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EYYOU MARINE REGION IMPACT REVIEW BOARD

COMMISSION DE LA RÉGION MARINE D'EYYOU
CHARGÉE DE L'EXAMEN DES RÉPERCUSSIONS

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Screening Decision Report

NMRIRB File Number: 125651

EMRIRB File Number: 0031-1523-006

Date: June 6, 2023

Honourable Steven Guilbeault
Minister of Environment and Climate Change
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6
Via Email: ministre-minister@ec.gc.ca

Honourable Joanna Quassa
Minister, Department of Environment (DOE), Government of Nunavut
PO Box 1000 Station 200
Iqaluit, Nunavut, X0A 0H0
Via email: jquassa6@gov.nu.ca

CC:

Manon Sorais, Project Proponent (Niskamoon Corporation)

Barrie Ford, Chairperson, Nunavik Marine Region Impact Review Board (NMRIRB)

Isaac Masty, Chairperson, Eeyou Marine Region Impact Review Board (EMRIRB)

Pailin Chua-oon Rinfret, Executive Director, Eeyou Marine Region Impact Review Board (EMRIRB)

Tommy Palliser, Executive Director, Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board (NMRWB)

Angela Coxon, Director, Eeyou Marine Region Wildlife Board (EMRWB)

Jon Neely, Director, Wildlife Operations, Department of Environment, Government of Nunavut

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Gregor Gilbert, Policy Advisor, Department of Environment, Wildlife and Research, Makivvik Corporation

Isaac Voyaguer, Director, Department of Environment, Cree Nation Government

Jessica Labreque, Department of Environment, Cree Nation Government

Re: Screening Decision for the proposed project “Preliminary Assessment of the Canada Geese Population Breeding on Long Island, NU, Canada”

The Nunavik Marine Region Impact Review Board (**NMRIRB**) is an Institution of Public Government established pursuant to Section 7.2.1 of the Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement (NILCA). The NMRIRB has a mandate under Section 7.2.2 of the NILCA to screen project proposals in the Nunavik Marine Region (NMR) and indicate to the Territorial and Federal Ministers in charge of authorizing a project whether a review is required.

Likewise, the Eeyou Marine Region Impact Review Board (**EMRIRB**) is an Institution of Public Government established pursuant to Section 18.2.1 of the Eeyou Marine Region Land Claims Agreement (EMRLCA). The EMRIRB has a mandate under section 18.2.2 of the EMRLCA, to screen project proposals in the Eeyou Marine Region (EMR) and indicate to the Territorial and Federal Ministers in charge of authorizing a project whether a review is required.

The purpose of this letter is to communicate to you the NMRIRB and EMRIRB screening decision as required pursuant to Section 7.4.4 of the NILCA and Section 18.4.4 of the EMRLCA. As the proposed project is within the Joint Zone, the NMRIRB and EMRIRB have decided to issue a joint Screening Decision Report (SDR).

Following the NMRIRB's and EMRIRB's assessment of all materials provided by Manon Sorais (the "Proponent"), the NMRIRB and EMRIRB is recommending that a review of the "Preliminary Assessment of the Canada Geese Population Breeding on Long Island, NU, Canada" (the "Project" or "Project Proposal") is not required pursuant to paragraph 7.4.2 of the NILCA and the paragraph 18.4.2 of the EMRLCA. Subject to the Proponent's compliance with the terms and conditions set out below, the NMRIRB and EMRIRB is of the view that the Project Proposal is not likely to cause significant public concern and is unlikely to result in significant adverse environmental and social impacts.

The NMRIRB and EMRIRB therefore recommend that you, as the responsible Minister, accept this Screening Decision Report (SDR).

The following information provides the results of the NMRIRB's and EMRIRB's screening of the Project and its reasons for the decision. The Boards acknowledge that in addition to the terms and conditions set out below, licenses, authorizations and permits issued by responsible agencies may include additional terms and conditions, however the Boards have consulted with departmental staff and additional terms and conditions would not conflict with the terms and conditions set forth below.

OUTLINE OF THE SCREENING DECISION REPORT

1. Regulatory framework
2. Project referral
3. Project overview
4. Proponent commitments
5. NRMIRB/EMRIRB Procedural History
6. Public Comments
7. Assessment of the project proposal and decision
8. Recommended project specific terms and conditions
9. Monitoring and reporting requirements
10. Regulatory requirements
11. Conclusion

1. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

NMRIRB

The primary objectives of the NMRIRB are set out in Section 7.2.5 of the Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement (NILCA):

7.2.5 In carrying out its functions, the primary objectives of NMRIRB shall be at all times to protect and promote the existing and future well-being of the persons and communities resident in or using the NMR, and to protect the ecosystemic integrity of the NMR. NMRIRB shall take into account the well-being of residents of Canada outside the NMR.

The purpose of screening is provided for under Section 7.4.1 of the NILCA:

7.4.1 Upon receipt of a project proposal, NMRIRB shall screen the proposal to determine whether it has significant impact potential, and therefore whether it requires a review under Part 5 or 6.

To determine whether a review of a project is required, the NMRIRB is guided by the considerations as set out under Section 7.4.2 of the NILCA:

7.4.2 In screening a project proposal, NMRIRB shall be guided by the following principles:

- a) NMRIRB generally shall determine that such a review is required when, in its judgement,*
 - i) the project may have significant adverse effects on the ecosystem, wildlife habitat or Nunavik Inuit harvesting activities,*
 - ii) the project may have significant adverse socio-economic effects on northerners;*
 - iii) the project will cause significant public concern, or*
 - iv) the project involves technological innovations for which the effects are unknown;*

b) NMRIRB generally shall determine that such a review is not required when, in its judgment, the project is unlikely to arouse significant public concern and

i) the adverse ecosystemic and socio-economic effects are not likely to be significant, or

ii) the project is of a type where the potential adverse effects are highly predictable and mitigable with known technology; and

c) in determining whether a review is required or not NMRIRB shall give greater weight to the provisions of paragraph 7.4.2 (a).

As set out under Section 7.4.4 of the NILCA, upon conclusion of the screening process, the Board must provide a written report to the Minister(s):

7.4.4 Upon receipt of a project proposal, NMRIRB shall screen the proposal and indicate to the Minister in writing that:

a) the proposal may be processed without a review under Part 5 or 6; NMRIRB may recommend specific terms and conditions attached to any approval reflecting the primary objectives set out in section 7.2.5;

b) the proposal requires review under Part 5 or 6; NMRIRB shall identify particular issues or concerns which should be considered in such a review;

c) the proposal insufficiently developed to permit proper screening, and should be returned to the proponent for clarification; or

d) the potential adverse impacts of the proposal are so unacceptable that it should be modified or abandoned.

EMRIRB

The primary objectives of the EMRIRB are set out in Section 18.2.5 of the *Eeyou Marine Region Land Claims Agreement (EMRLCA)*:

EMRLCA, Section 18.2.5: In carrying out its functions, the primary objectives of the EMRIRB shall be at all times to protect and promote the existing and future well-being of the residents in the EMR, and of the coastal Cree communities of Eeyou Istchee and of their members and to protect the Ecosystemic integrity of the EMR. The EMRIRB shall take into account the well-being of residents of Canada outside the EMR.

The purpose of screening is provided for under Section 18.4.1 of the *EMRLCA*:

EMRLCA, Section 18.4.1: Upon receipt of a Project Proposal, the EMRIRB shall screen the Project Proposal to determine whether it has significant impact potential, and therefore whether it requires review.

To determine whether a review of a project is required, the EMRIRB is guided by the considerations as set out under Section 18.4.2 of the *EMRLCA*:

EMRLCA, Section 18.4.2: In screening a Project Proposal, the EMRIRB shall be guided by the following principles:

- a) *the EMRIRB generally shall determine that such a review is required when, in its judgment:*
 - i. *the project may have significant adverse effects on the ecosystem, Wildlife habitat or Cree Harvesting activities;*
 - ii. *the project may have significant adverse socio-economic effects;*
 - iii. *the project will cause significant public concern; or*
 - iv. *the project involves technological innovations for which the effects are unknown;*
- b) *the EMRIRB generally shall determine that such a review is not required when, in its judgment, the project is unlikely to arouse significant public concern; and*
 - i. *the adverse Ecosystemic and socio-economic effects are not likely to be significant; or*
 - ii. *the project is of a type where the potential adverse effects are highly predictable and mitigable with known technology; and*
- c) *in determining whether a review is required or not the EMRIRB shall give greater weight to the provisions of paragraph 18.4.2(a).*

As set out under Section 18.4.4 of the EMRLCA, upon conclusion of the screening process, the Board must provide its written report the Minister:

EMRLCA, Section 18.4.4: Upon receipt of a Project Proposal, the EMRIRB shall screen the Project Proposal and indicate to the Minister in writing and make public that:

- a) *the Project Proposal may be processed without a review; the EMRIRB may recommend specific terms and conditions to be attached to any approval;*
- b) *the Project Proposal requires review;*
- c) *the Project Proposal is insufficiently developed to permit proper screening, and should be returned to the Proponent for clarification; or*
- d) *the potential adverse impacts of the Project Proposal are so unacceptable that it should be modified or abandoned.*

2. PROJECT REFERRAL

On April 26, 2023, the NMRIRB and the EMRIRB received a referral to screen the “Preliminary Assessment of the Canada Geese Population Breeding on Long Island, NU, Canada” from the Nunavik Marine Region Planning Commission (“NMRPC” or “Commission”) and the Eeyou Marine Region Planning Commission (“EMRPC” or “Commission”) which noted that the Project was not exempt from screening by the NMRIRB under Schedule 7-1 of the NILCA and not exempt from screening by the EMRIRB under Schedule 18-1 of the EMRLCA.

On May 2, 2023 the Proponent submitted the application online and pursuant to Sections 7.4.2 and 7.4.4 of the NILCA and Sections 18.4.2 and 17.4.4 of the EMRLCA, the NMRIRB and EMRIRB commenced screening the Project Proposal on May 10, 2023. The NMRIRB assigned a file number 125651 and the EMRIRB assigned a file number 0031-1523-006.

3. PROJECT OVERVIEW

Eeyou hunters and land users reported the decline of the number of Canada geese (*Branta canadensis*) using Eastern James Bay (QC) as a stopover during their migrations over the past decades. They also observed that their distribution is less and less predictable with the decline of eelgrass beds and berries in the area. The current Eastern James Bay habitat use by Canada geese was recently investigated. However, gaps remain in the knowledge of geese distribution and resources selection in the area. Addressing this knowledge gaps will require to monitor subarctic-breeding geese that migrate along the Eastern coast of James Bay. These geese are likely to breed on Hudson Bay islands, but these colonies are not well known. The project hereby submitted to the Nunavik Marine Region and Eeyou Marine Region consists in preliminary visits of Long Island (NU), an uninhabited island used and shared by both Eeyou and Inuit communities. Two short-term visits will be conducted in June and August 2023. During these visits, a team of research scientists and Eeyou land users will explore the island, count Canada geese breeding pairs in selected sections, and assess productivity in selected nests. These visits will allow to assess the size and the productivity of the breeding Canada goose colony to better anticipate a potential future monitoring and GPS-tagging program. Describing how subarctic-breeding geese currently use Eastern James Bay area for stopover is critical for Eeyou communities that have been long relying on the harvest of this population during its migration. Additionally, this work could be the premises of a new long-lasting Long Island Canada goose monitoring program. This program would allow Eeyou and Inuit communities using this population as a natural resource to track and document its trends in the future.

4. PROPONENT COMMITMENTS

The activities planned for the first visit (mid-June 2023) are:

- Exploration of the most densely colonized sections of the island.
- Inventory of breeding pairs and active nests (in selected sections).
- Marking of a sample of active nests using labeled bamboo sticks.
- Estimation of egg lay dates in a subsample of active nests (floating method).
- Assessment of Long Island as a working ground for potential subsequent monitoring programs.

The activities planned for the second visit (early-August 2023) are:

- Examination of previously marked nests (1st visit) to estimate the reproductive success of the breeding population.
- Retrieval of all nest markers.
- Observation of geese behavior during molt to determine the best method of capture for subsequent monitoring programs.

Proponent commitments as stated in the project application and supporting documentation:

- The project will be co-led by Manon Sorais and Reggie Scipio. The team will also include another Eeyou land user who has not been identified yet, as well as Frédéric LeTourneau, research scientist with an extensive experience of remote field work and knowledge of wild geese.
- For each visit, the study area will be accessed by boat from Chisasibi. The sections of the island with high nest density will be reached by boat or on foot.
- The approach, the marking of the nests, and the manipulation of the eggs will be conducted by Manon Sorais, trained research scientist, with the objective to limit the time of intervention and the stress of the animals.
- No goose will be manipulated in this project, and no samples will be collected during these visits.
- Marking active nests will only require labelled bamboo sticks and a GPS map. A camera will be brought to keep a visual documentation of the island and the activities.
- Possibly, a drone could be operated by a trained team member during the second visit (August 2023), during the molting season.
- We propose to visit Long Island twice in 2023, once during incubation (June 15), and once during molt (August 10). Each visit would require four full days, including the time for transportation by boat between Chisasibi (QC) and Long Island.
- The team and the gear will be transported by boat and the boats will be directly beached on Long Island coast (two Freighting canoe - 25 ft).
- We will bring our own drinking water and will not use water on site.
- The camp will be set according to Cree land users' habits. Each participant will set his personal tent.
- A propane stove will be used to cook. No major source of power will be required, all electricity-powered instruments including safety material will be battery operated.
- No new structure will be built for this project.
- All waste (four days of food packaging) will be brought back to Chisasibi to be properly disposed.
- Team members' boots will be disinfected before and after the visit of each section to minimize the risk of spreading pathogens through the island.
- Regular gasoline will be used to fuel the two boats used for the team transportation and will be brought in sufficient quantity (45 gal per boat) to travel around the island and go back to Chisasibi.
- No hazardous material or chemicals will be used.
- Fuel will be stored in Jerrycan type containers that will remain on the boats during our visit.
- We will bring two Universal 6.5 gallon bucket spill kits in case of a fuel spill. In case of a spill, these kits will be used to collect spilled fuel and soiled substrate. Spilled fuel and soiled substrate will be isolated in buckets and brought back to Chisasibi to be properly disposed.

- A complete first aid kit will be brought on site, including several epinephrin auto-injectors and an emergency satellite communicator.
- Bears bangers and bear sprays will be brought on site. Reggie Scipio will also come on the island with two rifles.
- By the end of this project in September 2023, a complete activity report will be written and shared to whomever is concerned or expresses interest in knowing about the outcome of this project. This report will also provide recommendations regarding potential future monitoring of the Long Island Canada goose colony. We wish to organize consultations in Eastern James Bay Eeyou communities during fall 2023 as well as in Inuit communities of the Nunavik Marine Region. These consultations will aim to report on the project activities but also to discuss communities' interests, questions, and concern regarding future monitoring programs.

Any activities outside of the commitment list is considered outside the project scope and would be subject to Screening by the NMRIRB and EMRIRB.

5. PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The following chart indicates key stages of the screening process and when they were completed.

Date	Stage
March 21, 2023	Proponent submission to the EMR Public Registry
April 13, 2023	Proponent submission to the NMRPC
April 26, 2023	EMRPC/NMRPC referred the project for screening
May 2, 2023	Proponent submitted the project application to both the NMRIRB and EMRIRB
May 3, 2023	NMRIRB/EMRIRB accepted the application and moved to Completeness check
May 5, 2023	NMRIRB/EMRIRB returned the project to the proponent for additional information
May 8, 2023	Proponent re-submitted the project to the NMRIRB/EMRIRB
May 8, 2023	NMRIRB/EMRIRB accepted the application and moved to Completeness check
May 10, 2023	NMRIRB/EMRIRB Moved the project to Active Screening
May 10, 2023	NMRIRB/EMRIRB issued Notice of Screening to the project Distribution Lists and posted information on the Public Registries
May 10 - May 31, 2023	Public Commenting Period
June 2, 2023	NMRIRB/EMRIRB Board Meeting
June 6, 2023	Screening Decision Report issued to Minister and Public

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Notice regarding the NMRIRB and EMRIRB Screening was issued on May 10, 2023, and as per Board procedures, a 15-business day public commenting period was initiated from May 10 to May 31, 2023.

A distribution list was developed that included pertinent Nunavik entities, Eeyou entities, government departments and land users.

The NMRIRB and EMRIRB requested that interested parties review the proposal information and provide the Board with any comments or concerns by May 31, 2023, regarding;

- Project related concerns;
- Any suggestions or recommendations for the project application;
- Support for the project;
- Additional project related comments, suggestions, potential terms and conditions.

The following is a summary of the comments and concerns received by the NMRIRB and EMRIRB

1. May 12, 2023, Lesley Howes, ECCC/ CWS/ Bird Banding Office

From the information provided, I understand that the proponent will only conduct the surveys in 2023. They are not proposing capture/ banding/ marking of birds in 2023.

A Scientific permit under the Migratory Birds Regulations (2022) may be required to disturb birds in a breeding colony and handle eggs. This can be applied for through the CWS regional office.

A bird banding permit from CWS is not required for these activities but will be required when/if they decide to capture, band and mark geese or other birds that are part of the North American Bird Banding Program. I believe the proponents are aware of this. They have been in contact with the Bird Banding Office (CWS).

I support the pilot year of surveying the breeding colony and productivity before capture, banding and placing tags on birds.

CWS has guidelines for working in breeding colonies. This document may be useful for the proponents when planning their field work.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IBCiWYqMitO02hBVD86eBt5cPq85EX3R/view?usp=share_link

In order to capture, handle, age, sex, and attach GPS tags to geese, a high level of skill is required. The proponents have been gaining this experience however, they may want to consider hiring a qualified biologist or technician who has a permit with the appropriate authorizations to work with them in their study area. This will allow the study to proceed while they continue to gain the field expertise they need to undertake the project independently.

2. Solomon Masty, Whapmagoostui

The geese nest in the middle area where there's lots of lakes and ponds.

3. *Ron (Rock) A. Sheshamush, Whapmagoostui*

Turn the Long Island and the Duck Islands into a bird sanctuaries.

4. *Jordan Masty, Whapmagoostui*

Regular geese and long neck are in the middle of the island where the islands connect, that's the flight route. We camp at the west side and at end of the island. We don't touch the eggs and we haven't touched them in years. We clean our areas where we camp and hunt and we take everything except the feathers, but we manage to take a few for pillows and blanket making.

5. *Frederick Audlarock, Whapmagoostui*

I don't think there will be eggs in Long Island this year people who camp there harvest them.

6. *May 30, 2023, Angela Coxon, Director of Eeyou Marine Region Wildlife Board*

- Long Island has been reported by local Cree land users as an important location for nesting birds, not just geese and there is the potential for species at risk to occur on the island;
- Long Island is a summer refuge location during the ice-free months as well as a winter denning location for polar bears;
- Project participants should be accompanied at all times by the local (Chisasibi) CTA-EMR Officer or a land user who has completed the polar bear safety training workshop, both of whom should also be equipped with polar bear deterrents in order to prevent human-bear interactions and the need for defense kills;
- All polar bear observations (e.g. observations of bears or of sign such as scat, tracks, abandoned dens) details are to be recorded and forwarded to the EMRWB (confirm with EMRWB staff what kind of information should be collected before project commencement);
- Any polar bear-human interactions and DLP kills must be communicated immediately through black radio to the Chisasibi CTA office and its local CTA-EMR Officer;
- All food and waste should be secured in a manner that does not attract bears; do not store food inside of tents and instead try to store all food inside the boats;
- If available to the project proponent, sleeping tents should be protected by bear fencing or an alert system (refer to Nunavut Bear Safety Guidelines);
- To minimize stress and to reduce risk of nest failures, review and adhere to guidelines published by Environment and Climate Change Canada (identified later in this report);
- In addition to these guidelines, restrict all project activities during inclement weather that would flush birds off of nest and result in failure to maintain an internal egg temperature required for successful incubation;
- Avoid the use of recordings, calls, or whistles to attract birds, which may alter the birds' normal feeding, mating, and brood-rearing activities. Also take into consideration the impacts of photography on birds, ensure that you limit the use of artificial lights/flash;

- Cree land users may be present on Long Island during project activity, especially during the harvest period for long neck geese (e.g. first 2 weeks of June). Consult with the CTA Offices and coastal tallymen in Chisasibi and Whapmagoostui prior to arrival on Long Island in both June and August to ensure that if Cree are present on the island at the same time, that they are aware of project activities and that project activities do not conflict with Cree land use activity on the island;
- The EMRWB considers Long Island to be a location that is currently data deficient. To date, opportunities to collect data has been very limited. It would be appreciated if the project proponent could contact EMRWB staff prior to the start of the project to discuss potential opportunity to collect data outside of the scope of the proposed project (e.g., other wildlife species observed, seabird nesting colony locations, other habitat types/predominate vegetation observed on the island, locations and descriptions of anthropogenic features, etc.).

7. June 1, 2023, Mark Basterfield, Director of Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board

The concern is that the birds and their nesting habitat will be disturbed during a sensitive time. The healthy abundance of Canada Geese, in addition to their general resilience to reasonable levels of disturbance makes these concerns fairly minor.

This project should be required to follow all applicable Federal Migratory Bird Regulations, with the exception of those which would directly interfere with the ability to collect project data (i.e., nest disturbance is not allowed under the Migratory Bird Regulations, but would need to be permitted for the purpose of data collection for this project).

Along with the suggestions stated above, this project should be required to minimize disturbance to the habitat of the study area, and to other wildlife occupying the study area. Additionally, the marine environment will be utilized to travel to and from the study area with freight canoes. The disturbance to the marine environment and wildlife should be minimal, but every effort should be made to avoid pollution or excess noise disturbance in the marine area.

Please note that these comments are provided by Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board (NMRWB) staff, and do not necessarily represent the views or recommendations of the NMRWB Directors.

7. ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT PROPOSAL AND DECISION

After a thorough assessment of all material provided to the Boards, in accordance with the principles identified within sections 7.4.2 of the NILCA and 18.4.2 of the EMRLCA, the decision of the Boards as per Section 7.4.4 of the NILCA and 18.4.4 of the EMRLCA is:

The Project Proposal may be processed without a review under Part 5 or 6; NMRIRB and EMRIRB may recommend specific terms and conditions to be attached to any approval, reflecting the primary objectives set out in section 7.2.5 and 18.2.5.

Anticipated impacts

The proponent has listed the following impacts in their project application:

- We anticipate minor disturbance of breeding female geese as we will approach their nests and manipulate their eggs.
- We anticipate no impact on the environment, except minor disturbance of breeding geese when team members will be walking on the colony to count nest and run nest examination.
- To our knowledge, there are no sensitive area identified in the surrounding area that could be impacted by the submitted project.
- We anticipate no negative impact of this project on the Eeyou rights and use of natural resource on Long Island.

The NMRIRB and EMRIRB have identified a number of anticipated impacts and provide the following views regarding whether or not the proposed project has the potential to result in significant impacts.

1) Impact on Birds

Board views:

The presence of the researcher and their activities, such as handling eggs and observing nesting behavior, may cause disturbance to the nesting geese. In particular, there is concern for the estimation of egg lay dates which requires the 'floating method'. According to Traditional Knowledge, this disturbance could potentially disrupt the birds' natural behaviors, including incubation, nest abandonment, and abandonment of eggs. This will be of high concern to the Cree and Inuit.

The Board is concerned that the disturbance will be happening during incubation which is a sensitive period.

The Board has concern over the use of bamboo sticks to mark the nests as it may flag the location of the nest to other predators.

The Board is concerned over the use of drones in August if they are used improperly and are flown too close to the colonies.

The Board is also concerned that the data collected will only be over one year, and may not accurately reflect the complete situation.

Recommended Mitigation Measures:

The Board recommends that the Proponent try to avoid the handling of eggs if possible. The Board recommends that the bamboo sticks are kept as small as possible and do not have any reflective markers. Proponents must follow the terms and conditions listed below.

2) Impact on Habitat

Board views:

Camping activities and the movement of the researcher on the island could result in trampling or damaging vegetation. The Proponent should be aware that the trails made by walking on the island can have an impact on wildlife.

Recommended Mitigation Measures:

Care should be taken to minimize habitat disturbance and avoid sensitive areas to ensure the preservation of the local ecosystem. Proper waste management is crucial to prevent pollution and minimize impacts on the environment. The researcher must have a waste management plan in place, including the proper disposal of food waste, packaging, and other materials brought to the island. Proponents must follow the terms and conditions listed below.

3) Impact on Harvesting Activities

Board views:

The project has potential to interfere with the harvesting of long-neck geese, which takes place starting the last week of May into the first half of June. The harvest of long-necked Canada geese occurs along parts of the coast and offshore islands during the proposed dates of this project. The August visit should be completed before Nunavik Inuit travel down to the island for the fall beluga hunt.

Recommended Mitigation Measures:

Consult with the CTA Offices and coastal tallymen in Chisasibi and Whapmagoostui prior to arrival on Long Island in both June and August to ensure that if Cree are present on the island at the same time, that they are aware of project activities and that project activities do not conflict with Cree land use activity on the island. Proponents must follow the terms and conditions listed below.

4) Risk for Safety

Board views:

The Board has raised concerns over travel safety. The Proponent must be aware of ice travel safety precautions, the potential for fog, and must plan the boat trips according to available daylight. The month of June can still experience fluctuating weather conditions and pack ice that moves suddenly with changes in wind directions. Although breakup has occurred, ice is still present all throughout the Bay, including the proposed areas, and the changing wind directions will result in areas of open water or pack ice on very short notice. There is very little to no boating activity in the Bay until all ice has melted, unless it is for goose harvesting activities. The entire Bay is usually not ice-free until the very end of June.

Further, there is the potential to encounter polar bears, especially mothers with new cubs at this time of year. During snow melt and ice break-up, mothers emerge from their dens on the islands with new cubs, and slowly move north for the summer. An effort must be made to maintain a distance from bears swimming in the water, especially mothers with cubs, to prevent stress and disturbance because the cubs are not yet strong swimmers.

Any bear encountered in the water will be expending a good deal of energy necessary to move from island to island, which are for the most part located many, many kilometers apart.

Recommended Mitigation Measures:

It is essential to monitor weather forecasts and be prepared for sudden changes, such as strong winds, storms, or fog. Unfavorable weather conditions can make navigation challenging and increase the risk of accidents. Proper navigation practices should be followed to avoid collisions with wildlife, particularly marine mammals. The use of fuel and potential oil or fuel spills should be managed carefully to prevent pollution.

Polar bears will be attracted to carcasses and food waste, so it is important the Proponent stay clear of carcasses and produce no food waste. Proponents must follow the terms and conditions listed below.

Anticipated impacts

	Impact	NMRIRB/EMRIRB Assessment	Proponent Assessment
PHYSICAL	Designated Protected Areas (i.e., national marine conservation areas, marine protected areas)	No Impact	No Impact
	Ground stability	No Impact	No Impact
	Permafrost	No Impact	No Impact
	Hydrology/Limnology	No Impact	No Impact
	Water quality	No Impact	No Impact
	Climate conditions	No Impact	No Impact
	Eskers and other unique or fragile landscapes	No Impact	No Impact
	Surface and bedrock geology	No Impact	No Impact
	Sediment and soil quality	No Impact	No Impact
	Tidal processes and bathymetry	No Impact	No Impact
	Air quality	No Impact	No Impact
	Noise levels	No Impact	No Impact
	Seabed and Marine Sediments	No Impact	No Impact
	BIOLOGICAL	Vegetation	No Impact
Wildlife, including habitat and migration patterns		Negative	No Impact
Birds, including habitat and migration patterns		Negative	Negative
Aquatic Species including habitat and migration / spawning		No Impact	No Impact
SOCIO-ECONOMIC	Archeological and cultural historical sites	No Impact	No Impact
	Cree/Inuit Harvesting Activities	Negative in the short-term, research outcomes may lead to positive data following the project	Positive
	Employment	No Impact	No Impact
	Community wellness	No Impact	No Impact
	Community infrastructure	No Impact	No Impact
	Human Health	No Impact	No Impact

8. RECOMMENDED PROJECT SPECIFIC TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The NMRIRB and EMRIRB are recommending the following terms and conditions to apply in respect of the Project pursuant to section 7.4.4 (a) of the NILCA and 18.4.4 (a) of the EMRLCA.

General

1. The Proponent (Manon Sorais) shall maintain a copy of the Project Terms and Conditions at the site of operation at all times.
2. The Proponent shall obtain the following permits and abide by any terms and conditions contained therein:
 - a) Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) – Scientific Permit
 - b) Government of Nunavut – Wildlife Research Permit
3. The Proponent shall forward copies of all permits obtained and required for this project to the Nunavik Marine Region Impact Review Board (NMRIRB) and the Eeyou Marine Region Impact Review Board (EMRIRB) prior to the commencement of the project:
 - c) Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) – Scientific Permit
 - d) Government of Nunavut – Wildlife Research Permit

Proponents are responsible for identifying all licenses, permits, and approvals that are required to carry out the proposed project.

4. The Proponent shall operate in accordance with all commitments stated in correspondence provided to the NMRIRB/EMRIRB and the online application filed initially and correspondence provided to the EMRIRB and online registry filed on May 8, 2023
5. The Proponent shall operate in accordance with all applicable Acts, Regulations and Guidelines.

Water Use

6. The Proponent has identified there will be no water use while on Long Island, however, if required, the proponent shall not extract water from any fish-bearing waterbody unless the water intake hose is equipped with a screen of appropriate mesh size to ensure that there is no entrapment of fish.
7. The Proponent shall ensure that water extraction from any fish-bearing waterbody is done with appropriate care and caution.

Temporary Camp

8. The Proponent shall ensure that all camps are located on gravel, sand or other durable land.
9. The Proponent shall use designated camping areas and established trails, if available, to minimize habitat damage and disturbance to wildlife.

10. The Proponent shall ensure that all disturbed areas are restored to a stable or pre-disturbed state as practical as possible upon completion of field work.

Waste Disposal/Incineration

11. The Proponent shall pack out all combustible waste and non-combustible waste placed in a covered metal container or equivalent until disposed of at the end of the journey in Chisasibi, Quebec. All such wastes shall be kept inaccessible to wildlife at all times.
12. The Proponent shall leave no trace on Long Island at the temporary camp site.
13. The Proponent shall not burn any garbage or debris on the islands.
14. The waste management plan shall include provisions for the disposal of human waste in an environmentally responsible manner.

Fuel Storage

15. The Proponent shall store all fuel in such a manner that they are inaccessible to wildlife.
16. The Proponent shall locate all fuel and other hazardous materials a minimum of thirty-one (31) metres away from the high-water mark of any water body and in such a manner as to prevent their release into the environment.
17. The Proponent shall ensure that re-fueling of all equipment occurs a minimum of thirty-one (31) metres away from the high-water mark of any water body.
18. The Proponent shall ensure that appropriate spill response equipment and clean-up materials (e.g., shovels, pumps, barrels, drip pans, and absorbents) are readily available during any transfer of fuel or hazardous substances, at all fuel storage sites and when refuelling equipment.
19. The Proponent shall inspect and document the condition of all fuel tanks and fuel caches daily while on Long Island for the duration of both research sessions.
20. The Proponent shall ensure that all personnel are properly trained in fuel and hazardous waste handling procedures, as well as spill response procedures. All spills of fuel or other deleterious materials of any amount must be reported immediately to the 24-hour Spill Line.

Wildlife - General

21. The Proponent shall ensure that there is no damage to wildlife habitat in conducting this operation.
22. The Proponent shall not harass wildlife. This includes persistently circling, chasing, hovering over, pursuing or in any other way harass wildlife, or disturbing large groups of animals.
23. Polar bears spend the ice-free months hunting and resting on the offshore islands. The Proponent will minimize any disturbance that may result in scaring or forcing polar bears from land into the water.

24. The Proponent shall maintain a distance of 100 metres if a polar bear is encountered on land, ice or open water while conducting activities from a zodiac or other small craft. It is a crucial time of the year for polar bear movement within the NMR/EMR; any interactions with polar bears should be avoided in order to prevent causing changes in behaviour and movement;
25. The Proponent shall not hunt. A Territorial fishing license is required if the proponent wishes to fish.
26. The Proponent shall ensure that all project personnel are made aware of the measures to protect wildlife and are provided with training and/or advice on how to implement these measures.
27. The Proponent shall ensure all project staff are trained in appropriate bear/carnivore detection and deterrent techniques. The polar bear is a protected species and as such, in the event of defensive measures required during an encounter, every effort should be made to deter the bear using non-lethal methods when safe to do so.
28. The Proponent or pertinent / assigned project team members shall carry non-lethal deterrent and an appropriate firearm and ammunitions.
29. The Proponent will be familiar with and abide by the recommended setback distances listed in the Marine Mammal Act during encounters with whales while enroute to and from Long Island (e.g., 400 m for species listed under SARA, 200 m for non-listed species).
30. The Proponent shall not touch, feed or entice wildlife to approach by holding out or setting out decoys or any such devices, foodstuffs or bait of any kind.

Migratory Birds

31. Egg and nest disturbance must be limited to Canada Geese eggs and nests and can only be done by movement within the colony and egg manipulation in order to inventory breeding pairs and active nests, mark a sample of active nests using labeled sticks, estimate egg lay dates and subsequently examine previously marked nests.
32. The Boards strongly encourage the proponent not to handle eggs. The Proponent shall only handle up to 10% of the eggs within the study area for the purposes of identifying / estimating when the eggs were laid up to a maximum of 50 eggs. During the August 2023 visit to Long Island, the proponent will specifically note in all reports whether the eggs that were disturbed actually hatched.
33. Everyone must direct their actions in the field to minimize disturbances to migratory birds, their nests and eggs (noise should be kept to a minimum, approach the nesting site slowly, move carefully through the nests of the colony, disturbance should be kept to a minimum).
34. The proponent must not work in colonies during rainy weather. This condition is important because on rainy days migratory birds stay on their nests to avoid getting their down feathers wet which would remove all thermal isolation for the eggs.

Boat Activities

35. The Proponent shall not deposit any fuel, chemicals, waste (including wastewater) or sediment into any marine waters and shall manage waste on board the boat prior to final disposal in Chisasibi.
36. The Proponent shall ensure all personnel are properly trained in fuel and hazardous waste handling procedures, as well as spill response procedures. All spills of fuel or other deleterious materials of any amount must be reported immediately to the 24-hour Spill Line at 867-920-8130.

Other

37. The Proponent should coordinate with local villages and land users to prevent potential interference with harvesting and land use activities. Specifically for this project, the proponent should coordinate with the communities of Akulivik, Puvirnituk and Inukjuak, Umiujaq and Kuujuaapik (Nunavik) and Chisasibi and Whapmagoostui (Eeyou).
38. The Proponent should engage with local residents regarding planned activities in the area and should solicit available Inuit and Cree Knowledge and information regarding current recreational and traditional usage of the project area which may inform project activities. Posting of translated public notices and direct engagement with potentially interested groups and individuals prior to undertaking project activities is strongly encouraged.
39. The Proponent shall ensure that project activities do not interfere with Inuit or Cree wildlife harvesting or traditional land use activities.
40. The Proponent should, to the extent possible, hire local people and access local services where possible.
41. The Proponent shall have a contingency plan in place in case of adverse weather.

9. MONITORING AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Wildlife Mitigation and Monitoring Plan

42. The Proponent shall provide a brief summary report to the NMRIRB and EMRIRB at the end of the project period.
43. The Proponent shall report all polar bear encounters, whale species observations as well as the presence of bird nesting colonies to the NMRWB and EMRWB.

Change in Project Scope

44. The Proponent shall notify the NMRIRB/EMRIRB of any changes in operating plans or conditions associated with this project prior to any such change.

Migratory Birds

45. For further information on how to protect migratory birds, their nests and eggs when planning or carrying out project activities, consult Environment and Climate Change Canada's Incidental Take web page and the fact sheet "Planning Ahead to Reduce the Risk of Detrimental Effects to Migratory Birds, and their Nests and Eggs" available at https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2013/ec/CW66-324-2013-eng.pdf
46. To prevent risk of nest abandonment and/or significant effect on nesting behaviour, please download, review and adhere to Environment and Climate Change Canada's Guidelines to Minimize Disturbance of Colonial-breeding Waterbirds During Research Activities available at:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IBCiWYqMitO02hBVD86eBt5cPq85EX3R/view?usp=share_link
47. *Migratory Birds Convention Act and Migratory Birds Regulations* (<https://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/M-7.01/>).

Bear and Carnivore Safety

48. The Proponent should review the Government of Nunavut's booklet on Bear Safety, which can be downloaded from this link: http://gov.nu.ca/sites/default/files/bear_safety_-_reducing_bear-people_conflicts_in_nunavut.pdf.
49. There are polar bear safety resources available from the Bear Smart Society with videos on polar bear safety available in English, French and Inuktitut at <http://www.bearsmart.com/play/safety-in-polar-bear-country/>. Information can also be obtained from Parks Canada's website on bear safety at the following link: <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/nu/quttinirpaaq/visit/visit6/d.aspx> or in reviewing the "Safety in Polar Bear Country" pamphlet, which can be downloaded from the following link: http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/nu/quttinirpaaq/visit/visit6/~media/pn-np/nu/auyuittuq/pdf/shared/PolarBearSafety_English.ashx.

Species at Risk

50. The Proponent shall review Environment and Climate Change Canada's "Environment Assessment Best Practice Guide for Wildlife at Risk in Canada", available at the following link: http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca/virtual_sara/files/policies/EA%20Best%20Practices%202004.pdf. The guide provides information to the Proponent on what is required when Wildlife at Risk, including *Species at Risk*, are encountered or affected by the project. Appendix D lists the Species at Risk found in the Eeyou Marine Region.

10. REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

The onus is on the Proponent to be informed of all licencing and permitting requirements related to their Project. The Proponent has applied for the following Government authorizations for this Project.

- a) Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) – Scientific License;
- b) Government of Nunavut – Wildlife Observation License;

In addition to the above noted licences, the Proponent is advised that the following legislation may also apply to the project:

- The Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College is the designated Minister responsible for *Nunavut's Scientist Act* (R.S.N.W.T 1988, C.S-4), which requires a license for any scientific research carried out within Nunavut. The licensing requirement applies throughout Nunavut's territorial lands and waters. The Nunavut scientific research license from the **Nunavut Research Institute** will be required for studies of marine geology, water quality, oceanography, marine microbes, and molecular eDNA on Nunavut lands. All islands in the Nunavik Marine Region and the Eeyou Marine Region are within the jurisdiction of the Nunavut Territory.

Finally, the Proponent is reminded that in addition to the terms and conditions set forward by the NMRIRB herein, they remain subject to the laws of general application in the NMR and EMR as it relates to their Project activities.

In addition to the NMRIRB/EMRIRB, there may be other access and regulatory considerations the Proponent needs to consider prior to commencing their Project.

Entry and Access Permission

The Proponent is reminded that within the NMR/EMR there are lands owned by Nunavik Inuit, lands owned by the Cree of Eeyou Itschee and some lands jointly owned by Nunavik Inuit and the Cree of Eeyou Istchee which includes Long Island. This screening report and the Project Certificate herein does not constitute authorization to access those lands. Where the Project involves accessing such lands, the Proponent is required to seek permission of the landowners prior to accessing those lands.

11. CONCLUSION

The foregoing constitutes the Board's screening decision with respect to Manon Sorais' Project Proposal. The NMRIRB and EMRIRB remain available for consultation with the Minister regarding this report as necessary.

The NMRIRB and EMRIRB look forward to your decision on this file as well as being kept informed and updated on the relevant permitting processes.

Dated June 6, 2023.



Barrie Ford
Chairperson
Nunavik Marine Region Impact Review
Board (NMRIRB)



Isaac Masty
Chairperson
Eeyou Marine Region Impact Review Board
(EMRIRB)

Attachments: Appendix A: Project Timeline

Appendix B: Project Map

Appendix C: Material Use

Appendix D: Species at Risk in the Eeyou Marine Region

APPENDIX A: PROJECT TIMELINE

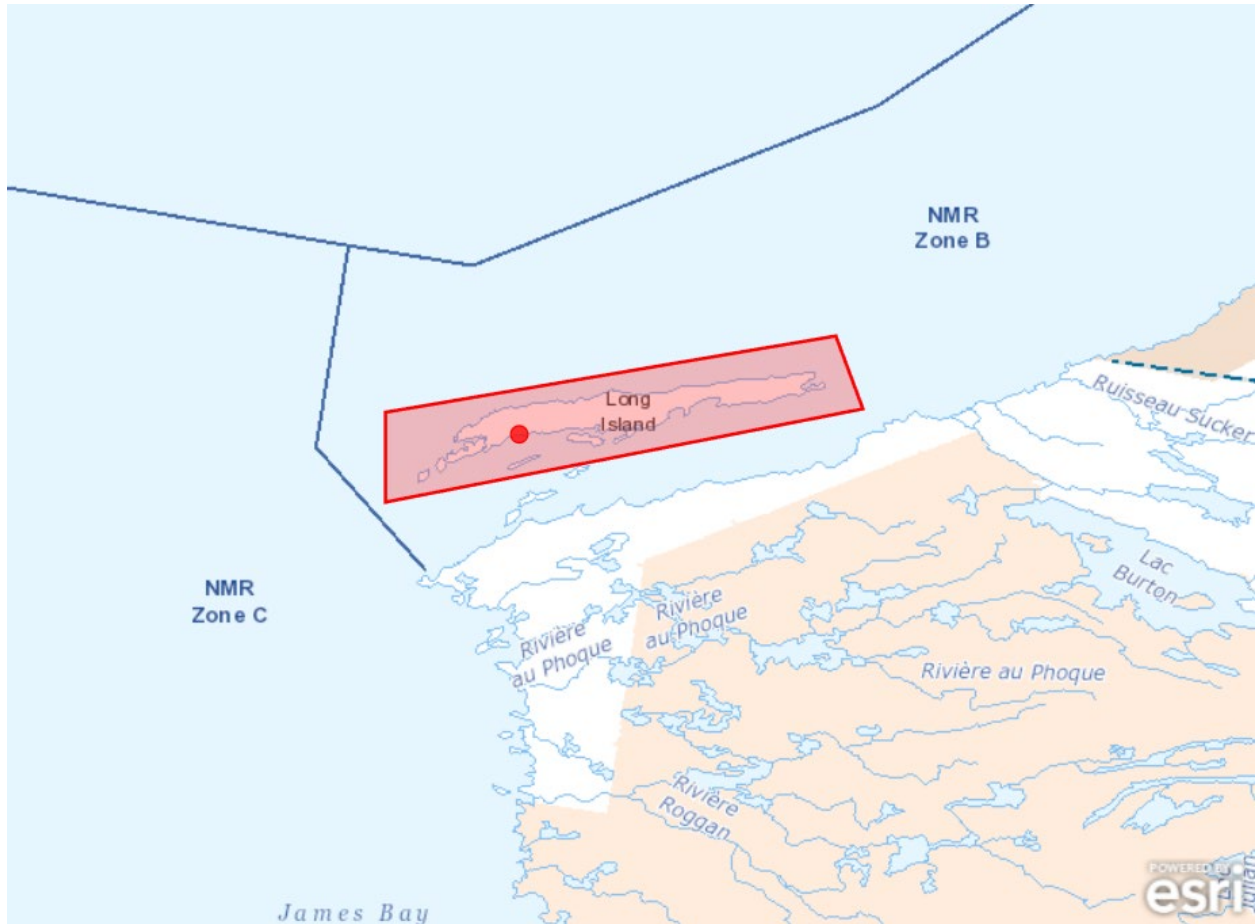
June 15, 2023-June 19, 2023 (4 days) = Trip from Chisasibi to Long Island and return

August 10, 2023-August 14, 2023 (4 days) = Trip from Chisasibi to Long Island and return

APPENDIX B: PROJECT MAPS



Figure 1. Study area. This project would take place on Long Island (NU), in the joint Inuit/Cree zone. The island would be reached by boat from Chisasibi (QC).



*Submitted through the NMRIRB Public Registry

APPENDIX C: MATERIAL USE

List of all Material Use:

- 2 Freighting canoes (25 ft)
- 2 Outboard engine - 50-60 hp (for boat propulsion)
- 20 containers of regular gasoline (340L in fuel in total), Jerrycans stored on the boats
- two Universal 6.5 gallon bucket spill kits
- Less than 5kg of food packaging waste (to be brought back to Chisasibi for disposal)
- Labelled bamboo sticks, GPS map, camera
- Drone

APPENDIX D: SPECIES AT RISK IN THE NMR/EMR

The following are the terrestrial species that are listed in Schedule I of the Species at Risk Act and for which at least one occurrence/mention/observation is in Eeyou Istchee (for the territory, I used the footprint of Cree traplines, taken from a map provided by the CTA) and the Eeyou Marine Region. This is based on data from a number of databases, including SOSPOP, the Centre de données sur le patrimoine naturel du Québec (CDPNQ), the Atlas of amphibians and reptiles of Quebec (AARQ).

- Harlequin duck (Special Concern)
- Monarch butterfly (Special Concern, under consideration for Endangered)
- Red knot, rufa subspecies (Endangered)
- Yellow rail (Special Concern)
- Short-eared owl (Special Concern, under consideration for Threatened);
- Common nighthawk (Threatened, under consideration for Special Concern)
- Red-necked phalarope (Special Concern);
- Peregrine falcon (Special Concern, under consideration for Not at Risk);
- Bank swallow (Threatened);
- Barn Swallow (Threatened, under consideration for Special Concern);
- Olive-sided flycatcher (Threatened, under consideration for Special Concern)
- Rusty blackbird (Special Concern);
- Canada warbler (Threatened, under consideration for Special Concern)
- Little brown myotis (Endangered)
- Northern myotis (Endangered)
- Polar bear (Special Concern)
- Wolverine (Special Concern)
- Boreal caribou (Special Concern)

Critical habitat has been identified on Cree territory for the following species:

- Red knot (Boatswain Bay)
- Bank swallow
- Little brown myotis
- Northern myotis
- Boreal caribou