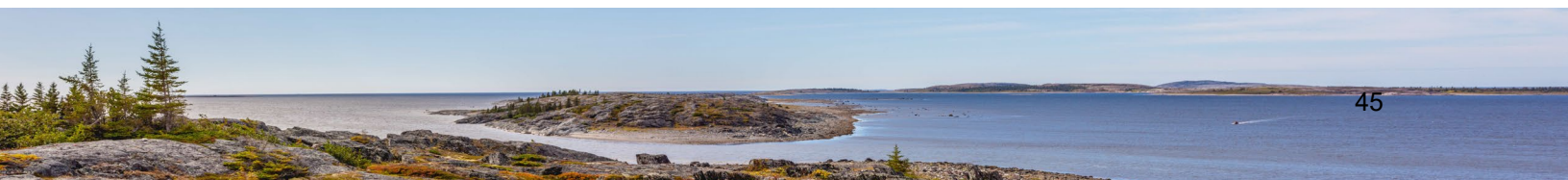


Figure 25: Sampling station locations for the Polar Bear Ecology in the EMR project (Alex Langwieder)



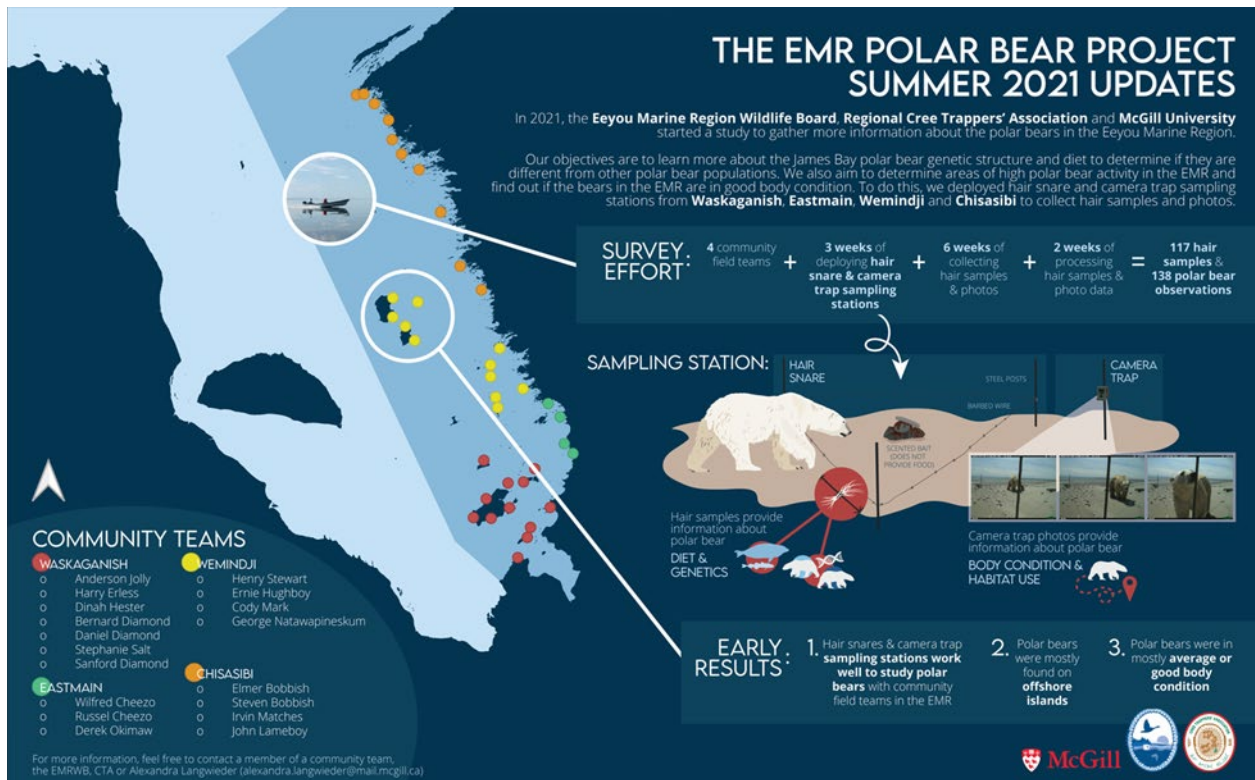


Figure 26: Summary infographic of the summer 2021 Polar Bear Ecology in the EMR project (Alex Langwieder).

#### n. Bat ARU Project

Very little information is currently available about the northern range of bat species in Quebec, despite the potential for roosting and breeding habitat and their observed presence by community members. In February and March 2022, the EMRWB applied for funding from Wildlife Acoustics and the Fondation de la faune du Québec (FFQ), respectively, to develop a bat monitoring project in the EMR. The project objectives are to determine which species of bat are present on the eastern coast of James Bay and on some of the offshore islands, as well as the northern range limits of bat species listed as Species at Risk at the federal and provincial levels (Figure 27). The EMRWB obtained support for the project from both the MFFP and the CWS, and they contacted bat monitoring experts from the MFFP and the non-profit organization FaunENord to initiate a collaboration regarding this bat monitoring project.



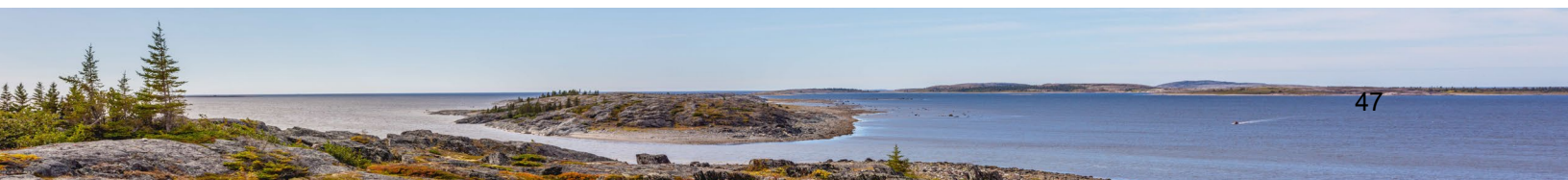
**Figure 27: Federally and Provincially Listed Bat Species at Risk**

**o. Wildlife Observation Reporting**

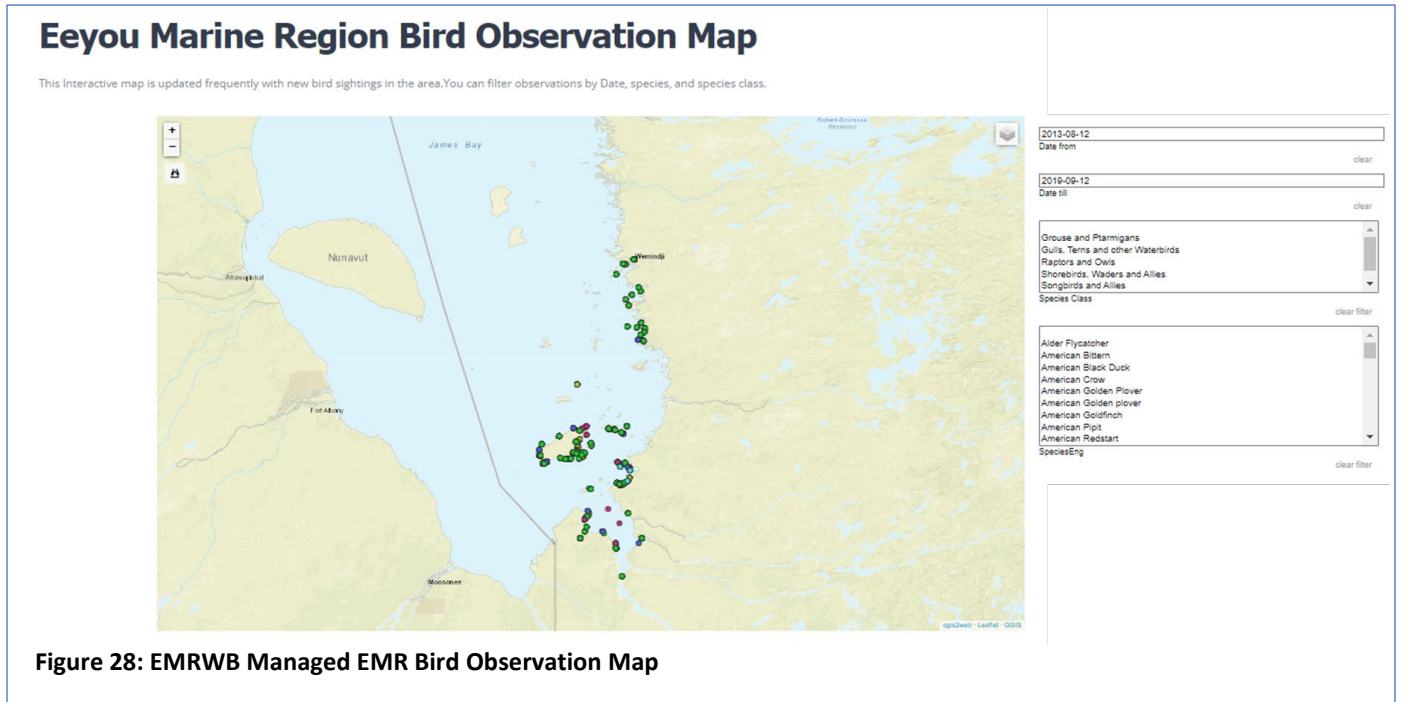
In FY 2020/21, the EMRWB decided to support the development and use of The Indigenous Knowledge Social Network (SIKU) web and mobile application for wildlife observation and ice safety reporting in the EMR. SIKU is a mobile application and web platform by and for Inuit which provides tools and services for ice safety, language preservation, and weather reporting. SIKU also provides tools to collect data from community-based research projects, harvesting activities, and wildlife observations, all of which align with responsibilities set forth in the EMRWB mandate.

During FY 2021/22, one of the EMRWB biologists met with SIKU staff on September 17, October 5, and October 28, 2021. Through these meetings, the EMRWB biologist connected SIKU with the Cree Nation Government toponymist and arranged sharing of the CNG’s Cree place names maps to be incorporated into SIKU. Additionally, the EMRWB biologist collaborated with SIKU staff to create a table of common species names in English and Cree. SIKU staff are currently working to incorporate Cree terminology into SIKU. During the October 28, 2021, meeting, the EMRWB biologist participated in a discussion with CTA, CNG, and SIKU staff regarding the use of apps in wildlife reporting. Despite multiple follow-ups by the EMRWB, there has been little progress in continuing collaborative conversations with the other Cree entities. More information on SIKU can be found here: <https://siku.org/about>.

To foster species reporting among the EMR communities, The EMRWB staff posted the beluga observation poster on the EMRWB Facebook and public places in each of the EMR communities. The EMRWB and CTA-EMR received 26 reports of beluga observations in the EMR in FY 2021/22. In FY 2021/22, EMRWB staff

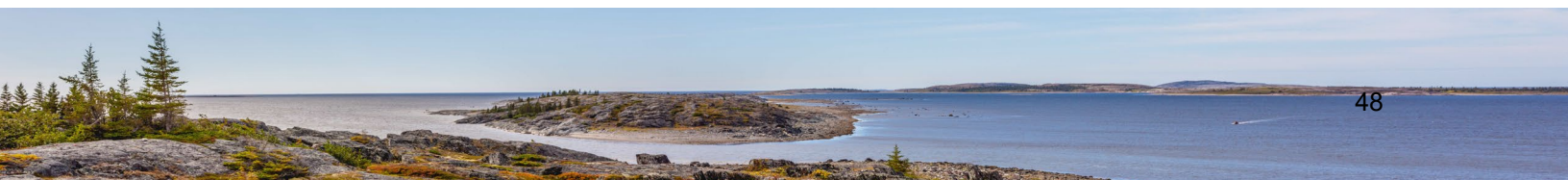


have continued to keep a database of all bird species reported. EMRWB staff decided to move the Eeyou Marine Region Bird Observation Map from a consultant managed platform to an internally managed platform on the EMRWB website (Figure 28).



In addition to maintaining a bird observation database, the EMRWB staff have developed observation databases for polar bear, beluga, pinnipeds, species at risk, new species, fish harvest, and general wildlife observations. Specifically, the EMRWB would like to highlight their success in collecting new species observations for rainbow smelt, an invasive fish species. In the summer of 2021, the EMRWB developed a poster to request that land users report any rainbow smelt they catch (Figure 29). As a result of this campaign, the EMRWB received 17 reports of rainbow smelt along the coast (Figure 30). This example highlights the effectiveness of community reporting for wildlife management in the EMR.

The EMRWB's plans to collect wildlife data from the Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association (COTA) boat tours was postponed in FY 2021/22 due to COVID restrictions for visitors, this initiative will be resumed in FY 2022/23.







# WANTED



## RAINBOW SMELT

- Around 8 Inches
- Olive green back and silver belly
- Deeply forked tail
- Small adipose fin
- Purple, pink, or blue shiny sides
- Prominent teeth on the roof of their mouths and tongues



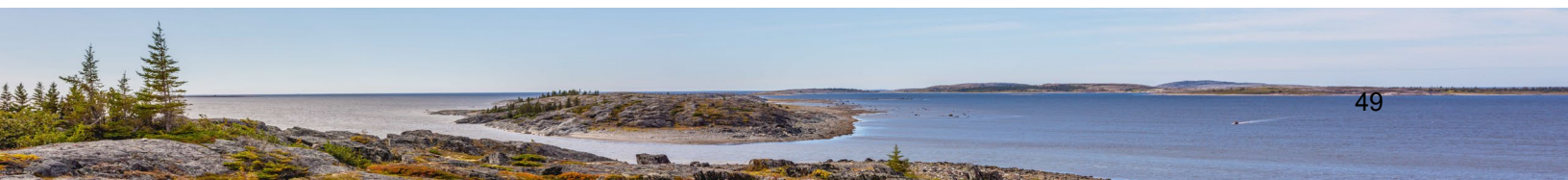
## REPORT YOUR RAINBOW SMELT

If you catch a Rainbow Smelt please take a photo and record where you caught it. Report this information to your local CTA-EMR Officer or the EMRWB Biologists ([wildlife@eeyoumarinereigon.ca](mailto:wildlife@eeyoumarinereigon.ca)). **DO NOT RELEASE ANY CAUGHT SMELT!**

### WHY?

The Rainbow Smelt is an invasive species, meaning it is not native to James Bay and has negative effects on native species. Rainbow Smelt reduce the population of native fish through competition, including perch, walleye, cisco, whitefish, and trout. Reports of Rainbow Smelt are increasing in James Bay and we would like to monitor where and how many are being caught.

Figure 29: EMRWB Wildlife Observation Rainbow Smelt Poster



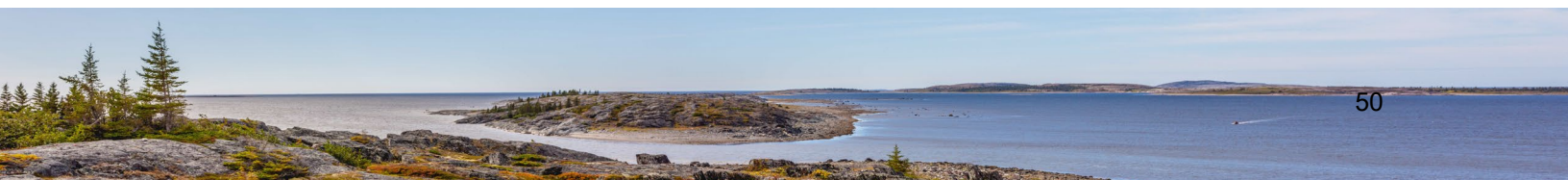


**Figure 30: Map of Rainbow Smelt Observations in the EMR 2021-2022.**

**p. Polar Bear Defence of Life and Property Kills and Reporting**

In FY 2021/22, EMRWB and CTA-EMR staff started to systematically compile polar bear observations, encounters, and defence of life and property kills (DLP) in a single online database. Standardized reporting tools were developed during the previous year to record all important aspects of polar bear observations and interactions. Observation and DLP records are submitted to the Quebec Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs (MFFP) in January every year.

In FY 2021/22, a total of 36 polar bear observations were reported to the EMRWB. The number of defense of life and property kills (DLP) totalled four bears, a significant increase compared to just two DLP kills occurring over the previous five years. Two of the defense kills occurred during goose hunting season in late April and May (Goose Break), which coincided with an unprecedented sudden warm spring and early ice breakup. All four occurrences took place near cabins located on islands after the bears failed to leave the area despite multiple deterrent attempts. Each DLP kill was documented and



reported to officials, and hair and muscle samples were collected from three of the bears. The nearest communities to the four DLP kills were Waskaganish (2), Wemindji (1) and Chisasibi (1). The timing of the four kills was such that they were applied to two different polar bear harvest seasons.

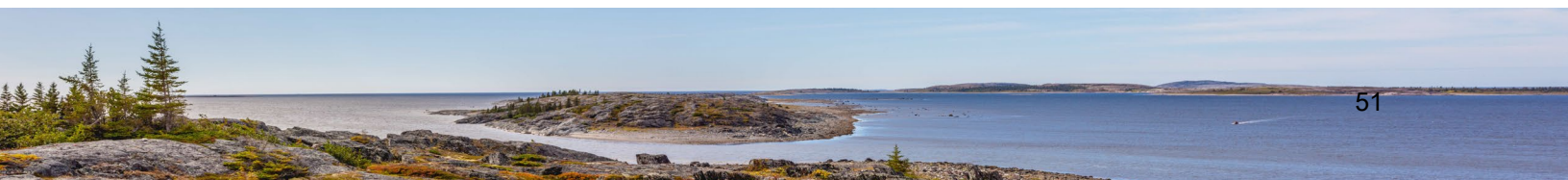
Over the last year, the EMRWB has been increasing its effort to minimize human-bear conflict, namely by facilitating polar bear safety training in all coastal communities.



**Figure 31: A female polar bear with two cubs on Scoter Island on May 4, 2021.**

#### q. Wildlife Viewing Protocols for Tourism Ventures in the EMR

In FY 2020/21, the EMRWB staff continued discussions with the Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association (COTA) regarding upcoming tourism ventures in the EMR. During FY 2021/22, EMRWB staff developed a wildlife viewing protocol to ensure the safety of the boat captains, tourists, and to also provide appropriate setback distances necessary to avoid disturbance to wildlife. The wildlife viewing protocol includes general guidelines for wildlife viewing as well as species and animal group specific guidelines based on the best available literature. The wildlife viewing protocol was developed in two formats, a short two-page version for tourists and land users (Figure 32) and a complete 16-page version for tourist guides. The EMRWB wildlife viewing guidelines were shared with COTA and Wiinipaakw Tours during the fall of 2021.




**Eeyou Marine Region Wildlife Board**  
**Wildlife Viewing Guidelines**

**General Wildlife Viewing Ethics**

1. Respect wildlife by not disturbing animals, when an animal changes its behaviour due to your presence, you are too close.
  - a. Use binoculars, spotting scopes, and cameras with telephoto lenses to view and photograph wildlife.
  - b. Learn the spatial needs of species and their alarm signals before you approach them.
  - c. Do not attempt to feed or touch wildlife.
2. Respect wildlife habitat, do not alter, damage, or destroy potential animal habitat.
  - a. Avoid trampling or damaging vegetation, walk on designated paths or in vegetation free areas when possible.
  - b. Clean all gear before entering and leaving new areas to avoid the spread of invasive species.
  - c. Leave the land and waterbodies as you found them, make sure to gather all garbage before leaving an area. Waste can be a bear attractant and can put yourself and others at risk.
3. Respect land users and be aware that others are using the land to provide food for their families.
  - a. If you are interested in fishing or hunting ensure that you are following all federal, provincial, and First Nations laws. This includes following permitting procedures and harvesting seasons for non-indigenous people.

**Polar Bears**

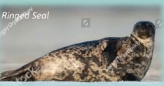
The Polar Bear is the largest terrestrial carnivore in the world and is suited for life in the Arctic and sub-Arctic, spending most of its time on the ice. In the EMR, you might spot Polar Bears on the ice of James Bay and Hudson Bay during the winter and spring or on offshore islands during the summer. Polar Bears are listed as a *Species of Concern* under the Federal *Species at Risk Act* and as a *Vulnerable Species* under Quebec Legislation.



When viewing polar bears, it is important to not change their behaviour. Indications of changed behaviour include the bear raising its head, focusing its gaze on you, changing its body posture, moving away from you, or charging you or your vehicle. To avoid disturbance, view using binoculars and approach from downwind, using minimal lights and noise. It is not acceptable to harass polar bears to move them into sight. Never approach a swimming polar bear.

**Seals**


Seal species that you might encounter in the EMR include the ringed seal, harbour seal, and bearded seal. Ringed seals are the most common and abundant marine mammals in James Bay. During the summer, you can find seals in search of fish in James Bay and local rivers. Seals also enjoy resting on islands, shorelines, or rocks and will often return to the same resting location multiple times.



When viewing seals in the water, you must maintain a distance of 50 m from the seal(s) and view them for less than 30 minutes. If you encounter a seal with pups or a lone pup, increase your distance. Pups are often left alone when mother seals are in the water feeding; they are not abandoned and must be left alone.

**Whales**


James Bay is the southernmost occurrence of Beluga in the eastern sub-Arctic. In the EMR, you will find beluga whales in groups of six or less during the summer. The presence of polynya (ice-free areas) and abundant food resources enable the beluga to remain in eastern James Bay year-round.



Beluga Whales are listed as *Threatened* under the federal *Species at Risk Act*. They must be viewed at a distance of 400 m or more. If you accidentally approach a beluga within 400 m, move away slowly until you have reached an appropriate distance.


**Migratory and Sea Birds**

*Red Knot*



Within the EMR you will likely see an array of migratory birds which are protected federally under the *Migratory Birds Convention Act*. Additionally, you will encounter sea birds, which come ashore to nest or live in coastal habitats year-round.

*Red-throated Loon*



When viewing bird colonies, you must be aware of the birds' behaviour. If a bird adopts an alert posture or emits alarm calls, takes flight or moves away, or actively defends the nest, move away quickly and quietly without making sudden movements. Additionally, avoid the use of recordings, calls, or whistles to attract birds.

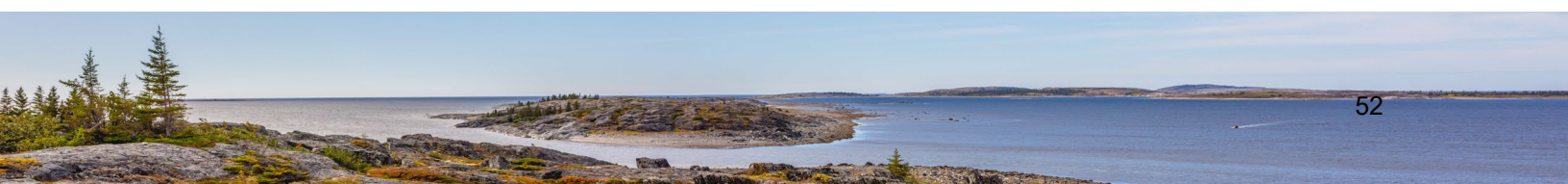
Contact us for more information: [wildlife@eeyoumarineregion.ca](mailto:wildlife@eeyoumarineregion.ca) | [emrb.ca](http://emrb.ca) | Eeyou Marine Region

**Figure 32: EMRWB short-hand wildlife viewing guideline for tourists and land users**

Due to COVID restrictions, tourism operations were not open in the EMR during FY 2021/22. For more information on tourism in the EMR, visit the Wiinipaakw Tours website here: <https://wiinipaakwtours.com/en>.

**r. Youth Outreach – Mission eDNA**

In March of 2021, EMRWB staff connected with Genome Quebec to explore the potential of expanding Genome Quebec’s youth outreach program, Mission eDNA, into the schools of Eeyou Istchee. The Mission eDNA youth outreach program uses cutting-edge science, eDNA (environmental DNA) to allow students to monitor biodiversity in their local rivers. The educational component of the project allows for high school students to engage in an authentic science experience, from planning sampling, creating a hypothesis, collecting samples at a river, sending samples for analysis, and regrouping to discuss the results. In 2019, the program started in southern Quebec, and to date has engaged with 37 schools with great success. In Eeyou Istchee, research projects that use eDNA are growing rapidly. Currently, the James Bay Expedition (University of Manitoba), Hudson Bay Ecosystem Change project (DFO), the National Geographic Pristine Seas Expedition (National Geographic), and the MFFP plan to use eDNA in the EMR to



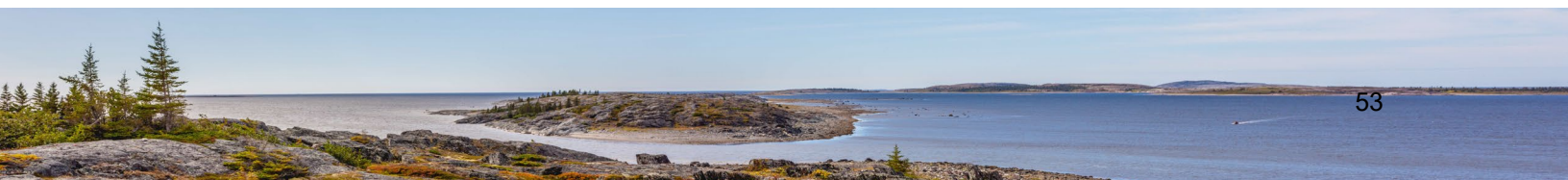
assess biodiversity. The Mission eDNA program will provide high school students with a better understanding of the research occurring in the EMR and provide them with applicable skills to pursue environmental research in the future.

In FY 2021/22, EMRWB staff continued meeting with Genome Quebec to discuss the science and logistics of the educational program, potential for a pilot program in Eeyou Istchee, and how the program could be adapted to fit within the Cree School Board curriculum (Figure 33). Throughout FY 2021/22, EMRWB staff, Genome Quebec, and the FISHES project lead met nine times and decided to develop a youth outreach pilot program in the communities of Waskaganish and Eastmain. In September of 2021, EMRWB and Genome Quebec staff presented the proposed outreach program to the Waskaganish and Eastmain Chief and Councils and received enthusiastic support for the program. Additionally, EMRWB staff started conversations with the principals and high school teachers in Waskaganish and Eastmain to garner their support.

The figure displays two educational materials. On the left is a 'Sampling site' form with sections for: 'The sky is rather:' (with weather icons), 'The bank has:' (with a landscape diagram), 'The water in the stream is:' (with color and clarity options), 'The bottom of the stream is made of:' (with sediment options), 'The quantity of algae is:' (with size options), and 'The possible sources of contamination are:' (with icons for various pollution sources). On the right is a 'STUDENT HYPOTHESIS SHEET' titled 'Developing your Hypotheses', which includes instructions on how to use the form, a 'Member(s) of the team:' field, and a 'Hypotheses on fish biodiversity' section with a scale from 'Faible' (0 to 2 species) to 'Grande' (plus de 10 espèces). The scale also includes 'Moyenne' (Entre 2 et 10 espèces) and 'Low Medium High' levels.

Figure 33: Examples of existing Mission eDNA materials to be adapted for the EMR.

Throughout planning meetings, EMRWB and Genome Quebec staff agreed that it would be important to adapt the project materials to be engaging and culturally relevant for the students. To affect this change, the project proponents worked together to hire a local ‘Youth Science Outreach Coordinator’ under a short-term contract to develop program materials. On January 14, 2022, EMRWB staff released a job posting on the EMRWB Facebook page/website, Cree Trappers Association Regional page, each of the



EMR communities Facebook page, and shared it with several local career resource pages (Figure 34). The posting closed on February 21, 2022, with three submissions from local youth. EMRWB and Genome






**Job Posting – Youth Science Outreach Coordinator**

Génome Québec is a private, non-profit organization established in 2000, plays a leading role in the genomics research community by financing research projects and providing researchers with guidance to help them build expertise of international caliber. Genomics is a branch of science that focuses on the study of the entire genetic information of a living organism.

FISHES project, led by Louis Bematchez's team (Université Laval, IBIS) aims to integrate new scientific technology (genomics) and Fisheries Science with Indigenous Knowledge to address critical socio-economic challenges and opportunities related to food security and commercial, recreational and subsistence fisheries. This project is financially supported by Génome Québec and Génome Canada.

**Mission eDNA Youth Outreach initiative**

Eeyou Marine Region Wildlife Board and Genome Québec staff, and FISHES researchers wish to develop a citizen science pilot project to **engage the community, especially youth, in a hands-on project merging science technology and biodiversity monitoring.**

**Educational goals**

- Educate youth about science as well as the potential and challenges of environmental genomics
- Give students and teachers the opportunity to explore biodiversity through genomics
- Stimulate young people's interest in scientific careers
- Highlight the connection between traditional knowledge and scientific knowledge

**Scientific goals**

- Allow students to live an authentic science experience
- Provide the FISHES project researchers data on wild fish status in streams



[Click here to learn more about the Mission eDNA program!](#)

**Mandate – Youth Science Outreach Coordinator**

We are looking for a person who can help us link the Mission eDNA Youth Outreach project to the concepts of environmental science and scientific investigation in the Cree School Board high school curriculum, while adapting the existing activity to include Cree culture and language. Skills needed include proficiency in English and Cree language (written and verbal) and experience working in education.

**Tasks**

- Review existing Mission eDNA guides and identify the appropriate grade level for the activities
- Adapt the existing school activity guide (writing) to bridge the high school science curriculum and the activity
- Adapt the existing materials and activities for the students
- Act as an advisor to EMRWB and Genome Quebec staff by providing educational, scientific, and cultural information that should be incorporated into the guide
- Integrate Traditional Knowledge and Cree language into the Mission eDNA school activity

**Rate of Pay**

We will establish together a short-term contract that will clearly define the deliverables for the period from February to May 2022 for a total of 50-75 hours of work. The rate will be between \$25 and \$35 per hour.

**Deadline**

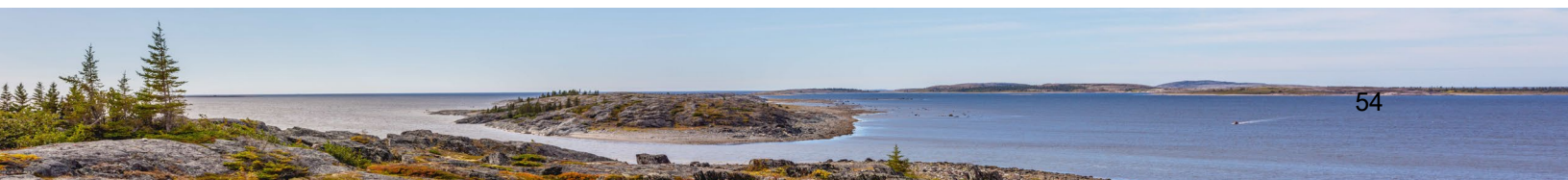
Several deadlines will be discussed in the timeline (February to May 2022). Our goal is to have the activity concept and documents developed before the summer break of 2022. Dates will be flexible to accommodate goose break.

To apply, send your curriculum vitae (CV) and letter of interest to the contacts below by **February 14, 2022**.

<p><b>Stephanie Varty</b> Wildlife Management Biologist Eeyou Marine Region Wildlife Board Mobile: 289-259-7256 Email: <a href="mailto:svarty@eeyoumarineregion.ca">svarty@eeyoumarineregion.ca</a></p>	<p><b>Noémie Poirier Stewart</b> Consultant, Education and Communications Génome Québec Mobile: 581-997-4114 Email: <a href="mailto:npoirierstewart@genomequebec.com">npoirierstewart@genomequebec.com</a></p>
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**Figure 34: Mission eDNA Youth Science Outreach Coordinator Job Posting**

Quebec staff held interviews on March 1, 2022 and notified the successful candidate on March 4, 2022. The successful candidate participated in two introductory meetings in March 2022 and will continue to work with EMRWB and Genome Quebec staff in FY 2022/23 to develop the project materials and include Cree language and concepts into the activity. The activity will be piloted in Waskaganish and Eastmain Secondary classes during the 2022/23 school year.



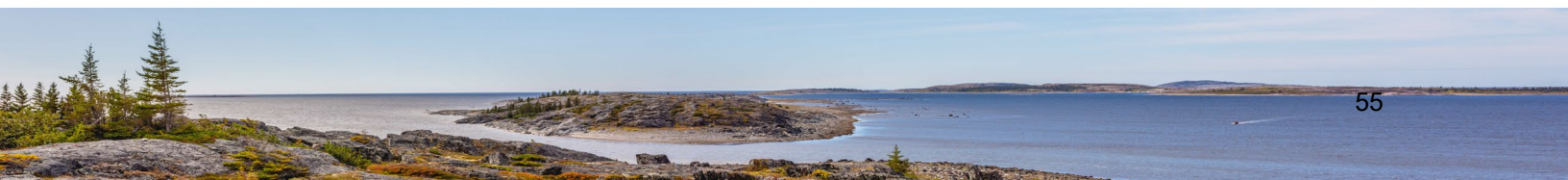
## 14. WILDLIFE RESEARCH FUND

The EMRLCA provides the EMRWB with a \$ 5 M Research Fund. The Board continued investing the totality of the funds, which are managed by Industrial Alliance (iA). The performance of the fund manager continues to be reviewed by Aon Hewitt (Aon).

In March of 2021, Aon informed the Board that an asset mix review of the investment platform was two years overdue and recommended that an analysis of our investment platform be performed as soon as possible to identify areas of poor investment performance. The EMRWB agreed and Aon was mandated to review the strategic asset allocation. Aon presented their findings and recommended a restructured investment platform during the EMRWB regular meeting on August 3, 2021. The Board accepted the recommendations and Aon presented the Board with an amended Statement of Investment Policies and Procedures at the next regular meeting in October 2021. Aon presented an amended Research Fund Spending Policy to the Board for adoption during the February 2022 EMRWB regular meeting.

Both iA and Aon made their annual performance presentations to the Board during the February 2022 EMRWB regular meeting. The performance of the investments are measured by calendar year. The value of the research fund as of December 31, 2021, was \$7,190,255. This represents a very modest annual gain of \$132,912 (The research fund was valued at \$7,057,343 on December 31, 2020). The EMRWB approved a total annual allocation (TAA) of \$250,000 to be made available to support research activities in FY 2022/23 (the TAA for FY 2021/22 was also set at \$250,000).

During FY 2021/22 EMRWB staff made minor revisions to the guiding documents used for the application and screening of research proposals. The EMRWB approved the use of research funds for eight projects in FY 2021/22, totaling a commitment of \$162,353 for the year (Table 3). Please refer to Section 14 for summaries of project work supported this year.

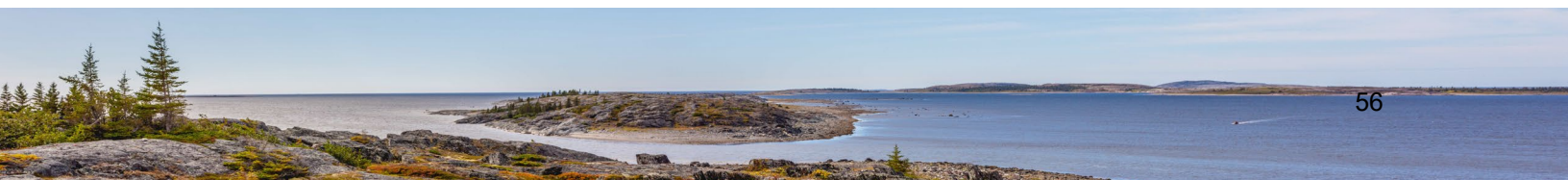


**Table 3. Research projects funded by the EMRWB Research Trust Fund in FY 2021/22.**

<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Project Lead</b>	<b>Funding Awarded</b>
Fostering Indigenous Small-scale Fisheries for Health, Economy and Food Security (FISHES) (Year 3)	CTA	\$53,020
Fostering Indigenous Small-scale Fisheries for Health, Economy and Food Security (FISHES) (Year 3)	EMRWB	\$25,000
Ascribing the Importance of Atlantic Brant Staging Areas for Holistic Conservation Planning (Year 1)	University of Saskatchewan	\$13,125
Polar Bear Ecology in the Eeyou Marine Region (Year 1)	McGill University	\$26,510
TEK Training Workshop	CTA-EMR	\$29,700
EMR Motus Tower Project	CTA-EMR	\$7,150
EMR Wildlife Disease Testing	CTA-EMR	\$3,000
EMR Autonomous Recording Unit Pilot Project for Breeding Bird Detection	EMRWB	\$4,848
	<b>Total Funding Allocated</b>	<b>\$162,353</b>
	<b>Total Unspent TAA</b>	<b>\$86,544</b>

## 15. CREE TRAPPERS' ASSOCIATION

The EMRLCA specifies, under section 12.6, that funding shall be provided by the EMRWB to the Cree Trappers' Association (CTA) in order to carry out the powers and functions as set out in Chapter 12, with respect to wildlife management and harvesting practices in the EMR. The EMRWB and the CTA-EMR continue to work successfully together under the framework of the EMRWB-CTA Collaborative Agreement that was adopted in April 2019. An important component of the Collaborative Agreement was the development of an outline detailing communication tools and meetings scheduled throughout the year to guide planning efforts between the two entities and to ensure accountability with respect to funding and spending. At a minimum, bi-weekly meetings to discuss progress and planning have been held consistently between the EMRWB Biologists and the CTA-EMR Wildlife Liaison Officer. Midterm and year-end planning sessions proved to be a success. A midterm review was held on October 1, 2021 between





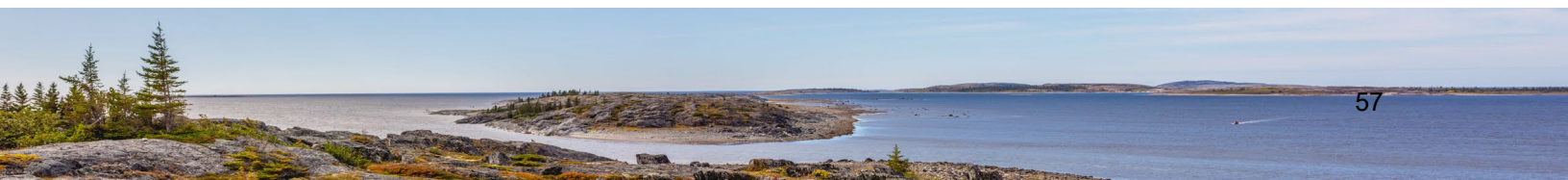
EMRWB staff and the CTA-EMR Wildlife Liaison Officer. The CTA-EMR FY 2021/22 workplan was assessed for level of completion at midterm, and budget reallocation needs were discussed.

Another planning meeting was held in February of 2022 and included the EMRWB Director, EMRWB Biologists, the CTA-EMR Wildlife Liaison Officer, and the CTA Finance Controller. This planning session focused on the development of an annual CTA-EMR workplan and operational budget for FY 2022/23. Financial support for CTA-EMR-led projects and research will continue to be applied for through the EMRWB Research Fund. The draft FY 2022/23 CTA-EMR workplan and budget was presented to the EMRWB by the CTA-EMR Wildlife Liaison Officer and the CTA Finance Controller on February 24, 2022, during the EMRWB regular meeting. The Board approved both documents and subsequently drafted and adopted the FY 2022/23 EMRWB-CTA Funding Agreement for the amount of \$560,215. The Funding Agreement sets out the terms and conditions related to the monthly transfer of operating funds from the EMRWB to the CTA-EMR staff operational costs.

For FY 2021/22, the EMRWB-CTA Funding Agreement totalled \$560,000. The full amount of the Agreement was spent on operational costs, leaving zero unspent funds to be returned to the EMRWB at the end of fiscal.

CTA-EMR staffing remained fairly consistent during FY 2021/22. Thomas Stevens remained CTA Executive Director while Natasha Louttit continued in her role as CTA-EMR Wildlife Liaison Officer. The local CTA-EMR officers for Waskaganish, Eastmain, Wemindji and Chisasibi continued in their respective roles, while a new CTA-EMR Officer was hired for Whapmagoostui in Spring 2021.

A copy of the FY 2021/22 CTA-EMR Annual Report can be found in Appendix C.





**Eeyou Marine Region Wildlife Board  
Statement of Revenue and Expenditures  
and Changes in Net Assets**

**For the year ended March 31**

**2022                      2021**

	Budget (Unaudited)	Operating Fund	Research Fund	AFSAR Fund	Total	Total
<b>Revenue</b>						
Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs	\$ 1,574,406	\$ 1,209,612	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,209,612	\$ 1,187,359
Investment income	-	-	1,449,746	-	1,449,746	16,778
Contributions	-	-	-	29,405	29,405	-
Unrealized (loss) gain on investments at fair value	-	-	(1,312,116)	-	(1,312,116)	756,272
Deferred contributions, beginning of year	-	364,804	6,808,870	-	7,173,674	6,619,827
Deferred contributions, end of year	-	(261,369)	(6,741,733)	(22,910)	(7,026,012)	(7,173,674)
	<b>1,574,406</b>	<b>1,313,047</b>	<b>204,767</b>	<b>6,495</b>	<b>1,524,309</b>	<b>1,406,562</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>						
Cree Trappers' Association	560,447	560,447	-	-	560,447	557,233
Salaries and benefits	518,373	528,725	-	-	528,725	460,349
Professional fees	66,392	94,694	-	-	94,694	102,999
Special projects	50,000	690	-	6,495	7,185	43,798
Travel, meals and accommodations	111,074	11,706	-	-	11,706	12,039
General and administrative	119,555	58,174	-	-	58,174	61,470
Investment management fees	-	-	42,414	-	42,414	37,040
Research expenses	21,911	-	162,353	-	162,353	73,200
Honorarium fees	97,817	42,239	-	-	42,239	42,502
Advertising and promotion	28,837	10,762	-	-	10,762	8,873
Amortization	-	5,610	-	-	5,610	7,059
	<b>1,574,406</b>	<b>1,313,047</b>	<b>204,767</b>	<b>6,495</b>	<b>1,524,309</b>	<b>1,406,562</b>
<b>Excess of revenue over expenditures for the year and net assets, end of year</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.



**EYOU MARINE REGION WILDLIFE BOARD**

**2021-2022 WORKPLAN (ANNUAL REPORT)**

**1. BOARD MEETINGS**

**A. ARRANGEMENTS FOR HOLDING FOUR (4) REGULAR BOARD MEETINGS**

*GOAL: To provide arrangements for holding efficient and cost-effective meetings*

<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>WHO'S ACCOUNTABLE</b>	<b>STATUS OF COMPLETION</b>
Draft meeting agenda and call meetings.	Director + Chairperson	2 weeks prior to meeting date.
Arrange travel bookings and organize meetings.	Administrative Assistant	Completed as scheduled.
Attend EMRWB regular meetings.	EMRWB + Director + Biologists	Meetings were held August 3-5 (Waskaganish), October 19-21 (videoconference), February 22-24 (videoconference).
Draft and edit meeting minutes.	Biologist + Director	Four weeks after meeting.
Maintain tracking tables for action items and Resolutions.	Biologist + Director	Reviewed at next Regular meeting.
Hold conference calls/special meetings to deal with unforeseen issues and additional business.	EMRWB + Director + Biologists	Meeting was held via videoconference on May 21, 2021.

**2. ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT**

**A. HUMAN RESOURCES**

*GOAL: To manage EMRWB staff in accordance with the policies adopted by the EMRWB.*

<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>WHO'S ACCOUNTABLE</b>	<b>STATUS OF COMPLETION</b>
Update Basic First Aid & CPR training for EMRWB staff	Biologist	No courses available locally due to community covid protocols.

Set objectives, goals, and expectations of the Accounting Administrator for 2021-2022 FY.	Director (with input from EMRIRB + EMRPC Directors)	Completed April 15, 2021
Review and assess the annual performance of the Accounting Administrator for 2021-2022 FY.	Director (with input from EMRIRB + EMRPC Directors)	Annual performance evaluations have been shifted to July/August to coincide with annual reporting.
Provide feedback to EMRIRB + EMRPC Directors RE annual performance of the Administrative Assistant.	Director	Feedback was provided throughout the year when concerns were identified.
Set objectives, goals, and expectations for the Wildlife Management Biologists for 2021-2022 FY.	Director	Completed April 15, 2021
Midterm review of objectives, goals, and expectations for the Wildlife Management Biologists.	Director	Midterm reviews have been eliminated and replaced with weekly or bi-weekly progress meetings.
Review and assess the annual performance of the Wildlife Management Biologists for 2021-2022 FY.	Director	Annual performance evaluations have been shifted to July/August to coincide with annual reporting.
Review and assess the annual performance of the Wildlife Management Director for 2020-2021 FY.	EMRWB	Completed August 17, 2021
Draft new EMR(WB?) HR Policy	Draft: Director + HR Consultant + EMRPC and EMRIRB Directors(?)	Postponed to 2022/23 FY in order to involve EMRPC and EMRIRB
	Review: EMRWB	Postponed to 2022/23 FY in order to involve EMRPC and EMRIRB
	Approval: EMRWB	Postponed to 2022/23 FY in order to involve EMRPC and EMRIRB

**B. INTERNAL FILE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AND DATA STORAGE, EQUIPMENT INVENTORY**

**GOAL: To set up an effective and organized file management system to promote file storage, sharing, and retrieval.**

<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>WHO'S ACCOUNTABLE</b>	<b>STATUS OF COMPLETION</b>
Organize current and archived operational files and documents.	Director + EMRWB staff	Ongoing
Utilize a digital resource library for organization of literature and reports.	Biologist	Ongoing entry into Mendelay
Promote and update online bird sightings map.	Biologist	Control of online map has been transferred from Stata360 to EMRWB staff to reduce cost.
Centralize and organize existing wildlife data files.	Biologist	Ongoing

**GOAL: To create an accurate equipment inventory list for insurance purposes.**

Label all EMRWB office and field equipment, create a new datafile for equipment, organize secure storage.	Biologist + Administrative Assistant	Ongoing
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**C. ACCOUNTING ARRANGEMENTS**

**GOAL: to provide accounting/bookkeeping administration support.**

<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>WHO'S ACCOUNTABLE</b>	<b>STATUS OF COMPLETION</b>
Provide on-going training and support to the Accounting Administrator through remote assistance.	Director	Ongoing monthly

**D. OPERATIONAL EXPENSES**

**GOAL: To conduct and maintain timely payments of EMRWB operation expenses.**

<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>WHO'S ACCOUNTABLE</b>	<b>STATUS OF COMPLETION</b>
Payment of monthly operational expenses, including special projects, service contracts, and funding agreements.	Accounting Administrator + Director + Chairperson	Ongoing bi-weekly

Continue to create a “master list” of a) annual finance/accounting tasks and deadlines, b) list of monthly and annual bill payments and methods of payments, c) list of shared invoices (intrafunds).	Accounting Administrator + Director	Ongoing
<b>E. DATA AND INFORMATION SHARING</b>		
<b>GOAL: To discuss and share relevant information and data with other EMR entities and stakeholders.</b>		
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>WHO'S ACCOUNTABLE</b>	<b>STATUS OF COMPLETION</b>
Participate in Internal EMR staff meetings to promote collaboration, the management and sharing of data, and regular updates on technical priorities between the three EMR boards.	Director + Biologists	Ongoing monthly
Establish partnerships and data sharing agreements with other EMR entities, and stakeholders for data and information sharing (e.g. Cree Trappers’ Association, NMRWB, NWMB, Cree Nation Government, Niskamoon, Hydro Quebec).	Director + Biologists	Ongoing. Fisheries data sharing agreement & confidentiality agreement established with Waskaganish Council in September 2021.
Collect literature of relevance from other EMR entities (e.g. CTA, CNG, Niskamoon, HTFCC, Hydro Quebec, CHB, etc).	Biologists	Public reports and research articles have been gathered from Niskamoon, Hydro-Quebec and consultants (September 2021). Ongoing as new literature becomes available.
<b>3. FINANCIAL REPORTING</b>		
<b>A. ANNUAL BUDGET 2022-2023 FY</b>		
<b>GOAL: To develop a cost-effective budget for 2022-2023 (Next FY).</b>		
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>WHO'S ACCOUNTABLE</b>	<b>STATUS OF COMPLETION</b>
Draft the 2022-2023 FY budget (as part of the Annual Workplan).	Development: Director	Completed February 22, 2022
	Review and approval: EMRWB	Completed February 24, 2022



	Submission: Director	Completed March 4, 2022
<b>B. FUNDING AGREEMENT</b>		
<b>GOAL: To provide funding to the EMRWB for the 2022-2023 (Next FY).</b>		
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>WHO'S ACCOUNTABLE</b>	<b>STATUS OF COMPLETION</b>
Sign the Funding Agreement for 2022-2023 FY.	Chairperson	Completed April 27, 2022
<b>C. ANNUAL AUDIT 2020-2021</b>		
<b>GOAL: To complete an audit of the EMRWB Financial Statements for 2020-2021 (Old FY) ensuring accountability and reliability of EMRWB financial operations.</b>		
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>WHO'S ACCOUNTABLE</b>	<b>STATUS OF COMPLETION</b>
Notify CIRNAC that an auditor has been appointed to prepare the Financial Statements for 2020-2021 FY.	Director	Completed April 1, 2021
Prepare the draft Financial Statements for 2020-2021 FY.	Development: Accounting Administrator + Director	Completed June 30, 2021
	Approval: EMRWB	Completed July 29, 2021
Submit the audited Financial Statements for 2020-2021 FY to CIRNAC as required under Annex 5 of the Funding Agreement.	Director	Completed July 31, 2021
<b>D. ANNUAL AUDIT 2021-2022</b>		
<b>GOAL: To complete an audit of the EMRWB Financial Statements for 2021-2022 (Current FY) ensuring accountability and reliability of EMRWB financial operations.</b>		
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>WHO'S ACCOUNTABLE</b>	<b>STATUS OF COMPLETION</b>
Solicit letters of engagement from auditors.	Director	Completed January 30, 2022
Appointment of auditor.	EMRWB	Completed February 24, 2022
<b>E. FINANCIAL REPORTING</b>		

<b><i>GOAL: To complete on-going, regular reporting of EMRWB Financial Expenditures to ensure accountability and accuracy of EMRWB financial operations.</i></b>		
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>WHO'S ACCOUNTABLE</b>	<b>STATUS OF COMPLETION</b>
Provide monthly financial updates to the Director.	Accounting Administrator	Not completed.
Provide quarterly financial reports to the EMRWB	Director + Accounting Administrator	Completed April 30, August 15, October 15, 2021, and January 15, 2022
Provide the 2020-2021 (old FY) financial variance report to CIRNAC (as part of the 2020-2021 Annual Activity Report)	Development: Director + Accounting Administrator	Completed July 28, 2021
	Review and approval: EMRWB	Completed August 4, 2021
	Submission: Director	Completed July 31, 2021
Provide the 2021-2022 (current FY) midterm financial report to CIRNAC (as part of the 2021-2022 Midterm Activity Report)	Development: Director + Accounting Administrator	Completed October 15, 2021
	Review and approval: EMRWB	Completed October 21, 2021
	Submission: Director	Completed November 26, 2021
<b>4. ACTIVITY REPORTS</b>		
<b><i>A. ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT FOR 2020-2021</i></b>		
<b><i>GOAL: To meet the reporting requirements under the EMRWB Funding Agreement for 2020-2021 (Old FY).</i></b>		
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>WHO'S ACCOUNTABLE</b>	<b>STATUS OF COMPLETION</b>
Draft the annual activity report for 2020-2021 FY	Development: Director	Completed July 31, 2021
	Review and approval: EMRWB	Completed August 3, 2021
	Submission: Director	Completed August 5, 2021

**B. MIDTERM ACTIVITY REPORT FOR 2021-2022**

**GOAL: To meet the reporting requirements under the EMRWB Funding Agreement for 2021-2022 (Current FY).**

<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>WHO'S ACCOUNTABLE</b>	<b>STATUS OF COMPLETION</b>
Draft the midterm activity report for 2021-2022 FY	Development: Director	Completed October 15, 2021
	Review and approval: EMRWB	Completed October 21, 2021
	Submission: Director	Completed November 26, 2021

**5. ORGANIZATIONAL PLANNING**

**A. ANNUAL WORKPLAN 2022-2023**

**GOAL: To develop a task-oriented workplan for 2022-2023 (new FY)**

<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>WHO'S ACCOUNTABLE</b>	<b>STATUS OF COMPLETION</b>
Draft the 2022-2023 FY workplan.	Development: Director	Completed February 15, 2022
	Review and approval: EMRWB	Completed February 24, 2022
	Submission: Director	Completed March 7, 2022

**B. EMR Organization Structural Review**

**GOAL: To examine and improve current organizational structure of the three EMR boards to identify capacity issues and improve efficiency of operations.**

<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>WHO'S ACCOUNTABLE</b>	<b>STATUS OF COMPLETION</b>
Review Final Report and Recommendations of the EMR Organization Structural Review	Director + EMRWB	Completed May 21, 2021

Hold a meeting to discuss future structure of EMR Organization (3 EMR Boards)	Directors + Board (EMRWB + EMRPC + EMRIRB)	Meetings held on June 17 and July 5, 2021
<b>C. EMRWB 10-Year Projection Plan</b>		
<b>GOAL: To perform an in-depth analysis of the financial requirements necessary to support operational functions under the newly-appointed EMR structure for the next 10 years.</b>		
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>WHO'S ACCOUNTABLE</b>	<b>STATUS OF COMPLETION</b>
Plan and design the process necessary for the creation of a 10-year Projection Plan	Design: Director + Consultant	August 15, 2021
Complete draft by reviewing EMRWB structure, past financial records, and conducting interviews and a workshop with staff and board.	Consultant + EMRWB Staff + EMRWB + Legal Counsel	Ongoing. Multiple meetings held with consultant between July 27, 2021 and March 31, 2022.
Review and approve draft 10-year Projection Plan	Consultant + Director + EMRWB	Delayed until September 2022 due to capacity issues with consultant
Submit to CIRNAC as part of the consultation and renegotiation of the new 10-year Funding Agreement	Director	Delayed until Q3 of 2022 due to capacity issues with consultant and EMRPC
<b>D. Renegotiation of the 10-Year Funding Agreement with the Government of Canada</b>		
<b>GOAL: To renegotiate the details of the EMRIP, and 10-Year Funding Agreement for April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2031</b>		
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>WHO'S ACCOUNTABLE</b>	<b>STATUS OF COMPLETION</b>
Participate in consultation sessions led by EMRLCA Funding Agreement Renegotiation Team	EMRWB Staff & Members, Legal Counsel	There was no engagement with the EMRWB in 2021/2022.
<b>E. Collaboration and Planning Between the EMRWB, EMRPC and EMRIRB</b>		
<b>GOAL: To hold an annual joint meeting between the 3 EMR Boards to discuss structure and capacity, and to increase communication, collaboration, and sharing of resources and data</b>		
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>WHO'S ACCOUNTABLE</b>	<b>STATUS OF COMPLETION</b>

Hold a one-day joint meeting of the three EMR Boards via videoconference to discuss topics of relevance	EMRWB, EMRPC & EMRIRB	Completed June 17, July 5, and December 15, 2021 and January 13, 2022
<b>6. COMMUNICATIONS</b>		
<b>A. DISSEMINATION OF BOARD MANDATE AND RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE PUBLIC.</b>		
<b>GOAL: To communicate and promote the mandate of the EMRWB to the Cree of Eeyou Istchee, the general public, stakeholders, and to provide information regarding the activities of the EMRWB in the EMR.</b>		
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>WHO'S ACCOUNTABLE</b>	<b>STATUS OF COMPLETION</b>
Distribute/stock copies of the EMR Land Claim Agreement to the EMR communities.	Biologist + Administrative Assistant	Ongoing.
Hold a photo contest with the goal of producing a 2022 EMRWB wall calendar, and for acquiring stock photos for use in reports, newsletter, and website.	Biologist + Administrative Assistant	Photo contest closed on October 3, 2021, finalist photos were posted on social media on October 15 for public vote. Annual Calendar was produced in November 2021 and distributed in December 2021.
Produce a quarterly digital newsletter to communicate the mission and projects of the EMRWB, and promote the EMR and provide updates and information regularly through social media (e.g. Facebook).	Biologist + Director	Production delayed due to lack of capacity and funding.
Plan and conduct an EMR Activity Update “Symposium” via videoconference to the GCC(EI)	EMRWB + EMRPC + EMRIRB	Cancelled and substituted by request made by CNG to the GCC(EI) in Q1 of 2022/23 for the creation of an EMR Coastal Committee.
Incorporate the use of Cree and French languages into communications and Board materials (e.g. newsletter, titles of documents, executive summaries). Research the cost of providing full translation services to	Director + Consultants	Cree translation of Polar Bear TEK Report Abstract was completed on Aug. 13, 2021. Shortage of Cree translators and lack of budget for

communications materials as well as Cree language lessons for staff as part of the 10-Year Projection Plan.		translation costs limited opportunities for translation. A list of potential translators and fees was created in March 2021
<b>B. WEBSITE</b>		
<b>GOAL: To broadcast the EMRWB's mandate, activities and to provide information on wildlife and habitat of the EMR.</b>		
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>WHO'S ACCOUNTABLE</b>	<b>STATUS OF COMPLETION</b>
Continue to work on new EMRWB website and post new information and regular activity updates and news.	Biologist + Director	Ongoing
<b>C. RELATIONSHIP BUILDING</b>		
<b>GOAL: To promote and build a strong and positive working relationship with the Cree Nation Government</b>		
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>WHO'S ACCOUNTABLE</b>	<b>STATUS OF COMPLETION</b>
Conduct a strategic planning workshop in which a Collaborative Agreement will be developed to clarify and the roles and responsibilities of the CNG as they pertain to the EMRLCA.	Director + Legal Counsel + EMRWB	Not completed due to lack of interest/capacity from CNG
<b>GOAL: To promote and build strong working relationships with EMR entities, stakeholders, co-management partners, and government.</b>		
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>WHO'S ACCOUNTABLE</b>	<b>STATUS OF COMPLETION</b>
Attend the ArcticNet Conference.	Director + Biologist + EMRWB	Conference was attended virtually December 6-10, 2021
Attend one NMRWB regular meeting.	Director + Biologist + EMRWB	Not completed due to Covid travel restrictions but several joint Board meetings were held via teleconference on April 16, October 28, November 17, December 15, 2021 and February 24, 2022 to discuss management decisions. Multiple joint staff

		technical meetings were also held throughout the year to discuss management files and Hearing process planning.
Attend Annual CTA Board of Directors Meeting	Director + Chairperson	Not completed due to Covid travel restrictions
Attend AGA of the Cree Trappers Association	Director + Chairperson	Not completed due to Covid travel restrictions. Attended the local Waskaganish CTA AGA on August 26, 2021
Attend AGA of the Cree Nation Government	Director + Chairperson	Not completed due to Covid travel restrictions
Attend meetings of the Coastal Habitat Steering Committee (Observer status only).	Director or Biologist	Completed on May 19, June 4, and Sept. 1, Nov. 3, 2021 & March 22, 2022
Participate in Hudson Bay Consortium Steering Committee Meetings and Working Group Meetings	Director or Biologist	Meetings were held on April 9 and November 30, 2021
Develop and promote youth engagement and training to assist with research projects in the EMR.	Biologist	Ongoing in Eastmain and Waskaganish
<b>7. CREE TRAPPER'S ASSOCIATION</b>		
<b>A. PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CREE TRAPPER'S ASSOCIATION</b>		
<b>GOAL: To develop and maintain a positive and productive partnership with the Cree Trapper's Association.</b>		
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>WHO'S ACCOUNTABLE</b>	<b>STATUS OF COMPLETION</b>
Develop and finalize the Funding Agreement for 2022-2023 (New FY)	Development: Director	Completed February 15, 2022

	Approval: EMRWB	Completed February 24, 2022
Conduct a midterm review of 2021-2022 (Current FY) CTA-EMR workplan and budget	Director + Biologist + CTA	Completed October 1, 2021
Conduct a planning session for the 2022-2023 CTA-EMR workplan and budget	Director + Biologist + CTA	Completed February, 2022
Conduct regular progress/planning meetings with CTA-EMR Wildlife Liaison Officer	Biologist	Ongoing biweekly (minimum)
<b>8. WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PROJECTS</b>		
<b>A. PRIORITY PROJECTS RELATED TO SPECIES AT RISK WITHIN THE EYYOU MARINE REGION - POLAR BEARS</b>		
<b>GOAL: To participate in the research and management of the SHB polar bear population in the Eeyou Marine Region.</b>		
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>WHO'S ACCOUNTABLE</b>	<b>STATUS OF COMPLETION</b>
Attend the Polar Bear Management Working Group (under the HFTCC) meetings, as observer.	Biologist	No Meetings scheduled in 2021/22
Represent EMRWB in annual Polar Bear Administrative Committee meetings and participate in phone meetings.	Director	May 27, June 22, September 15, 2021 and February 10, 28, 2022
Represent EMRWB in annual Polar Bear Technical Committee meetings.	Biologist	Completed January 25-28, 2022
Complete EMR polar bear TEK consultation results report	Final Review and Approval: EMRWB	Completed May 21, 2021
Review and approve the Draft Quebec Polar Bear Management Plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review draft management plan</li> <li>Hold joint meeting with NMRWB and HFTCC to discuss and plan joint consultation and decision-making process</li> <li>Hold public consultations</li> </ul>	EMRWB Staff & Members EMRWB Staff & Members EMRWB Staff & Members	Completed March 31, 2021 Completed April 16, 2021 Joint public written hearing was completed on September 24, 2021



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare and submit final decision to Quebec</li> </ul>	EMRWB Staff & Members	<p>Final comments were submitted to the authors on December 8, 2021. The authors did not respond with a final version of the Plan by the end of 2021/22.</p> <p>Delayed to 2022/23 FY</p>
<p>Hold a joint consultation and decision-making process to determine TAT and NQL recommendations for the SHB polar bear population</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct joint meetings with NMRWB, NWMB and HFTCC to discuss and plan a joint consultation and decision-making process</li> <li>• Submit a joint application to CIRNAC for supplemental funding</li> <li>• Hold public consultations</li> <li>• Prepare and submit initial decision to Government of Canada</li> </ul>	<p>EMRWB Staff &amp; Members, Legal Counsel</p> <p>Director</p> <p>EMRWB Staff &amp; Members</p> <p>EMRWB Staff &amp; Members</p>	<p>Meetings held on May 28, 2021 and February 9, 21, and March 31, 2022</p> <p>TBD</p> <p>TBD</p> <p>TBD</p>
<p>Review and approve the Draft National Polar Bear Management Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process TBD</li> </ul>	Director + Biologist + EMRWB	No engagement from the Government in 2021/22
<p>Collaborate with CNG and CTA to develop polar bear protocols and forms for observation reporting, safety and deterrence, and DLP kills.</p>	Biologist + Director	Completed July 30, 2021.
<p>Compile and submit annual polar bear observation data to Quebec.</p>	Biologist	Completed January 15, 2022
<p>Collaborate with and support graduate student research and TEK collection on polar bears in the EMR.</p>	Director + Biologists	Ongoing. Year 1 of study has been completed
<p>Collaborate on future research plans with other jurisdictions (e.g. Ontario Government for aerial survey planning).</p>	Director	SHB polar bear aerial survey was conducted jointly by the Governments of Ontario and Quebec in August 2021

**B. PRIORITY PROJECTS RELATED TO SPECIES AT RISK WITHIN THE EYYOU MARINE REGION - BELUGA WHALES**

**GOAL: To participate in the management of the beluga whale stocks in the Eeyou Marine Region.**

ACTIVITIES	WHO'S ACCOUNTABLE	STATUS OF COMPLETION
Conduct a joint beluga management plan meeting with NMRWB.	Biologist + Director + EMRWB	Completed April 16 and October 28 2021
Conduct a joint beluga management plan “year-end” discussion meeting	Biologist + Director + EMRWB	Delayed to April 11-13, 2022 (Montreal) due to Covid travel restrictions

**C. PRIORITY PROJECTS RELATED TO OTHER SPECIES AT RISK WITHIN THE EYYOU MARINE REGION**

**GOAL: To support research and management of species at risk and habitat in the Eeyou Marine Region**

ACTIVITIES	WHO'S ACCOUNTABLE	STATUS OF COMPLETION
Respond to COSEWIC and ECCC requests for comments on species at risk that occur within the EMR.	Biologist + Director + EMRWB	Bank swallow – April 9, 2021 Barn swallow – April 19, 2021 Short-eared owl – April 19, 2021 Hudsonian godwit – September 2, 2021 Joint public written Hearing for bank swallow completed on February 17, 2022 and joint Decision submitted on March 29, 2022. Joint written public hearing for killer whale completed December 7, 2021 and joint decision submitted on March 9, 2022.

Support and participate in bird surveys and TEK collection on species at risk.	Biologist	Delayed to 2022-23 FY due to Covid community restrictions
Support the installation and upkeep of Motus towers as part of a collaboration with the CTA and BSC to collect data on species at risk that migrate through the EMR.	Biologist	Planning and maintenance was conducted in Winter and Spring of 2022 but towers were not made operational in 2021/22 due to lack of tags deployed by researchers during the previous field season
Support research efforts in the EMR to collect data on species at risk and habitat.	Biologist + Director + EMRWB	Beluga aerial survey completed by DFO in July 2021. Year 1 of R/V William Kennedy James Bay Expedition was completed in August 2021. Participated in monthly videoconference meetings of the Cree Research Needs Working Group.

***D. PRIORITY PROJECTS RELATED TO HARVESTED SPECIES WITHIN THE EEYOU MARINE REGION***

***GOAL: To gather information on harvesting efforts of wildlife species found within the EMR to aid in wildlife management recommendations and to collect ongoing baseline data potentially needed for future decisions on NQLs and TATs.***

<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>WHO'S ACCOUNTABLE</b>	<b>STATUS OF COMPLETION</b>
Hold meeting to develop a fisheries data sharing agreement between the EMRWB, Niskamoon, EMR Cree Nations, and CTA.	Director + Biologists	Confidentiality agreement for fisheries data with Waskaganish signed September 14, 2021.
Request historical and current harvest data for relevant wildlife species from other EMR entities (e.g. Niskamoon, CTA, CNG, HTFCC).	Biologists + Director	Collected from Niskamoon February 19, 2022. Additional Collection from other sources is ongoing.

Promote the use of SIKU to report wildlife observations and fisheries data through community engagement and training (pilot project)	Biologists	Training delayed while the SIKU App development is in progress to incorporate Cree language and relevant species.
Support and participate in local fisheries research (e.g. FISHERS project).	Biologists	Ongoing. Year 3 of the study was completed.
<b><i>E. SUPPORT THE COLLECTION OF TRADITIONAL ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE IN THE EYYOU MARINE REGION</i></b>		
<b><i>GOAL: To support projects and efforts to collect historical and current traditional ecological knowledge including wildlife observation data.</i></b>		
Develop and launch a Citizen Science campaign to highlight importance of reporting wildlife sightings in the EMR (e.g. polar bear, beluga, invasive species)	Biologists	Beluga reporting form posted online & in communities in May 2021  Invasive species reporting form posted online and radio announcement completed in July 2021  Other activities were postponed due to Covid community restrictions.
Request historical wildlife and habitat data from Parks Canada, DFO, and ECCC, Hydro Quebec.	Biologists	Historical wildlife reports from ECCC and DFO were collected throughout the year. Ongoing.
Collaborate and participate with the CTA in a TEK training workshop	Director + Biologist	Delayed by the CTA to June 2022
Collaborate with the CNG to collect existing TEK from the CNG archives	Biologist	Not completed due to lack of engagement/capacity from the CNG
<b><i>F. COLLABORATE WITH AND SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF RESPONSIBLE ECOTOURISM VENTURES IN THE EYYOU MARINE REGION</i></b>		

<b><i>GOAL: To establish effective viewing and reporting protocols to ensure compliance, safety, and wildlife data collection.</i></b>		
Develop wildlife viewing protocols	Biologist + EMRWB	Completed July, 2021
Develop a wildlife observation reporting form and protocol	Biologist + Director	Completed July, 2021
Develop polar bear safety guidelines	Biologist + EMRWB	In progress – draft completed in December 2021
Review annual report from Wiinipaakw Tours Solidarity Cooperative	Biologist + Director + EMRWB	Not completed. Wiinipaakw operations were very limited in 2021/22 due to community covid restrictions.
<b><i>G. DEVELOP RESOURCES TO AID APPROVAL PROCESS AND PERMISSION TO ACCESS FOR PROPOSED RESEARCH IN THE EMR</i></b>		
<b><i>GOAL: To develop effective policy and guidelines to ensure that proper approvals and permission to access the EMR are obtained by research leads as part of the project planning process.</i></b>		
Research and develop project approval and access permission policy and guidelines	Development: Legal Counsel & Director Review: EMRWB Approval: EMRWB	Postponed to 2022/23 due to lack of capacity.
<b>9. WILDLIFE RESEARCH FUND</b>		
<b><i>A. ADMINISTRATION OF THE WILDLIFE RESEARCH FUND</i></b>		
<b><i>GOAL: To monitor the performance of the Wildlife Research Fund and provide long-term investment returns through capital growth.</i></b>		
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>WHO'S ACCOUNTABLE</b>	<b>STATUS OF COMPLETION</b>
Evaluate the performance of the investment managers.	Director + Accounting Administrator + EMRWB	Completed February 24, 2022

Monitor the performance of the investments (calendar year)	Director + Accounting Administrator + EMRWB	Completed bi-annually (July & February)
Determine the annual allocation of the Research Fund to support research projects in the EMR for 2022/23 FY	Director + EMRWB	Completed February 23, 2022
<b><i>B. SCREEN, APPROVE AND FUND RESEARCH PROJECTS IN THE EMR.</i></b>		
<b><i>GOAL: Promote and support wildlife and wildlife habitat research in the EMR.</i></b>		
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>WHO'S ACCOUNTABLE</b>	<b>STATUS OF COMPLETION</b>
Advertise an open call for funding applications	Biologist	Completed on social media December, 2021
Screen and approve project proposals and funding applications	Screen: Biologist + Director Approve: EMRWB	Applications were evaluated and approved in May and October 2021 and February 2022
Develop Collaborative Agreements, review midterm and final project reports.	Director + Biologists	Completed
Revise screening criteria, application form, application guide and other processes if needed.	Biologist + Director	Revisions to screening criteria and application approved by EMRWB on February 22, 2022. Ongoing.



## **2021-2022 CTA -Eeyou Marine Region Department Annual Report**

The Eeyou Marine Region Land Claims Agreement (EMRLCA) is a Treaty that came into effect February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012, and incorporates the five Cree coastal communities of Eeyou Istchee: Waskaganish, Eastmain, Wemindji, Chisasibi and Whapmagoostui. The Eeyou Marine Region spans approximately 61,270 square kilometers of coast, including offshore islands, along Eastern James Bay and south Eastern Hudson's Bay, where it enters a Cree/Inuit overlap Zone with the Inuit of Nunavik.

Our department is financed by the Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) via the Eeyou Marine Region Wildlife Board, whom we work closely with to carry out our mandate, which involves monitoring harvesting rights, management and preservation of wildlife, and to conduct community driven research priorities for the Eeyou Marine Region.

Through these research projects, activities and collaborations, the Cree's gain further knowledge of the evolving reality of their territory and strengthen their ancestral right of sustainably harvesting from the land. This also includes how the Cree and Canada govern the Eeyou Marine Region.

### **FISHES – Fostering Indigenous Small-scale Fisheries for Health, Economy and Food Security**

We have completed our second of three years of sampling this year for the FISHES project. Our CTA-EMR continue a Cree-lead sampling campaign and work directly with Tallymen and land users to collect samples. We also collaborated with the CTA Special Projects to collect samples from our annual Access to Traditional Food Program, as an opportunistic sampling method. Since removing the adipose fin causes no harm to the fish, we can also take a catch-and-release approach. There is no waste of harvested fish, as they are all distributed to elders and community members.

The project FISHES will develop and apply genetic analysis, with Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) to address critical challenges and opportunities related to food Security, both subsistence and recreational harvesting, and to identify important fisheries within the EMR for future protection. It will develop genomic resources for fish species important to our Cree traditional harvest, and identify genetically distinct populations (of families) of Cisco, Whitefish and Brook Trout. Identifying genetically distinct populations of fish is a key step towards maintaining a sustainable harvest. FISHES will result in socio-economic benefits in many ways to foster sustainable fisheries, food security, and social well-being. Finally, it will contribute to our ability to forecast the response of key fisheries to rapid global and socio-economic changes in Eeyou Istchee and preserve cultural continuity.

#### **Activity Plan:**

- 2021/2022 Fiscal Sampling Activities complete
- Contracted 35 Cree workers (Tallymen, Community Members & youth)
- ~\$76,586.00 into employment
- Preliminary Genetic Analysis results will be provided late 2022
- Final Sampling Season 2022/2023



This project is to be in partnership with the CNG, Niskamoon Corporation, EMRWB, Cree Nation of Mistissini and the Cree Nation of Waswanipi. The duration of sampling for the project is 2020-2023.

**Table 1: FISHES Sample Summary Table (Summer 2020-Spring 2022)**

	<b>Chisasibi</b>	<b>Eastmain</b>	<b>Waskaganish</b>	<b>Wemindji</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
<b>Cisco</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>937</b>
Mixed	164	143	219	99	625
Source	86	65	121	40	312
<b>Trout</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>718</b>
Mixed	65	152	11	164	392
Source	198	47	1	80	326
<b>Whitefish</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>489</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>1449</b>
Mixed	193	412	340	79	1024
Source	217	77	78	53	425
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>923</b>	<b>896</b>	<b>770</b>	<b>515</b>	<b>3104</b>

## Shorebirds and Species at Risk

### Expedition 2021

Since 2012, Nature Canada, supported by the CNG Challenge Fund, has worked to identify important bird habitat stopover sites for shorebirds, areas where sea duck undertake their summer molts, and waterfowl gathering areas along the James Bay coast, in collaboration with the CTA-EMR, the Eeyou Marine Region Wildlife Board, Cree Nation Government and Canadian Wildlife Services.

Our first goal is to engage with the coastal communities of Eeyou Istchee through training opportunities, educational workshops, and the collection of TEK on important avian species at risk. Our second objective is to perform shorebird and breeding bird surveys in potentially important avian SAR habitats in Eeyou Istchee to estimate the abundance, density, or occupancy of avian SAR.

Unfortunately, due to COVID the 2021 expedition, had to be postponed once again.

### Motus Towers: Tracking Migration of the Red Knot Rufus

In 2012, Nature Canada and the Cree Nation Government initiated work with the Cree Nation of Waskaganish to identify Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA), through community engagement and targeted field surveys of birds using Motus Towers. The CTA, EMRWB and Faun Nord have since become involved in the project. Charlton Island, the Stratton Islands and Boatswain Bay, have been confirmed stopover habitats for the Endangered Rufa Red Knot and many other shorebirds species, in particular a new breeding species for southern James Bay, the Horned Grebe, a Federal Species at Risk.

This year, all five of our Motus towers underwent maintenance in preparation for 2022/2023 fiscal year. However, since the 2017, Motus Tracking Stations have been collecting data of the migration activity of the Rufus Red Knot. Previously collected data for 2020 from the months of July to October can be viewed at <https://motus.org/get-involved/>

## **Autonomous Recording Units Project: Pilot Project Wemindji**

The EMRWB has taken the lead in this partnership pilot project with the goal towards filling data gaps and gathering traditional ecological knowledge for avian species at risk in the Eeyou Marine Region. This project will be used to develop long-term monitoring programs and assist in establishing protected areas. Avian SAR, including Red Knot Rufa subspecies and Yellow Rail, have been recorded in the Eeyou Marine Region (EMR) in surveyed locations, but most of the coast has not been surveyed to date. Additionally, the use of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) has not been utilized to determine important bird habitats.

In May 2021 ARU's were deployed along the shores an offshore island of traplines VC-17 and VC-14 of the Wemindji coast. Ten (10) ARU's were deployed from May-September. The units were programmed to record at sunrise and sunset during different intervals. Overall, 153 recordings were randomly selected for analysis by CWS-Quebec birders. A total of 83 different bird species were recorded!

The goals of this pilot project were 1) to provide information to CWS for their Quebec Breeding Bird Atlas, 2) to provide information to the CNG on avian species at risk in the EMR and 3) to explore the capabilities of ARU's for community-led long-term monitoring projects.

## **James Bay Expedition 2021: *RV William Kennedy***

The University of Manitoba, Oceans North, and other universities and government partners, including the CTA and the EMRWB are conducting a two-year oceanography study of the offshore waters of James Bay. In August of 2021, the expedition vessel came down from Churchill to do sampling in James Bay for about 2 weeks. The study was done using a 65-foot research vessel called the *RV William Kennedy*. This vessel is owned by the Arctic Research Foundation and is used for research by the University of Manitoba.

The overall goal of the project is to study the offshore marine environment of James Bay and how it is influenced by neighbouring Hudson Bay and also by the rivers that flow into James Bay. For nearly 50 years, James Bay has received very little attention from scientists, despite its vast size and importance to communities and wildlife. Because there is very little information about the offshore areas of James Bay and the food webs out there, the new data will be useful for Cree organizations interested in marine conservation or in future sustainable development. The new data will also help provide a baseline for assessing changes in the Bay's waters and food webs over time, for example, changes due to climate warming or resource development.

University researchers will be analyzing the data and samples obtained from the ship to learn more about the circulation patterns in the bay; to estimate how much nutrients are available and in turn how much can grow (be produced) in the Bay and what kinds of organisms such as small animals like shrimp can be

supported by this production; and finally they will look at the characteristics of the bottom habitats, both the bottom sediments (mud) and the bottom-dwelling animals like clams that might be present.

This year, because of COVID restrictions, the ship was not allowed to visit any communities in the bay. But for summer 2022, the research team would like to organize an event to bring Cree land users and youth out to the vessel to learn more about the research and take part in the sampling. After the expedition, a meeting will be organized within the region to report on the findings and plan next year's sampling and knowledge exchange events.

## Polar Bears

### Polar Bear Ecology Project

Although Polar Bears are not new to the area, there has been very little to no research done, so we had a need to gather scientific data on the conditions of the polar bear population in the Cree EMR Zone. In the *Eeyou Istchee Coastal Community Voices on Wildlife Research Priorities for the Eeyou Marine Region*, communities identified interests in studying polar bear ecology in the EMR. Polar bears are important top predators in arctic and sub-arctic systems and, as such, their population structure and distribution can have impacts on other species and human communities due to the rapid environmental changes and by reduced ice habitat. The CTA-EMR began a collaboration with Master's and PhD student, Alexandra Langwieder from McGill University, alongside the EMRWB. This research project will help us answer the questions we have about the health, condition, diet, abundance and genetic analysis of our polar bears along the Eastern Coast of James Bay, from Waskaganish to Chisasibi.

Our first year of sampling started in the summer of 2021, having set up 37 hair snare stations set up on the offshore islands and coast from Waskaganish to Chisasibi:

- ✓ 117 Hair Samples collected
- ✓ 133 Polar Bear Observations
- ✓ 130 Other species Observations (caribou, black bear, fox, geese)
- ✓ Genetic Analysis: 25 Individual Polar bears identified, 11 more DNA samples to be individually confirmed

Information from the samples provide:

#### Hair samples:

- Unique genetic identity of each bear in their DNA
- Record of what the bear was eating while the hair was growing

#### Trail Cam Photos:

- Information about the body condition
- Information about males and females
- Mothers and cubs

#### Cree Knowledge Interviews: (Summer 2022)

- Important knowledge about current and past polar bear habitat and behavior
- Polar bear observations from being active on the land (bears, dens, tracks, scat)

- Insights into why we might be seeing some of the trends (for example, why bears prefer to stay in certain areas during different times of year)

The second year of sampling will continue in the summer of July 2022, along with Traditional Ecological Knowledge interviews conducted in winter 2023.

### **Sightings and observations**

Polar Bear Management is part of the mandate for the CTA-EMR and so it is important that our community members continue to contact their respective EMR Local Officers and complete a detailed Polar Bear Observation Report for each sighting or evidence of Polar Bear activity, this includes tracks, dens, etc. All reports are submitted to the EMRWB for Federal Records, as Polar Bears are a Federally at-risk species.

### **Polar Bear Non-Lethal Deterrents**

The Cree Tappers' Association has on stock, and provides non-lethal deterrents to all Tallymen and land-users in high-risk areas. There are three types available at no cost, for land users in areas of high risk, 12-gauge long range rubber bullets, 12-gauge flash blanks, and bear pray, along with instructions on usage.

### **BearWise**

The CTA-EMR will be providing a course in Polar Bear Awareness and Safety to community members called BearWise. This will be offered in all 5 of our coastal communities, however, due to COVID, this training has been postponed until the fall of 2022. [Polar Bears: A Guide to Safety](#) focuses on the prevention of negative human encounters with polar bears and combines Inuit Qaujimagatugangit (Traditional Knowledge) and scientific expertise to inform material presented on polar bear behaviour and human safety around bears. This course is led by Andy McMullen, who has shared considerable knowledge with those who care about human safety and bear conservation for over 2 decades. For more information, please visit <https://bearwise.ca/>

### **Polar Bear Safety Awareness**

Community awareness, safety and precautionary measures in the form of posters, brochures, radio announcements and Facebook posts are some of the ways the CTA-EMR Department and the EMRWB work together to keep our community informed, as we notice that with climate change and changing ice conditions has the potential to increase polar bear sightings and encounters.

## **Wildlife Observation Reports**

### **Beluga Whale Sightings and observations**

It is important that our community members continue to contact their respective EMR Local Officers and complete a detailed Beluga Whale Observation Report for each sighting of individual whales, or groups of

whales, as they are very social mammals. These observation reports will be used to better understand distribution patterns, to monitor population numbers and to identify critical habitat. This knowledge will guide future management plans to conserve our local Eeyou Marine Region wildlife. All reports are submitted to the EMRWB for Federal Records. In 2021/2022, we recorded a low number of sighting reports, but will be encouraging reporting and are looking into engaging in beluga research in the future.

### **Invasive Species**

The CTA-EMR and the EMRWB have confirmed, identified and are recording all observations of an invasive species in the Cree EMR Zone, the rainbow smelt (*Osmerus mordax*), which has been confirmed in a number of rivers along the coast of Eeyou Istchee. Invasive species are impossible to remove, but we can manage the population by strict management methods. Other invasive species of interest are green crabs (*Carcinus maenas*) and the cormorant (*Phalacrocoracidae*). We encourage all land users to report any sightings of wildlife that are unusual to the area, this way, we can begin monitoring and placing management methods in place, as early as possible.

### **Marine and Avian Observations**

THE CTA-EMR encourages citizen scientists to report all observations of species in the Cree EMR Zone of wildlife that is rare, however not new, to identify the abundance of variety of species in Eeyou Istchee! For example, a walrus was spotted in the bay around the Wemindji area this past fiscal, which haven't been observed in many decades, but Elders have often said, in time they will come back. Some examples of wildlife that we are particularly interested in hearing about are: bearded seals, ringed seals, rufus red knot, Hudsonian godwit, horned grebe and minke whales, just to name a few!

### **Community-Based Coastal Assessment Project: Pilot Project Eastmain**

This project, led by the University of Manitoba in partnership, DFO and with Oceans North, aims to address knowledge gaps in offshore oceanographic observation along the Eastern Coast of James Bay, with the pilot project based out of Eastmain. The project mission is to establish a current baseline of oceanographic data on physical, chemical and biological features (e.g., salinity, temperature, currents, phytoplankton, zooplankton), with emphasis on offshore waters. It will establish the current environmental conditions of our marine hydrology and wetland ecology by identifying and quantifying environmental characteristics that influence our coastal wildlife. However, due to COVID, this pilot project will be starting in the summer of 2022. Our long-term goal is to have the project move to each coastal community, in order to establish a baseline scientific data of the Cree EMR Coast, including Whapmagoostui, as the southeast coast of Hudson's Bay.

### **McGill Fish and Wildlife Management Professional Development Training Program**

This training program is the collaboration of the Centre for Indigenous Peoples' Nutrition and Environment (CINE) of the Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences at McGill University and the CTA – EMR

Department, funded by the EMRWB and Apatisiwin Skills Development of the CNG. The program designed is to equip our CTA-EMR team to understand the ecological and evolutionary principles underlying wildlife management policies, as well as identify, understand, and communicate the scientific research conducted on local fish and wildlife populations and the local environment. This knowledge will allow us to manage, analyze, interpret, and communicate scientific data; understand research ethics, how to protect intellectual property, and the professional obligations and worldview of scientists. This year, we were able to resume our studies and complete Modules 3 and 4 of the training, virtually.

Module 1: Principles of Evolution & Ecology (25 hours) – February 2020 *complete*

Module 2: Principles & Methods in Fish & Wildlife Management (25 hours) – March 2020 *complete*

Module 3: Data & the Scientific Method (25 hours) – March 2021 *complete*

Module 4: Fish & Wildlife Science in the Eeyou Marine Region (25 hours) – March 2021 *complete*

Module 5: Understanding Academia and Communicating Science (20 hours) – Fall 2022 graduation

## **Necropsy Sampling**

The CTA-EMR department provides necropsy-sampling services to local hunters who may be concerned about the health of a particular animal or their harvest. Necropsy is the examination or dissection of a carcass, or flesh/organ sample, to determine the cause of death or the changes produced by disease. Some hunters may notice abnormalities in muscle tissue or organs of an animal they are preparing to eat or have harvested an unhealthy animal. It is not limited to marine mammals or fish, it is open to all hunters and trappers who witness abnormal circumstances in the field that may need to be documented scientifically, such as bird mortality, presence of a disease or parasite, and unusual behavior or food contamination. Community members are encouraged to bring their samples to your EMR Local Officer, who will prepare the sample for testing. This will then be sent to a laboratory operated by the CQSAS Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Montreal. Once the analysis is complete and received by the EMR Local Officer, they will record and report the results.

## **Citizen Science**

The CTA-EMR Department and the EMRWB are teaming up to launch and promote a Citizen Science campaign to encourage community members to share knowledge and report observations of the land and wildlife. Citizen science is any activity conducted by a any community member that contributes data and observations to our collective knowledge. Some data that can be reported include polar bear sightings, tracks or other signs (e.g., denning), beluga sightings, shorebird and waterfowl sightings/locations of nesting colonies; other species of birds, oobservations of invasive species, or new and unusual species and harvest data submission as part of the Waterfowl Harvest Study.

You can report your observations to your local CTA-EMR officer in your community, or visit the “Wildlife” section on the website [www.emrwb.ca](http://www.emrwb.ca) and fill out an electronic observation form (coming soon).

## **Additional Participation**

- ArcticNet Annual Scientific Meeting for Arctic and Northern Research, Halifax, December 2021
- CTA-AGA August 2021 – CTA-EMR presentation
- Office 365 Training – November 2021
- Bush kit Training – renewal