Nunavik Marine Region Planning Commission
Commission d'aménagement de la région marine du Nunavik

WELLBEING WORKSHOPS WITH NUNAVIMMIUT 2025

Report from the Nunavik Marine Region Planning Commission



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INTENDED USE AND SCOPE

This report outlines what was heard during the Nunavik Marine Region Planning Commission's (NMRPCs) Wellbeing Workshops Community Tour, conducted with all Nunavik communities, as well as Inuit in Chisasibi, between January and June 2025. It is intended to acknowledge and share the feedback received.

The views and opinions in this report reflect our understanding of the comments from the individual community members who attended our workshops. They do not necessarily represent the views or positions of the NMRPC, all Nunavik Inuit, or all Nunavimmiut.

Feedback from the community workshops is collectively summarized in this report for brevity; however, it is important to highlight that challenges, opportunities, and priorities vary within and between communities. For community-level summaries, please contact the NMRPC at admin@nmrpc.ca.



PHOTO: FELIX WILLIE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement (NILCA) is a modern-day treaty that asserts Nunavik Inuit rights and interests in the Nunavik Marine Region. The objective of the NILCA is to encourage self-reliance and the cultural and social wellbeing of Nunavik Inuit (NILCA 23.1.1(b)). To support this objective, the Nunavik Marine Region Planning Commission (NMRPC) was established as an institution of public government under the NILCA and tasked with conducting marine planning in the Nunavik Marine Region.

As outlined in the NILCA, the marine planning process in the Nunavik Marine Region must protect and promote the wellbeing of all residents and communities of Nunavik and all users of the Nunavik Marine Region. While the process must account for the interests of all Canadians, it is required to devote special attention to protecting and promoting the existing and future wellbeing of Nunavik Inuit (NILCA 6.2.1(b)).

As Nunavik Inuit are in the best position to define what wellbeing means to them and how it can be protected and promoted through marine planning in the Nunavik Marine Region, the NMRPC hosted Wellbeing Workshops with all Nunavik communities from January to June 2025. The workshops explored the concept of wellbeing in the context of the saltwater and islands surrounding Nunavik and the actions that the NMRPC might take to protect and promote it now and into the future. This document summarizes the experiences and perspectives shared during the workshops

At the heart of what we heard was that wellbeing is spending time on the land, hunting and harvesting, eating country food, maintaining connections with family and community, respecting the environment and wildlife, and protecting Inuit culture and language. Together, these elements foster strength at the individual and community levels as well as in individuals both mentally and physically.

From an environmental perspective, we heard that the entire Nunavik Marine Region is valued and deserving of protection. Nested within the region are areas requiring particular care, including wildlife migration routes, calving areas, breeding and birthing grounds, and polynyas. We heard that identifying certain species for protection or marking specific areas for conservation on maps can be seen as inappropriate because it may imply that the loss or damage of other species and areas is acceptable.

While the environment and wildlife of the Nunavik Marine Region are mostly pristine and healthy, concerns exist related to garbage and contamination, tourism, shipping, overharvesting and poaching, introduced species, climate change, as well as current and future development. Effective efforts, including enforcement of regulations, education and outreach for Inuit and non-Inuit, and protection measures led by Inuit, are needed to keep the Nunavik Marine Region intact.

It was made clear in discussions that Inuit are part of healthy ecosystems. They maintain a relationship with, and a responsibility to wildlife, hunting and harvesting grounds and other valued spaces. It was also made clear that communities are interested in research and monitoring on a range of topics, including water quality, impacts on wildlife health and behavior resulting from pollution and climate change, sunken ships, and economic opportunities. Community members voiced that they must be included in research and monitoring.

Wellbeing is strongly linked to the protection of the environment, but also to culturally important historic sites. These include traditional seasonal camps, gravesites, hunting and harvesting grounds, fishing grounds, sites for processing meat, food caches, trading locations, soapstone quarries, and seasonal congregation sites for families. Cairns and markings for navigation are also valued.

Different priorities exist between and within Nunavik communities regarding economic development in the Nunavik Marine Region.



Some asserted that development of any kind is undesirable while others noted that development would relieve the poverty and financial pressures experienced in the region.

We heard that framing the conversation around "economic sustainability" as opposed to "economic development" provides common ground. Workshop participants shared that development should promote culture, avoid impacts on the environment and wildlife, as well as provide local economic growth and employment. Ideally, ventures should be Inuit-owned and led. Tourism, an international port, renewable energy, traditional activities, aquaculture and fisheries, and the military offer potential opportunities.

An understanding of what wellbeing means to Nunavik Inuit and the actions they want to see taken to protect and promote it will guide the marine planning process in the Nunavik Marine Region. We hope other organizations will also take from this report what they need to be able to serve Nunavimmiut to the best of their abilities.

Moving forward, the NMRPC will use all the feedback provided during the Wellbeing Workshops to develop a Marine Planning Strategy for the Nunavik Marine Region. The strategy will guide the marine planning process and the resulting creation of a Marine Use Plan.



PHOTO: MALAYA QAUNQ-CHAPMAN

BACKGROUND

The Nunavik Marine Region Planning Commission (NMRPC) is an institution of public government created under the Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement (NILCA). The NILCA tasks the NMRPC with developing a Marine Use Plan to guide and direct resource use and development in the Nunavik Marine Region. The Nunavik Marine Region includes the saltwater and islands offshore of Nunavik, excluding the tidal islands connected to the mainland during low tide (Figure 1).

The NMRPC is responsible for creating a Marine Planning Strategy to lay the foundation for the preparation of the Marine Use Plan. The strategy will provide a roadmap for the marine planning process as well as a tool to hold the NMRPC accountable for its work.

As required under the NILCA, the strategy will contain broad planning goals, objectives, and actions as well as priorities regarding the conservation, development, management, and use of the saltwater, islands, and resources of the Nunavik Marine Region (NILCA 6.2.2(a), 6.4.1(a)) (Figure 2). In addition, the strategy will contain values for the marine planning process and, as per the NILCA, devote special attention to protecting and promoting the existing and future wellbeing of Nunavik Inuit (NILCA 6.2.1(b)).

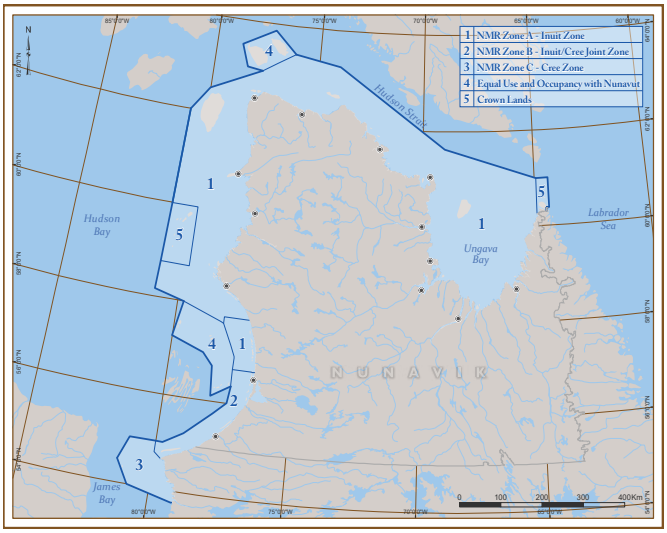


Figure 1: Nunavik Marine Region.

Marine planning in the Nunavik Marine Region cannot limit the rights of Nunavik Inuit beneficiaries as protected under the NILCA, James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, or the Constitution Act, 1982. As a result, the management of traditional activities is outside the scope of marine planning in the Nunavik Marine Region. However, marine planning can and should be used to manage development and other activities with potential impacts on traditional activities, such as harvesting, boating, and camping. It is, therefore, important for the NMRPC to understand and account for these activities.

Values are shared ideals. They provide guiding principles for decision-making. **Goals are general targets to aim for.** They provide direction. **Objectives are specific targets to be achieved.** They are "what must be done". **Actions are activities to be completed.** They are "how objectives can be achieved". Together, these elements establish a framework for strategic, long-term planning that leads to action.

A broad range of individuals and organizations have activities and/or interests in the Nunavik Marine Region. Early, ongoing, and meaningful engagement is necessary with the full suite of these planning partners to support development of a strategy that is comprehensive, relevant, and achievable. In recognition of this, the NMRPC is co-developing the Marine Planning Strategy with planning partners.

Insights from the Wellbeing Workshops, alongside input from the Marine Planning Strategy Surveys, will directly inform development of the Marine Planning Strategy. The Marine Planning Strategy will reflect the needs and desires of Nunavimmiut and serve as a tool for creating an effective Marine Use Plan.

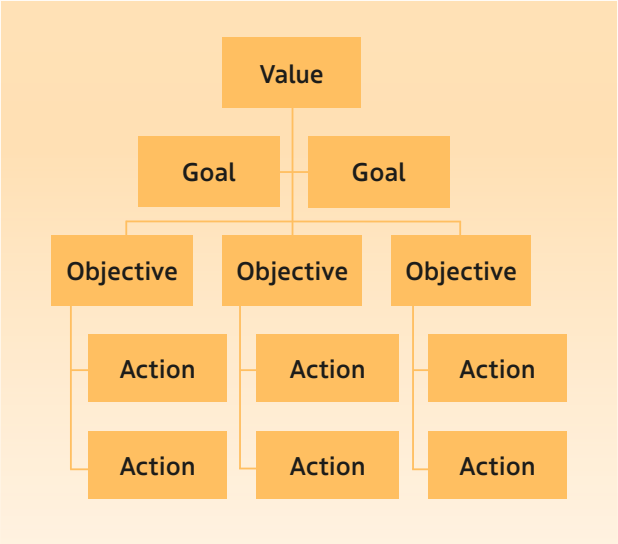


Figure 2: The relationship between values, goals, objectives, and actions.

The following engagement has taken place to date to support co-development:

Early Engagement Community Tour (2023): We conducted a tour to introduce the NMRPC to Nunavik communities, including Inuit in Chisasibi, and hear their opinions on the Nunavik Marine Region.

Marine Planning Strategy Surveys (2024-2025): We used surveys to validate draft content for the strategy. We used the feedback received during the 2023 community tour to develop the surveys.

- **Targeted Survey** – We delivered a Targeted Survey in-person to experts in the marine environment, with a focus on Nunavik harvesters and Elders.[1]
- **Public Survey** – We provided a Public Survey to all Nunavik Inuit, Nunavimmiut, and others from across Canada interested in the Nunavik Marine Region.[2]
- **Organization Survey** – We shared an Organization Survey with a broad range of agencies from across Canada with activities or interests in the Nunavik Marine Region, including land claims organizations, industry and businesses, government, academia, and non-governmental organizations.[3]

Wellbeing Workshop Community Tour (2025): We conducted a community tour to all Nunavik communities, as well as Inuit in Chisasibi, to explore the concept of wellbeing with Nunavimmiut.[4] We invited Nunavimmiut to share their knowledge, experience, and perspectives on marine planning in the Nunavik Marine Region.

[1] Nunavik Marine Region Planning Commission. 2024. Marine Planning Strategy: Targeted Survey 2024 for Local Experts from Nunavik Communities.
[2] Nunavik Marine Region Planning Commission. 2025. Public Marine Planning Strategy Report.
[3] Nunavik Marine Region Planning Commission. 2025. Organization Marine Planning Strategy Report.
[4] Nunavik Marine Region Planning Commission. 2025. Wellbeing Workshops with Nunavimmiut Report.

Available online at https://nmrpc.ca.

WELLBEING WORKSHOPS

The objective of the NILCA is to encourage self-reliance and ensure the cultural and social wellbeing of Nunavik Inuit (NILCA 23.1.1(b)). Marine planning in the Nunavik Marine Region is one tool under the NILCA to contribute to this objective. Specifically, the NILCA requires that marine planning in the Nunavik Marine Region protect and promote the wellbeing of people and communities in the Nunavik Marine Region with special attention to Inuit and Inuit Owned Lands (NILCA 6.2.1(b)).

With the understanding that Nunavimmiut and Nunavik Inuit are best positioned to define wellbeing and how it can be protected and promoted, we held workshops between January and June 2025, to explore wellbeing with all Nunavik communities, as well as Inuit in Chisasibi (Table 1). During the workshops, we worked with participants to explore what makes Nunavik Inuit feel comfortable, happy, and healthy. We also explored challenges in the Nunavik Marine Region that are reducing wellbeing and opportunities with the potential to increase it. Our goal was to explore what the marine planning process in the Nunavik Marine Region should work to protect and how it can promote wellbeing.

The NMRPC held all workshops in person for one day with the exceptions of Kuujjuaq and Chisasibi. In Kuujjuaq, we held an additional meeting with the local Anguvigait on a separate day. In Chisasibi, we held the workshop online for one evening due to flight scheduling and mechanical issues.

In total, 311 people participated in the workshops. Sixty percent (60%) of participants were female and 40% were male. Tasiujaq had the highest participation with 39 community members, while Akulivik had the lowest number at 9. Different factors influenced attendance, including:

- other events and priorities, such as a federal election and a search and rescue operation for a missing person in Akulivik on the day of the workshop,
- whether a workshop took place between January to April (greater attendance) or in May or June when the weather was nice for being on the land (lower attendance),
- whether a workshop was during the week (greater attendance) or on a weekend (lower attendance), and
- the degree of involvement in, and promotion of, the workshop by the local Northern Village, Anguvigait, and radio station.

Table 1: Dates of 2025 Wellbeing Workshops.

Community	2025 Wellbeing Workshop Date
Kuujjuaraapik	January 15
Umiujaq	January 17
Kangiqsualujjuaq	February 5
Kangirsuk	February 7
Aupaluk	February 9
Tasiujaq	February 11
Kangiqsujuaq	March 2
Quaqtaq	March 4
Kuujjuaq	March 22 (Community), May 5 (Anguvigait)
Inukjuak	April 24
Puvirnituq	April 26
Akulivik	April 28
Ivujivik	May 9
Salluit	May 12
Chisasibi	May 31 (Due to airplane mechanical issues, this workshop was held virtually with the Inuit living in Chisasibi)



Participants ranged in age from 10 to 85 years, with those aged 30 to 50 years being the best represented age group.

To encourage participation, we shared information about the workshops in advance of the sessions through social media, recorded and live radio announcements on regional and local FM stations, as well as emails and phone calls to local Northern Villages, Anguvigait, and Land Holding Corporation offices. On arrival in the communities, we visited the offices to further share information about the NMRPC, marine planning, and the workshops. Where possible, we went on the radio again to confirm we had arrived and share workshop details.

To make the meetings accessible and interesting to community members, we invited participants to drop in during the day at a time that worked well for them. An interpreter was available to allow participants to engage in their language of choice and all materials were in shared in Inuktitut and English. We provided snacks and meals as well as thank you gifts and entry into a cash draw to incentivize attendance and participation. As needed, we gave rides to and from meeting spaces.

During each in-person workshop, we set up the room with three stations to provide a welcoming, informative, and engaging space. The first station was a welcome table where we greeted participants and shared a short video about the NMRPC, NILCA, and Nunavik Marine Region.

At the second station, we provided information about the history and role of the NMRPC and introduced the marine planning process.
At the third station, we focused on listening to Nunavimmiut discuss what wellbeing meant to them in the context of the saltwater and islands of the Nunavik Marine Region.

At the third station, the wellbeing discussions were open, unstructured, and followed the lead of community members (see Appendix 1 for the NMRPC staff discussion guide and Appendix 2 for how the workshops were designed to support culturally appropriate engagement). NMRPC staff and consultants recorded conversations on sticky notes and large maps that covered the coastline and offshore of the local marine area of each community. We did not record conversations verbatim. Instead, we captured summaries of discussions as they unfolded. By marking up the maps and making short notes as the conversation flowed, we were able to confirm with workshop participants that what we recorded captured the intent or spirit of the discussion. We left the marked-up maps on the tables, and we posted the sticky notes on the walls for all to read, which helped promote further discussion.[5]

NMRPC staff and contractors made a total of 1,846 separate notes, which form the basis of this report. In the months following the workshop, we sorted the notes by subject matter and identified multiple perspectives, different opinions, and common themes.

[5] All maps have been digitized and all notes taken are available (upon request) in an Excel file, organized by community.

WELLBEING GRAPHIC

We worked with Fuselight, a company specializing in graphic facilitation, to visually summarize the Wellbeing Workshop discussions (see Figure 3 and Appendix 4). A graphic transforms a message or multiple ideas into a powerful, memorable, and shareable experience, which is consistent with what we heard from Nunavik Inuit, that images are great ways to share information in a summarized way.

While a separation of these challenges and opportunities worked well for a graphical representation of what we heard during the Wellbeing Workshops, for the purposes of this report we have summarized this information by theme (see Figure 4 on page 11).

This approach allowed a balance of perspectives on a given subject as some people may see something as a challenge, while others see the same things as an opportunity, or vice versa. For example, a development project may involve an increase in ship traffic or a perceived risk of environmental degradation, but it could also provide employment and training opportunities to communities. Some opportunities discussed by participants could act to address relevant challenges. Youth programs on the land, for example, could help reduce the loss of language and skills needed to live off the land.

Workshop participants also brought to light many successes, things that have had or are having a positive impact on their wellbeing (see section on Successes). Other notes taken that were not as highly relevant to the marine planning process are documented in the section entitled 'Elements outside of the marine planning process'.



Figure 3: Visual summary of Wellbeing Workshop participants' comments on wellbeing as well as challenges and opportunities affecting wellbeing.

The 10 themes that emerged from the Wellbeing Workshops. The colors of each theme in the figure below correspond to their sections in this report.

- Wellbeing
- Being on the Land
- Hunting, Harvesting, and Fishing
- Climate Change
- Research and Monitoring
- Navigation and Marine Infrastructure
- Sustainable Economic Development
- Protection of the Environment and Wildlife
- Trash and Contamination
- Sharing, Taking Care of Each Other, and Working Together
- Successes
- Elements Outside the Scope of Marine Planning

Figure 4: Color coded themes chart. The themes are indicated top right/left on pages 11-35.

WHAT WE HEARD

Wellbeing

We heard that a range of cultural, social, environmental, and economic elements define the concept of wellbeing for Nunavik Inuit. Of particular importance were having strong family, role models, and respect for elders; hunting, harvesting, and fishing; sharing, taking care of each other, and working together; eating country food; ensuring animals are healthy and the environment is clean; preserving Inuktitut and respecting Inuit knowledge; and being on the ocean and seeing wildlife.

Workshop participants discussed several factors that were influencing Nunavik Inuit wellbeing. Challenges included the high costs of equipment and gas, which were preventing people from spending time on the land, as well as climate change, harm to the environment and wildlife, loss of culture and language, and lack of enforcement around non-Inuit poaching, Inuit overharvesting, and trespassing on Inuit Owned Lands.

Workshop participants stated often that language and culture are foundational to their wellbeing. People spoke about their traditional practices and the importance of sharing them with young people, particularly through hands-on activities. Participants emphasized that Nunavik Inuit are losing the traditions of sharing, helping those who cannot provide for themselves, and respecting elders and the land. Some felt that the current generation is less ethical, more materialistic, less connected to traditional knowledge, and less interested in teamwork.



PHOTO: MALAYA QAUNIRQ-CHAPMAN



At the same time, we heard that there are opportunities in the Nunavik Marine Region that have the potential to increase wellbeing. These included culturally appropriate development and jobs, increased access to the saltwater and islands, protection of the environment, on-the-land programs for youth, and Nunavik Inuit empowerment and leadership. Similarly, there was agreement that marine planning in the Nunavik Marine Region would present opportunities for environmental protection, Inuit empowerment, and employment of Nunavik Inuit in culturally appropriate jobs.

Impact of Government and Others on Inuit

Workshop participants described government policies and events in the past that continue to have profound impacts today. These impacts are important to be able to fully understand the perspectives if Nunavik Inuit; notably:

- The loss of Nunavik sled dogs in the 1950s and 60s led to the loss of Inuit ability to travel and hunt, leaving some aggrieved and angry.
- The relocation of children for schooling separated families. Parents who moved to be near their children went hungry because they didn't know the land and animals in their new location.
- The separation of Nunavik Inuit territory; placement of a traditionally nomadic culture into villages as well as the relocation of families to harsh conditions in the High Arctic.
- Returning to communities after time on the land remains challenging for some and mistrust of government continues.
- Negotiation of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement excluded discussions of mineral deposits and subsurface rights. As a result, the Agreement excludes Nunavik Inuit from controlling and equitably benefiting from mineral resources on their lands. This was not negotiation in good faith.
- Due to a lack of understanding of Inuit culture, animal rights groups have impacted traditional harvesting and the Arctic environment.

Being on the Land

Nunavik Inuit have a long history on the waters and islands of the Nunavik Marine Region. Inuit are a maritime people and were nomadic until being relocated into settled communities less than 100 years ago. If you walk the shore or visit the islands in the Nunavik Marine Region, you will find that Inuit have been there. Their culture and language remain firmly rooted in their collective history.

The connections with family and community continue to be forged and strengthened through spending time on the land, islands and waters, among a diversity of wildlife (a list of plants and animals mentioned by participants can be found in Appendix 3). Time on the land for Inuit today includes many activities such as dog sledding, kayaking, rock climbing, camping, boating, picnics, and swimming. People also spend time collecting items to make jewelry and simply enjoying the scenery of the saltwater and islands, breathing fresh air, and being on the ocean and seeing wildlife.

Preserving Language and Knowledge

Inuktitut is best preserved by being on the land because words and concepts are lost when traditional activities are discontinued.

We heard that:

- Elders are aging or passing on, and their knowledge is being lost. Fewer teachers remain to share on-the-land skills for how to hunt, fish, and butcher as well as clean skins, sew, and prepare food.
- There is a loss of Inuit knowledge as people purchase food through inter community trade instead of harvesting and preparing it themselves.
- Due to lack of knowledge and skills, some people accidentally injure animals instead of successfully killing them.
- While current practices may have changed over time, there is still knowledge from the past. For example, beluga meat was cooked outside, wrapped in seal skin, and buried for use in winter, while duck eggs were harvested from cliffs using ropes made from walrus skin.
- An important step for restoring Inuit values and supporting the transfer of traditional knowledge and language is fostering time on the land for communities, including youth and elders. Several participants expressed that they are open to sharing their knowledge and skills.



Valued Cultural Sites

Participants at our workshops emphasized that all islands hold cultural significance; however, several islands inside and outside of the Nunavik Marine Region were highlighted, including the Sleeper, Belcher, Sugluk, Mansel, Akpatok, Gyrfalcon, and Saeglorsaok Islands. Past famine and cannibalism on Akpatok Island hold a distinct place in Nunavik Marine Region history.

We heard that:

- The islands and coastline of the region contain extensive cultural historic sites with Inuit artifacts and spiritual importance.
- Valued cultural sites described include traditional seasonal camps, gravesites, hunting and harvesting grounds, fishing grounds, sites for processing meat, food caches, trading locations, soapstone quarries, and seasonal family congregation sites.
- Cairns and markings for navigation are valued.
- Traditional camps are where families lived, children were born, and individuals died and were buried. Many Inuit still alive have birthrights on the islands, and stone toys and sod houses along with other artifacts can be found on islands in the Nunavik Marine Region.
- The protection of culturally important sites is required.
- Culturally valued items taken in the past should be returned to Nunavimmiut.
- European and Inuit history became entwined over time. As a result, cultural sites and artifacts from after contact with Europeans are also of interest, such as listening stations established during the Cold War and WWII artifacts that have washed up on the coast.
- Families historically moved between seasonal camps, and they would often meet. Celebrations would take place, and, over time, accordions became part of the festivities.



PHOTO: MICHELLE VALBERG

Benefits of Time on the Land

Wellbeing Workshop participants shared their feelings of excitement when wildlife is spotted during a hunt, joy when picking clams and mussels at low tide, and pride when climbing steep cliffs to collect eggs or bringing home a beluga to share with grateful elders.

- The land is medicine and provides healing.
- The land brings peacefulness and a sense of freedom, allowing stress to vanish and creating space to change and grow.
- Spending time outdoors with family, friends, and community members is especially valued.
- Visiting past family camps, seeing youth feel natural on the land, maintaining strong family structure and role models, and connecting with ancestors on the land create a sense of happiness and harmony.
- Having on-the-land skills, such as knowing how to hunt or build a cabin, contributes to wellbeing as it allows people to provide for themselves as well as others.



Supporting Access to the Saltwater and Islands

Many people spoke about the challenges impacting Nunavimmiut's access to the saltwater and islands, particularly the costs of equipment and gas. For those with limited income, the purchase of a boat and motor, snowmachine, or ATV (Honda) is prohibitive. While those with jobs may have the funds to purchase equipment, the trade-off is that they then have limited time to spend on the land. Many people also depend on those who have the means (e.g. for gas or a boat) for access to country food which puts more pressure on them.

Many workshop participants spoke to the importance of programs and initiatives that aim to increase access to the saltwater and islands in the Nunavik Marine Region.

We heard that:

- Provide on-the-land opportunities, such as programs and camps, for youth and others to gain traditional knowledge and practice Inuit culture and values. Activities could include hunting and harvesting, gun safety, butchering, land surveying and wayfinding, water and ice safety, general camping and survival skills, and cabin building, as well as learning Inuktitut, Inuit history, the importance of supporting the community, and respecting the land and animals.
- Provide community events to promote wellness and knowledge sharing.
- Use existing community boats for not only hunting but also for taxiing community members to campsites. When community boats are unavailable, purchase community equipment for hunting as well as recreational use by families, including boats, ATVs (Hondas), and snowmachines.
- Create accessible and welcoming spaces for fixing equipment.
- Construct camps for communities to visit together to support intergenerational activities and cultural revitalization.
- Charter airplanes to bring elders to traditional camps on the islands.

Hunting, Harvesting, and Fishing

During the workshops, we heard that hunting, harvesting, fishing and sharing country food are core to Inuit wellbeing. Nunavik Inuit are on the land year-round with each season presenting new opportunities, from ice fishing to beluga harvesting. In addition to providing country food, traditional wildlife management practices have long fueled traditional subsistence hunting, harvesting, and fishing economies.

Respect for the Environment

Inuit are the longstanding stewards of the land and waters within the Nunavik Marine Region. Traditionally, they have ensured that animals are healthy and that the environment is clean and many Nunavimmiut continue in that role today.

We heard that:

- No amount of money justifies impacts on the environment.
- Respecting the environment and wildlife includes keeping campsites and hunting grounds clean, harvesting only what is needed, using all of a harvested animal, and keeping ecosystems intact.
- Inuit protect their self-sufficiency by protecting the environment.
- A sense of peace is experienced when Inuit, animals, and the environment are healthy and safe.

Harvesting Areas

Wellbeing Workshop participants in every community identified several key hunting and harvesting locations, see below.

We heard that:

- Inuit are still finding new locations to harvest country food, and all islands have value for hunting, harvesting, and fishing; however, several locations were discussed, see below.
- The culture is changing, and people are more hesitant to include others in their hunts and to share harvesting hotspots.
- Few Chisasibi Inuit visit islands in the Nunavik Marine Region because Chisasibi has a road system. It is easier to access hunting and fishing grounds on the mainland by car than it is to access islands by boat.
- Food caches located along the coast would be opened in the fall and food would be taken inland to eat during the colder months.

Harvesting grounds highlighted by Nunavimmiut

- Akpatok Island for eggs, polar bears, lettuce-like plants, walrus, mussels, birds, caribou, and harp and bearded seals.
- Angngiit for geoducks, berries, beluga, and fish.
- Deception Bay for crowberries, lingonberries, and blueberries.
- Diana Bay for fish, seals, and whales.
- Digges Island for berries and murre eggs.
- Eider Islands for general hunting.
- Ivujivik waters for beluga.
- Kings Island.
- Mansel Island for beluga, polar bears, Arctic tern eggs and down, and Arctic char.
- Moosehead Island for egg picking.
- Nottingham Island for walrus (there is also interest in introducing caribou here).
- Neptune and Arctic Islands for gull egg picking.
- Ottawa Islands for Arctic char fishing.
- Quaqtaq waters for fish, walrus, polar bear, and beluga.
- Salisbury Island for walrus.
- Situunniit for crabs, starfish, sea urchins, mussels, blackberries, and fish.
- Sugluk Island for fish, beluga, sculpins, geoducks, and clams.
- Sugluk lnlet for seaweed, mussels, and clams.
- Ulukjuvik for fish, mussels, and rhubarb-like plants.

Country Food

Country food is a staple in many Nunavik Inuit households. In addition to providing sustenance, it provides medicine, a source of joy, and a cause for celebration. Harvesting practices and country foods vary by community, depending on what is available as well as what is preferred.

We heard that:

- Support is needed for transporting meat to home communities.
- Eating country food together is healthy for the mind and body and it makes Inuit feel strong and content.
- There is poaching by non-Inuit and overharvesting by Inuit.
- In the past, Inuit went hungry and finding food was a reward. Food insecurity remains to this day, and Inuit continue to survive from hunting and harvesting.
- Marine mammals and polar bears are the focus of Ungava coast communities, while geese have a particular importance for Chisasibi Inuit. In Salluit, fewer gull and duck eggs are collected now because many prefer murre eggs.
- The safety of country food is a concern as new diseases, such as trichinella, are appearing, the taste of country food is changing, and development activities are expanding.
- Inuit in Chisasibi are unique compared to other Nunavik Inuit because they do not have access to a lot of country food and currently travel to other communities for hunting and harvesting and rarely hunt beluga or seal.

Traditional Economy and Trade

The traditional Inuit economy was a subsistence economy and a social system entirely adapted to the harsh Arctic environment, fundamentally based on hunting, harvesting, and communal sharing for the sole purpose of group survival. It was not driven by monetary profit, market prices, or the accumulation of individual wealth, but by collective custom and necessity. Crucially, the traditional economy today requires money from the wage economy to function. Hunting is not "free."

We heard that:

- Intercommunity trade should be regulated to address the issues of overharvesting, incomplete butchering, and lack of traditional sharing.
- Harvesters can sell country food through intercommunity trade.
- It could work well to charge fees for Inuit who travel to hunt and profit from selling meat through intercommunity trade.
- Community members should be allowed to hunt close to their communities before hunting is opened to others.
- Funding should be provided to hunters who are required to travel for harvesting.
- Chisasibi Inuit often need to purchase Arctic char from northern communities.
- The trade of country food between communities has enabled local hunters to benefit those throughout Nunavik.
- Hunter Support programs supply income to hunters by purchasing harvested country food and, in some cases, by paying wages.
- A range of supports are provided through Hunter Support programs as well as the Anguvigaq and local Anguvigait, Makivvik, Northern Villages, and the Kativik Regional Government.
- Cree have income security because they are paid to go on the land every month, whereas the Inuit only have Hunter Support.
- Support programs provide infrastructure and resources such as hunting equipment, boats and wharves, charter flights to hunting grounds, gas subsidies, and community freezers to support the storing and redistribution of country food.



- Traditional activities that currently provide income include collecting and cleaning eiderdown as well as creating art such as carvings and jewelry.
- To expand opportunities around eiderdown, it could be helpful to have down cleaning machines in all communities.
- Seaweed harvesting has provided income in the past and may be worth exploring again.
- Potential new opportunities include the creation and marketing of wool from muskox, smoking Arctic char to add value prior to sales, and hiring community members to clean up waste on the land.
- The creation of programs for waste cleanup would have a range of advantages, including providing local jobs, protecting the environment, and acting in accordance with Inuit values.
- For Inuit living in Chisasibi there is interest in either establishing seal hunting to trade for Arctic char or traveling north for Arctic char fishing.

Harvest Management

During the Wellbeing Workshops, people explained how Inuit had no external restrictions from government on harvesting in the past and worked together to manage resources and share harvests. There is a sense that modern harvest management practices are providing some people with more and others with less, leading to disagreements over quotas and disputes within and between communities surrounding conservation and harvest management. Modern management has contributed to the erosion of Inuit culture, language and food security.

We heard that:

- The management of marine mammals is an area of significant concern. Conditions around how many, where, and when animals may be harvested require hunters to leave their communities for food.
- Conflicts can arise as hunters arrive on the traditional hunting grounds of others and compete for catch, such as in the waters surrounding Long Island near Kuujjuaraapik and the waters surrounding Quaqtaq. Management decisions by government have negative impacts on how harvest is traditionally managed.

- When hunters are successful and larger numbers of animals are killed, there is concern around overharvesting and wasted meat.
- Expensive flights to hunting grounds can lead to the butchering of only highly valued animal parts with the remainder being left for locals to clean up.
- Unpredictable flight schedules leave meat spoiling in airports.
- When fewer animals are harvested due to government quotas that limit catch, it results in food scarcity and a loss of income for hunters who profit through the sale of meat to community Hunter Support programs or through intercommunity trade.
- Hunters undertake long and sometimes unsafe trips to hunting grounds where they experience unfamiliar conditions including currents and tides, windy and wet weather, lack of safe drinking water.
- When hunters travel for harvesting and compete with one another for catch, fewer community members can be involved, and butchering is often rushed.
- Fewer harvesters mean less knowledge and language around animal parts and butchering is transferred to younger generations and less time is available to practice traditions surrounding harvesting, such as the customary sharing of the beluga flipper.
- Some harvesters overhunt to gain additional income from selling meat. Others shoot animals and leave them instead of taking the time for butchering and sharing with elders.
- Hunters are faced with increasingly unpredictable weather and animal behavior, reduced abundance of fish and wildlife, increasing travel distances, and rising costs for gas.
- New challenges to traditional harvest management are posed by introduced species, such as muskox near Kuujjuaraapik, and shifting ranges of others. Some islands have wolves now.
- Marine mammal management should recognize that population numbers are not only impacted by Inuit harvesting but also by climate change and predation by other animals.



Climate Change

Climate change presents a significant challenge throughout the Nunavik Marine Region. Changes have been observed in ice, seasons and weather, water levels and temperatures, population sizes of animals, as well as animal behavior and health. It was widely recognized by participants that there is a need to address climate change in the Nunavik Marine Region.

Planning has a role to play in supporting the response of Inuit to climate change, a key element of which must involve accounting for short-term and long-term changes in the movement and dynamics of wildlife.

Ice

Changes in sea ice are connected to the warming climate. Impacts include loss of equipment and life as travellers fall through thin ice, altered travel routes requiring more time and fuel, delayed or limited access to fishing grounds, cancellation of events such as dogsled races, and shifts in equipment, such as using a canoe instead of a snowmachine.

We heard that:

- Earlier and faster ice melt is impacting wildlife.
- Sea ice is freezing later and melting earlier and faster.
- In some areas, the ice is thinner or is failing to form at all.
- The floe edge, where landfast sea ice meets the open water and wildlife congregates, is shifting and there are fewer icebergs.
- Mussels and clams are being crushed during early ice break-up.
- Changing locations of seal births on the floe edge are making hunting more challenging.
- Foxes are getting stuck in communities.
- Polar bears are of particular concern. Bears are being stranded on islands where they starve or consume large amounts of seabirds and eggs, resulting in impacts on Inuit down picking and harvesting. In some cases, the bears are pushed onto the mainland where they become nuisances in communities.

Seasonal Weather Patterns

Climate change impacts are causing shifts in the environment and wildlife that hunters must respond to. Weather patterns are shifting.

We heard that:

- Unpredictable weather is impacting travel, hunting, and ultimately, food security.
- Despite sometimes needing to travel farther, hunters are continuing to provide food for their communities.
- Winter isn't as cold, and summers are longer and hotter.
- In the warmer months, stormy conditions with rough water and bigger swells are becoming more common and winds now quickly pick up and change direction.
- In the colder months, freezing drizzle and stronger blizzards are more frequent.
- Unpredictable conditions in combination with lower tides and shallower waters in the warmer months, or unstable ice in the colder months, are impacting travel, hunting, and food security.
- Rocks are crumbling and cracking due to increased freeze/thaw events and warmer weather. The unstable landscape is leading to landslides that result in debris in rivers, which eventually enters the ocean and causes coastal navigation and safety issues.
- Snow removal is a big concern; so much more snow and no place to put it and then a big problem with water when it all melts.


PHOTO: NELLIE AMIDLAK

Water

People that attended the workshops agreed that water levels are dropping in the Nunavik Marine Region as well as in rivers and lakes on the mainland, which presents challenges for both humans and animals.

We heard that:

- Lower tides are presenting a navigation hazard, particularly around islands.
- Limited access to freshwater on the islands is impacting camping.
- On the mainland, lower and warmer waters are reducing Arctic char egg survival, spawning success, and migration to the ocean.
- Reduced water levels in rivers used for community sealift and fuel delivery are increasing the potential for accidents and spills impacting coastal waters.
- There is concern around future water quality in Tasiujaq and saltwater entering the water supply.

Distribution and Abundance of Wildlife

Workshop participants reported the arrival of new species and changes in the distribution and abundance of certain existing species. Workshop participants also noted that new interactions between species are emerging with the changes in distribution, and that animal behavior and health within existing populations are shifting in response to climate change.

We heard that:

- Animals increasing in abundance within Nunavik include polar bears, black bears, muskoxen, wolves, lynx, fishers, martens, whooping cranes, swans, puffins, Greenland sharks, pufferfish, whitefish, pickerel, trout, Atlantic and pink salmon, eels, porpoises, dolphin, orcas, and minke whales.
- New species of bugs are present, including crickets.
- New species of ducks have been observed.
- Geese migration and nesting locations have moved, and birds are arriving earlier in the year.
- There has been an increase in polar bear encounters in the North.
- Polar bears are learning to pick berries from black bears, and the two species are fishing side by side. Both species are consuming seabirds and eggs on the islands, causing reduced population numbers.
- Population control may be needed to address animals affecting Inuit safety and property, such as black bears and polar bears.
- Seals and polar bears are navigating differently.
- Minke and orca whales are causing beluga migration routes to shift as well as scattering seals, possibly causing population declines.
- Local fish populations are experiencing impacts as new marine mammals consume the adults in the ocean and new fish species consume the eggs in rivers.
- Sculpin numbers are lower.
- Fish have less meat.
- The locations of clams, Arctic char, and cod have changed.
- Increased numbers of beavers and extensive growth of willows are causing reduced water levels and blockages in rivers. This is impacting fish numbers, particularly Arctic char that spawn further south.
- More foxes have rabies.
- Seal breeding grounds have changed.
- There is concern that reduced salinity associated with climate change will result in the loss of seal, fish, beluga, and walrus populations.
- There is concern that climate change is contributing to contaminants in the marine environment, impacting animal and Inuit health.
- It is possible that, due to warming waters, new changes will continue to appear. For example, salmon and Arctic char may move further north, while shrimp may go deeper.
- Changes in fish and wildlife are not all bad. Once new species are better understood, they could be hunted and provide food for communities.



Research and Monitoring

Workshop participants from 12 communities expressed interest in research and monitoring covering a broad range of topics. People felt that it was important that research engage Inuit and be conducted transparently, and in a way that respects wildlife.

We heard that:

- Data should be centralized to enable easy access.
- Information collected on the land, including photographs and data, should be shared with communities.
- There is concern that research methods harm wildlife, such as the practices of putting polar bears to sleep and collaring caribou.
- Past research exploited Nunavik Inuit historical sites and there is a need for repatriation. For example, artifacts and skeletons were removed from Diana Bay in the 1970s and should be returned.
- It is challenging for Inuit to voice concerns and work toward solutions due to high turnover in research staff in Nunavik. It would be helpful to have greater consistency in the representation of researchers.



PHOTO: EMMA CAIN

Research Needed

Research and monitoring needs in the Nunavik Marine Region as heard by community:

Community	Research and Monitoring Feedback
Akulivik	• Water quality monitoring. • Research on the impacts of the community dump on the ocean.
Aupaluk	• Water quality monitoring. • Coastal survey. • Impacts of shrimping boats on beluga food and migration. • Mapping of mussel, shrimp, cucumber, and scallop harvest areas. • Research on beluga population numbers (there is concern that current counts are overestimating population sizes).
Chisasibi	• Research on mussels and whether they are safe to eat.
Inukjuak	• Testing of fish and wildlife for contaminants. • Mapping of wildlife migration routes. • Monitoring of wildlife consumption. • Research on sunken ships, including European ships sunk by Inuit in the past. • Research on impacts of fuel spills on ringed seals, including smaller spills by resupply ships. • Research on Arctic tern and guillemot population numbers and health.
Ivujivik	• Research on contamination from the oil spill in the early 2020s. • Testing of wildlife for contaminants, such as hydrocarbons and mercury.
Kangiqsualujjuaq	• Research on climate change impacts, including changes to the locations of clams and mussels. • Water quality monitoring, particularly before and after mining operations begin. • Research on seals, including exploration of declining seal numbers and the potential impacts of mining activities. • Identification of where nomadic families lived.
Kuujjuaq	• Research on the potential connections between increased sediment in Ungava Bay rivers and dams on the mainland. • General monitoring of the state of the environment now so changes in the future can be identified. • Research to understand economic development opportunities in the Nunavik Marine Region.
Kuujjuaraapik	• Research to advance ecotourism.
Puvirnituq	• Research on wildlife and the impacts of dams on mercury levels to ensure country food is safe to eat.
Quaqtaq	• Research on the impacts of noise and sonar in the marine environment.
Tasiujaq	• Research on local fish populations.
Umiujaq	• Research on climate change impacts, including changes to ice, willow growth, and the influence of orcas on seal and beluga populations. • Research on the impacts of dams and salinity at the mouth of the Little Whale River. • Research on the transfer of garbage and contaminants by currents.

Navigation and Marine Infrastructure

As Nunavik communities are only accessible by air, the waters of the Nunavik Marine Region provide a highway system. A variety of challenges and opportunities were discussed during the Wellbeing Workshops related to navigation, emergency response, shipping, and marine infrastructure.

Navigation and Emergency Response

Several factors make navigation in the Nunavik Marine Region challenging.

We heard that:

- The significant range between high and low tides.
- Strong currents that can converge along travel routes.
- Weather that can be severe and change quickly.
- Areas with boulders and eddies.
- Waters that can be shallow and are becoming shallower.

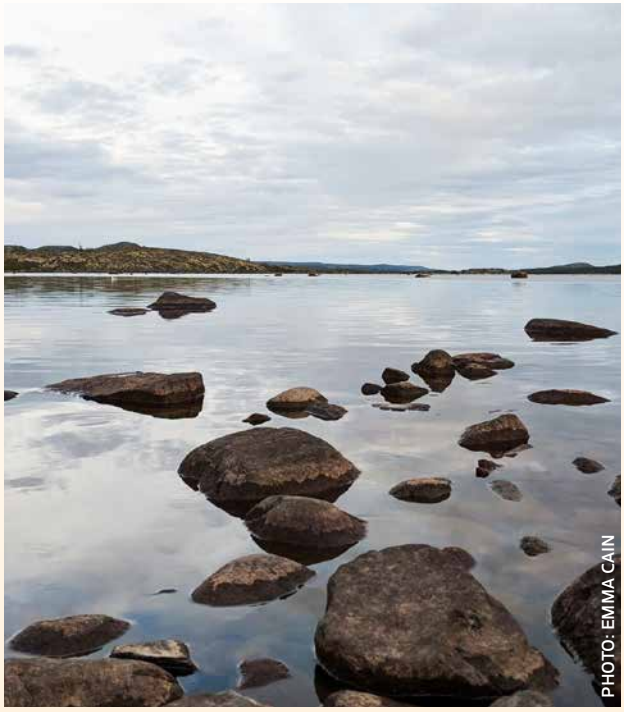


PHOTO: EMMA CAIN

- Navigation tools such as GPS that are not always accurate, especially near islands.
- Some communities have sufficient knowledge and resources for emergency response, while others could benefit from training and improved equipment and infrastructure.
- Tools that could potentially be adapted to better support navigation in the Nunavik Marine Region including the Navionics and SIKU mapping apps.
- Increased navigation information from the Canadian Coast Guard as well as a system for sharing ice conditions would be beneficial.
- While the Nunavik Marine Region currently has standard shipping routes for some operations and aids to navigation in some areas, additional mapping and navigation aids are needed.
- There is interest in the establishment of shipping corridors.
- Unpredictable ice conditions are presenting a significant challenge in the colder months.
- Navigation aids need to be improved in the waters close to communities, hunting grounds, and common commercial and traditional travel routes.
- Navigation challenges lead to accidents, leading to loss of life, damage and loss of expensive equipment, and pollution.
- Some locations lack markers along snowmachine routes.
- Some locations would benefit from emergency shelters and camps near commonly used sites and harvesting areas.
- Marine Guardians throughout the Nunavik Marine Region could support responses to incidents, both to hold those affecting the environment responsible as well as to minimize loss of life and impacts on the environment and wildlife.



Shipping and Marine Infrastructure

Existing infrastructure in the Nunavik Marine Region includes a range of features, such as docks and harbours. People felt that additional marine infrastructure, notably ports and roadways, could benefit both industry and Nunavik communities.

We heard that:

- Shipping is needed in the North, and an international, deep-sea port in Kuujjuaq could create economic opportunity.
- A coastal port could create jobs, support production in the North, and reduce concerns surrounding shipping on the Koksoak River, including potential impacts on fish due to sediment disturbance and potential accidents due to dropping water levels.
- Key drawbacks to a potential deep-sea port include increased marine traffic and resulting environmental impacts.
- Shipping and community resupply result in noise, pollution, trash, physical damage from anchoring, and fuel spills.
- Invasive species may be introduced through ballast water.
- Submarines have been observed in the Nunavik Marine Region both in the past as well as more recently.
- It would be helpful to explore the addition of airstrips on some of the islands as well as new small craft harbours and wharves.
- Locating infrastructure close to communities is ideal, remaining aware of increasingly shallow waters and heightened potential for accidents in some areas.
- Consideration must be given to where community deliveries and refueling take place to ensure that communities are serviced and the environment is protected.
- Rising tides and sea levels are affecting homes in Aupaluk and a seawall may be required.
- Roads and a bridge over the inlet just south of Ivujivik are needed.
- More roads to commonly used areas are needed in Kuujjuaraapik. There is currently a lot of traffic. Road improvements are also needed as people are getting stuck.
- Bridges to cross rivers in the spring and trails to campsites are needed in Umiujaq.
- The road between Umiujaq and Richmond Gulf needs maintenance. It is important because it is a secondary route to return to Umiujaq if the ocean is too rough.
- For improved communication, the antenna on Digges Island should be moved.
- Improved communications infrastructure is needed in Nunavik.

Sustainable Economic Development

Workshop participants across Nunavik were clear that their lifestyle today involves having money and economic stability, but different priorities exist between and within Nunavik communities regarding economic development in the Nunavik Marine Region. What may work in one community, may face opposition in another. Economic growth and development may provide benefits to some and cause harm to others. Many participants voiced concerns about Inuit rights and environmental impacts.

Some voiced concern about increased activity and potential environmental and wildlife impacts and do not want development of any kind, while others shared that Inuit need more economic activity, job opportunities, and financial prosperity.

While workshop participants expressed different perspectives on development in the Nunavik Marine Region, they agreed that any activities that take place must be balanced, culturally appropriate, and respect the environment and wildlife.

Development and Income

We heard that:

- Framing the conversation around "economic sustainability" as opposed to "economic development" may provide common ground.
- Activities should avoid impacts on wildlife and the land should be respected.
- Focus should be placed on communities instead of economic activities.
- Long-term success and not short-term gains should be prioritized because culture is lost when sacrifices are made for immediate benefits.
- Development could relieve the poverty and financial pressures experienced in the North. Nunavik is isolated from the rest of Canada, and its resources are not being used to their full potential.



- Nunavik Inuit should benefit from development fairly and preferably own ventures instead of depending on partnerships with third parties.
- The ideal job is one that provides income as well as feeds the community and offers time on the land.
- Working towards economic sustainability involves recognizing that Inuit should have economic self-sufficiency and that respect for the land is a fundamental priority.
- Supports are needed to help navigate required permits and approvals.
- Start-up funding could advance local economic ventures and foster Inuit autonomy.
- There is interest in developing partnerships with regulatory bodies to foster understanding of existing regulations and to co-develop solutions addressing regulatory gaps. For example, there may be a need for shipping guidelines and corridors in the Nunavik Marine Region as well as minimum elevations for tourist and commercial flights.
- It would be nice to have a road in Aupaluk to access beluga harvesting sites.

Tourism

Some Nunavik communities have tourism operators and others do not. While tourism has appeal and was viewed as a potential source of culturally appropriate employment by some workshop participants, others were opposed. They were of the belief that country food should remain in communities, catch and release practices are harmful, and Inuit culture is a way of life and not a spectacle. The key message was that tourism activities must meet the needs of the communities they operate in.

We heard that:

- Tourists can negatively impact the land and lack cultural sensitivity as well as add harvest pressure and interfere with the activities of Inuit hunters.
- Hospitals in Nunavik lack the capacity to respond to incidents involving large numbers of tourists.
- Non-Inuit tourism can be different from Inuit tourism. Non-Indigenous operations may use more impactful and expensive equipment, such as helicopters, and operate in ways that are less respectful of the environment and Inuit culture.
- There is support for ecotourism operations that respect the land and wildlife, reduce impacts on Inuit harvesting, practice responsibly to avoid accidents, teach traditional ways, and educate others about the Inuit culture and landscape.
- It may work well for tourism to continue or begin in some areas, and in other areas it may be preferable to explore other options.
- The type of operations may vary. For example, muskox sport hunting may be a good fit in one location while non-consumptive activities, such as camping or cultural tours, may work well elsewhere.
- Tourism activities bring challenges, such as, increased vessel traffic as well as boats traveling too close to the shore or airplanes flying too low.

Energy and Mining

Exploration for minerals, oil, and gas receives little support in communities. Regarding alternative energy, some people are open to renewable energy, while others are opposed due to concerns surrounding wildlife impacts.

We heard that:

- Concerns were expressed about mining and traditional energy development because of impacts on the land, water, and air as well as issues around increased ship traffic and icebreaking; making mining and traditional energy development less appealing.
- Existing mining operations on the mainland are impacting the Nunavik Marine Region.
- Wind turbine projects are currently moving ahead in Nunavik with community support and there is interest in additional alternative energy projects.
- Workshop participants noted that the negotiation of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement excluded discussions of mineral deposits and subsurface rights. As a result, the Agreement excludes Nunavik Inuit from controlling and equitably benefiting from mineral resources on their lands.
- Concerns around the impacts from hydroelectric dams included:
    - Relocation of marine mammals and the resulting loss of traditional hunting grounds due to lowered salinities and thicker freshwater layers.
    - Loss of hunted marine mammals that, once successfully killed, sink faster and deeper in relatively thicker freshwater layers making it difficult to recover them.
    - Altered goose migration routes due to increased freshwater flows causing decreased coastal salinities and loss of the eelgrass that geese feed on, resulting in negative impacts on hunting.
    - Reduced spawning success of fish and limited migration back to the ocean due to reduced water levels in some areas.

Fisheries

Shrimp trawling by Inuit organizations is already taking place in the Nunavik Marine Region and Makivvik is exploring additional commercial operations. People are interested in starting local fisheries, such as a sea cucumber fishery in Ungava Bay or a small-scale fishery in partnership with the Cree in Hudson Bay. The introduction of fish hatcheries and aquaculture operations could restore Arctic char populations as well as support food security and economic growth.



PHOTO: ROBBIE NINGIURUVIK

Protection of the Environment and Wildlife

The Nunavik Marine Region has relatively less development pressure than other marine areas in Canada. Its environment and wildlife are comparatively pristine and healthy.

Ecosystems and Valued Components

We heard that:

- Interventions can prevent the environment from remaining "intact". Interventions can include development with harmful impacts, as well as protection efforts that either prevent the environment from changing or that allow for new activities with impacts on the environment and wildlife.
- Participants made it clear that Inuit are part of the environment and harvesting is understood to be part of the natural system. Environmental protection should keep the Nunavik Marine Region intact, meaning that natural processes are allowed to unfold unaffected by interventions.
- The entire region is valued and deserving of protection. Nested within the region are areas requiring particular care, including wildlife migration routes, breeding and birthing grounds, and areas where the water remains open year-round.
- Successful environmental protection prevents significant impacts on the environment and wildlife, including Inuit.
- Issues with fish and wildlife are understood to be connected to several challenges, including reduced food availability and changes in diet; altered behavior such as herd and pod scattering, egg-dropping from cliffs, and shifting migration routes; sickness and deformities; reduced size; and decreased abundance or loss of local populations.

Protection and Protected Areas

We heard that:

- Non-Indigenous protected areas sometimes allow for non-consumptive tourism, such as wildlife observation or camping, while prohibiting harvesting and hunting. In such scenarios, the use of helicopters or boats for tourism activities may harm the pristine areas that people are trying to explore, while the exclusion of harvesting may impact local communities without leading to significant conservation benefits. Protected areas need to include hunting and fishing grounds and allow for harvesting, thereby protecting the land as well as Inuit knowledge, traditions, and language associated with it.
- Highlighting specific animals for protection or marking areas for conservation on a map may be inappropriate because it wrongly implies that the loss or damage of other habitats and animals is acceptable.
- It is unclear how existing management practices are serving to protect the environment and wildlife in the Nunavik Marine Region, including whether they are sufficient.



PHOTO: FELIX WILLIE

Trash and Contamination

Workshop participants voiced significant concern surrounding contamination and waste and associated impacts on the health of the environment and country food, leading to fears around the safety of eating country food. Sources of contamination and waste discussed by Nunavimmiut included marine spills, mineral exploration, dams, shipping, community sewage outfall, northern village dumps, military operations and old campsites. Workshop participants highlighted that Inuit and Cree are also contributing to the problem as trash, human waste, and carcasses are being left on the land and islands. Workshop participants voiced that they want to be part of the solution and shared their ideas for how to move forward.

What we heard:

- Cleanup efforts could be supported and educational campaigns around trash could be provided to stop the issue of littering at the source.
- Bullet casings from hunting are left on the ground and camps are not being cleaned up.
- Trash is thrown from ships.
- Fishing nets are washing up on shore.
- Fishers could be required to include identification tags on nets for accountability.
- Community events could be organized for clean-ups on the coast and islands.
- There is a need to regulate the construction of cabins and camps because the cabins can disturb animals, such as geese, and often result in litter on the land.
- Contaminants from the mainland travel into the into the marine environment.
- DEW lines have left seeping barrels, soup cans, and rusting oil drums on the land.
- Dams are contributing to contaminants, which are then transported by rivers to the ocean.

- Northern village dumps are of particular concern because they are often near the coast, resulting in uncontained trash blowing to the ocean and runoff seeping into the saltwater.
- Ocean currents and rivers are bringing marine and mainland pollution to remote locations within the Nunavik Marine Region.
- Smoke from burning trash has traveled to the marine environment.
- Bilge water can release oil and other waste into the marine environment.
- Sunken vessels as well as waste from past activities of the Hudson Bay Company are on the seafloor.
- Green growth has been observed on the coast near a local dump.
- With an increase in ship traffic, comes an elevated risk of accidents and spills.
- Different agencies could come together to address cross-jurisdictional impacts as well as create emergency spill plans.
- There is a transport of pollutants, such as mercury, from dams into the coastal environment, contaminating country food such as mussels.
- Activities that contribute to contamination and waste are often concentrated near communities. In some locations, harvesting can no longer take place close to home, requiring travel for healthy country food.
- It would be beneficial to have programs to help families travel to areas further from communities where there is less contamination.



PHOTO: NELLIE AMIDLAK

Sharing, Taking Care of Each Other, and Working Together

Many organizations have activities, interests, or responsibilities in the Nunavik Marine Region, including government agencies, academic institutions, industry, and nongovernmental organizations. During the workshops, we heard that what is said by Inuit should be recognized by others such as government agencies and researchers. Decisions impacting Inuit should be made with Inuit in ways that fit Inuit culture and values.

> *"We don't want to wake up in the morning and wonder what is going to happen next."*
>
> ELDER, NOAH INUKPAK
> UMIUJAQ

Communication and Engagement

Many organizations conduct outreach and engagement within communities through gatherings that bring people together; however, many are discussing similar or connected issues. Participants described repeating the same feedback to different groups and regularly receiving little to no information on how their expertise was applied or how things have changed as a result. One participant said, "It is exhausting."

We heard that:

- Engagement fatigue is a significant challenge.
- Organizations need to collaborate on their engagement efforts to reduce engagement fatigue.
- Cooperation between management agencies across jurisdictions is needed.
- More communication is needed with Nunavik Inuit by proponents about proposed activities and development.
- Organizations should speak with all community members, including Cree and Inuit.
- Government and other permitting agencies should establish clear lines of communication with communities. Inuit are on the land and can identify and flag illegal activities that might otherwise go unreported.
- Inuit would like to learn more about activities and decision-making impacting their lands and waters to support informed engagement.
- Topics of interest requiring greater communication included past response efforts to marine incidents; the current state of the environment in areas affected by marine incidents as well as marine protected areas; requirements around shipping activities and corridors; and environmental screening for mining and protections for communities.
- Nunavik Inuit are often uncertain about who to contact regarding questions or concerns. For example, information is needed on how to report new species and activities that may be taking place without proper government authorizations or Inuit consent. Such activities include prospecting, dumping or burning of waste, tourism operations, fishing by non-Inuit, and overharvesting by Inuit.
- Many of the agencies operating in the Nunavik Marine Region are unknown to communities or their roles and responsibilities are unclear.
- A map of all the agencies operating in the Nunavik Marine Region and their responsibilities as well as a directory of contacts is needed.
- Animal rights organizations could benefit from learning about Inuit, including practices around country food and the importance of food security.



Interjurisdictional Cooperation

Inuit as well as authorities from different jurisdictions need to coordinate to effectively manage the islands and salt waters. As one workshop participant eloquently stated, people, wildlife, and currents all freely move in and out of the Nunavik Marine Region while lakes and rivers on the mainland flow to the ocean.

We heard that:

- Organizations should share information with all potentially impacted communities as well as gather feedback, regardless of whether proposed operations are based inside or outside of the Nunavik Marine Region.
- Nunavik Inuit should be informed of who is using the Nunavik Marine Region as well as what is being done and when and for how long it will occur.
- Increased communication and coordination can foster improved understanding, positive action, and the prevention or resolution of conflict.

Nunavik Inuit Empowerment and Leadership

It was voiced that loss of control has excluded Inuit from decisions affecting their lives and has had far reaching impacts on Inuit culture, the environment, and animals. Participants shared ideas about how Inuit could regain control of decisions impacting Nunavik Inuit lands and waters.

What we heard:

- Inuit governance is the most important issue that has not yet been resolved.
- Section 35 of the Constitution Act should be put into practice.[6]
- Inuit need to do a better job of taking care of Inuit lands and waters.
- There is a need for improved inclusion of Inuit knowledge and Inuit decision-makers regarding wildlife and habitat management.
- Youth should be mentored to speak up and to not feel intimidated by government or complacent with how things are.
- There should be increased representation of Nunavik Inuit on boards of organizations with interests or activities in the Nunavik Marine Region.
- More community members should be involved with Makivvik.
- Increased Nunavik Inuit surveillance in the Nunavik Marine Region would be beneficial.
- Inuit have not been taking control and have been guided into accepting things they do not approve of.
- Nunavik Inuit should manage saltwater sport fishing licences, culturally important areas, and tourism activities.
- There must be direct engagement by Nunavik Inuit with shipping companies regarding shipping corridors and impacts.
- Past harms must be addressed so that Inuit are able to move forward.

[6] Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 recognizes and affirms the existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the *First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada*. It is a foundational part of Canadian law, establishing a constitutional basis for Indigenous rights that cannot be extinguished by legislation, though specific rights are subject to legal interpretation by the courts. Constitution Act, 1982, being Schedule B to the Canada Act 1982 (UK), 1982, c 11.

Successes

Wellbeing Workshop participants identified a variety of efforts already taking place in the Nunavik Marine Region and beyond that are making a positive difference. These efforts relate to research and monitoring, environmental protection and enforcement, Inuit culture and language, skills training and employment, access to the land, collaboration, resources and technology, waste clean-up, navigation and emergency response, as well as Inuit empowerment and leadership. The NMRPC will explore these efforts further with the goal of learning from them and possibly building on existing successes where applicable.

Below is what we heard related to activities and practices that are already taking place.

Culture and Heritage

- Sewing workshops in Aupaluk.
- Past canoe races in Kuujjuaq.
- Fishing competitions in Salluit.
- Workshops on traditional activities in Kuujjuaraapik.
- Culture camps in Whapmagoostui are undertaken by Cree, but Inuit noted they really like that they do this.
- Programs by Misarvik that take elders on the land.
- Summer camps by the Kangiqsualujjuaq Anguvigait to pass on culture.
- Nunavik Sivunitsavut program in Montreal.
- Efforts by Makivvik and the Kativik Regional Government to respond to climate change.
- Advocacy by Makivvik for Inuit rights.
- Housing of Inuktitut language maps by Avataq.

Being on the Land

- Snowmachine and Honda (ATV) rentals in Kuujjuaq.
- A Kangiqsualujjuaq Anguvigait initiative that built cabins and provides funds to families to enable them to spend time on the land, despite lack of resources and issues with polar bears, while also warding off poachers.
- Annual gun safety license program in Aupaluk that enables people to legally own firearms.

Research and Monitoring

- Fish monitoring in Aupaluk in response to decreased population numbers.
- Research on mussels by the Chisasibi Anguvigait funded by the Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board.
- Makivvik-led goose banding and research on sea life near Kangirsuk.
- Research on the impacts of orca on seal and beluga populations near Quaqtaq.
- Tracking of ship movements in the Hudson Strait.
- Work by Atanniuvik to manage research activities in Nunavik.
- Use of Inuit knowledge in reports, such as work by a PhD student from Laval University, and the sharing of reports with communities.
- SIKU app, which provides a useful tool for tracking environmental conditions and safe navigation.
- Apps used for tracking ice, wind, and other conditions for travel.

Navigation and Marine Infrastructure

- Equipment pulled behind snowmachines in Nunavut to test local ice thickness.
- Provision of spill kits and emergency response kits in Nunavik.

Sustainable Economic Development

- The Canadian Armed Forces' Rangers program, including Junior Rangers, allows people to work in the North. Positions with the Rangers are ideal as they provide time on the land as well as outdoor skills training.
- Increased opportunities for training in Nunavik, including carpentry.

Protection of the Environment and Wildlife

- An agreement between Salluit and Kangiqsujuaq that allows shipping only after March to protect seals.
- Removal of beaver dams and willows by the Umiujaq Anguvigait to support fish spawning and migration.
- Blasting by the Nayumivik Land Holding Corporation in Kuujjuaq to help fish access a lake.
- Placement of game wardens in all communities except Aupaluk.
- Creation of shipping corridors along the Nunatsiavut coast and St. Lawrence that reduce impacts on the environment and wildlife.



PHOTO: EMMA CAIN

Trash and Contaminations

- Past clean-ups of campsites by the Northern Village of Inukjuak.
- Cree Nation Government clean-up of old campground and abandoned exploration camps with the support of Cree Tallymen and Inuit for locating sites.

Sharing, Taking Care of Each Other, and Working Together

- Makivvik-hosted meetings with the Eeyou Marine Region Impact Review Board, Nunavik Marine Region Impact Review Board, and Nunavut Impact Review Board to foster conversation.
- Partnership between the Nunavik and Nunavut Inuit to explore protection of the King George and Sleeper Islands.
- Regular meetings of the Qiniqtiq Land Holding Corporation, local Hunter Support, and local Anguvigait in Kangiqsualujjuaq to manage lands and wildlife together.
- A Parks Harmonization Committee that brings together representatives from Inukjuak, Kuujjuaraapik, Whapmagoostui, and Umiujaq.
- Inuit ownership of 80% of the islands in the Nunavik Marine Region through the NILCA.
- Work by the Inuit Circumpolar Council and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami on shipping and Arctic sovereignty.
- Modern treaties, like the NILCA, and funding have been established to address harms, to address the ongoing need for capacity building, empowerment and culturally relevant healing and reconciliation with Nunavik Inuit.



PHOTO: MICHELLE VALBERG

Elements Outside the Scope of Marine Planning

Marine planning in the Nunavik Marine Region will address social, cultural, environmental, and economic objectives. As the process is relatively broad, most of the feedback provided through the Wellbeing Workshops is relevant. However, several comments provided are best actioned outside of the marine planning process. These pieces are listed below and will be shared with appropriate agencies for their consideration and possible action.

Compensation and Decision-Making

- Compensation for the impacts of marine mammal management on Inuit culture is needed.
- There are disputes between communities regarding use of Category 2 lands.
- There is not a lot of communication around decision-making in communities.
- Funding and staffing are a challenge for the Nunavik Wildlife Board; it needs more capacity to support engagement with Nunavik Inuit.
- More culture days are needed where employers provide paid days off for employees to spend time on the land.

Roads and Changing Landscapes

- The permafrost is thawing and Salluit may be at risk of mudslides and changing landscapes.
- Roads or highways connecting Nunavik communities are needed.

Drinking Water

- Ivujivik needs a clean source of water, and it would be nice to have a greenhouse.

Inuktitut

- Kativik Ilisarniliriniq is currently in Ungava dialect mostly and it could work to have an office in each region.
- Inuktitut learning should take place beyond the early grades and organizations should support their employees in learning basic words in Inuktitut.
- It would work well to connect the three language zones in Hudson Bay, Hudson Strait, and Ungava Bay. The two Nunavik coasts can't always communicate because of the two different dialects. For example, students in foster care move between coasts and it can be challenging for them.

Addictions

- There are too many drugs. People use them because their hearts are broken.
- Drinking is a problem in the housing provided for medical care down south.
- There is concern that there is drinking on the land because people have access to guns and vehicles. There is a possibility of violence.

Inland Parks

- It would be good to have a national park on the mainland south of Aupaluk.
- Tursujaq National Park seemed like an opportunity, but starting an ecotourism business is hard and expensive.
- There are concerns with the Tursujaq Provincial Park, including impacts of activities in the park on animal behavior and Inuit camping and hunting, the need for Inuit to pay to access the park, and benefits from the park for Inuit not coming together as planned, such as employment.
- There is interest in providing Cree names on maps and sharing Cree history within Nunavik provincial parks.

NEXT STEPS

The NMRPC will use the knowledge, experience, and perspectives provided during the Wellbeing Workshops, along with feedback received through other engagement activities, to develop the draft Marine Planning Strategy. The draft strategy will be shared with planning partners, including Nunavimmiut, to support the co-development of a comprehensive, relevant, and achievable Marine Planning Strategy for marine planning in the Nunavik Marine Region. We will provide updates as the process moves forward to foster transparency and ongoing engagement. The information provided during the Wellbeing Workshops will serve as the foundation for future discussions.

APPENDIX 1

Wellbeing Discussion Guide for staff and consultants

Wellbeing is the state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy.

Context

We want to learn about Nunavimmiut perspectives on wellbeing because the NILCA states that the purpose of marine planning is to protect and promote the existing and future wellbeing of those persons resident in or using of the Nunavik Marine Region.

We want Nunavimmiut to define what it is we should do to protect and promote wellbeing. We want to avoid defining wellbeing for Nunavimmiut and setting targets for the marine planning process that don't reflect Nunavimmiut priorities.

The information provided by Nunavimmiut will help us:

1. Map priority areas where managing uses to avoid conflicts would be helpful.
2. Take action to support activities that enhance Nunavimmiut wellbeing, such as limiting development or activities in certain areas or supporting discussions and partnerships between different groups.

Welcome and Invitation to Discuss Wellbeing (Draft Script)

Hi, thank you for joining us today. We're here to talk about wellbeing. I'll tell you why that is and give a bit of background and then I would love to hear your thoughts.

As you might have just learned at the previous station, the Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement outlines what we as an organization are required to do. Under the Agreement, our job is to do marine planning with the purpose of protecting the wellbeing of Nunavimmiut.

That means we've done our job well if we've taken actions related to the saltwater and islands that have helped Nunavimmiut feel comfortable, happy, and healthy.

My question for you is what supports your wellbeing in relation to the saltwater and islands. In other words, what makes you feel comfortable, healthy, or happy related to the saltwater and islands?

Wait and let people think about their responses. Encourage them to write their answers out on sticky notes and share locations on the maps. Once people start talking about wellbeing, dig into their responses to learn more. Explore where they do various activities and what it is about the activities that really makes them feel comfortable, healthy, or happy. The discussion may touch on mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing.

Prompting Questions

If people are hesitant to share, try asking the following:

- *Examples of things that could make people feel comfortable, healthy, or happy related to the saltwater and islands could include hunting or trapping, eating good food, time spent on the land, earning a living, or time spent with friends or family. Are any of these things that you enjoy?*

To continue the conversation and to learn about opportunities, challenges, and priorities in the Nunavik Marine Region, try asking the following:

- *What is happening, or could happen, that stops you from doing things on the saltwater and islands?*
- *What could help fix the things that are problems – what actions should be taken? Who should take these actions?*
- *Do you have ideas for things that you'd like to see on the saltwater and islands that aren't happening yet? Who could help make them happen?*

APPENDIX 2

Workshop Guiding Principles

The following steps were taken to support the delivery of culturally appropriate Wellbeing Workshops in line with guidance adopted from the Inuit Circumpolar Council's 2024 Marine Facilitation Lab Series:

Provide hands on activities
We shared large maps that people could draw on as well as sticky notes that people could sketch out their ideas and feedback on and move around to help display their ideas. In several communities, we provided art tables and blank pages where people could quietly draw or write-out their thoughts.

Use plain language
Speaking notes with prompting questions in plain language were shared with staff in advance of engagement. In addition, quotes from communities from previous visits were displayed on posters and a large banner to demonstrate ongoing engagement and to share past learning.

Do your work in Inuit languages
All materials were translated, and an interpreter was always available.

Value Inuit knowledge
The format of the sessions focused on our team listening to communities and hearing about their experiences (see Appendix 4). We avoided bringing in "experts" from outside to tell communities about the Nunavik Marine Region and did not focus the sessions on a presentation by our team.

Recognize Elders as scientists / Recognize and value people's authority and contributions
We highlighted that we were in communities to listen to the expertise of communities. We shared the following quote Sheila Watt-Cloutier's "Right to be Cold": Science is a body of knowledge, and a way of knowing based on rigorous observation. By this definition, the hunters who criss-cross the ice and snow and embody centuries of observation are scientists. When they describe what is happening to their landscape, the world needs to listen.

Trust in Indigenous knowledge
We shared with communities that their knowledge would be applied to the Marine Planning Strategy, ultimately guiding the marine planning process.

Let Inuit craft the questions
We started discussions with a broad question regarding wellbeing and invited communities to define next steps (see Appendix 5).

Avoid going in with the hopes you will get particular answers
We posed a simple question around wellbeing and let the conversation go from there.

Suspend the questionnaire and make space for genuine sharing
We focused on facilitating discussion and sharing between community members and between community members and NMRPC staff/ Commissioners.

Bring a holistic approach and avoid separating ideas too artificially or creating silos/artificial compartmentalization (e.g. marine/shipping/ ocean uses/wildlife).
Recognize that there is no specialization to Indigenous knowledge like there is in western science (i.e. indigenous knowledge spans across broad concepts), provide flexibility for conversations and don't hem people in, and create a space where people can focus on what matters to them instead of focusing on what is in or out of scope

We framed discussions under the broad concept of "wellbeing" and provided space for communities to discuss any topics they felt were relevant (i.e. we did not have stations specific to shipping, tourism, fishing, etc., only one broad station related to the concept of wellbeing).

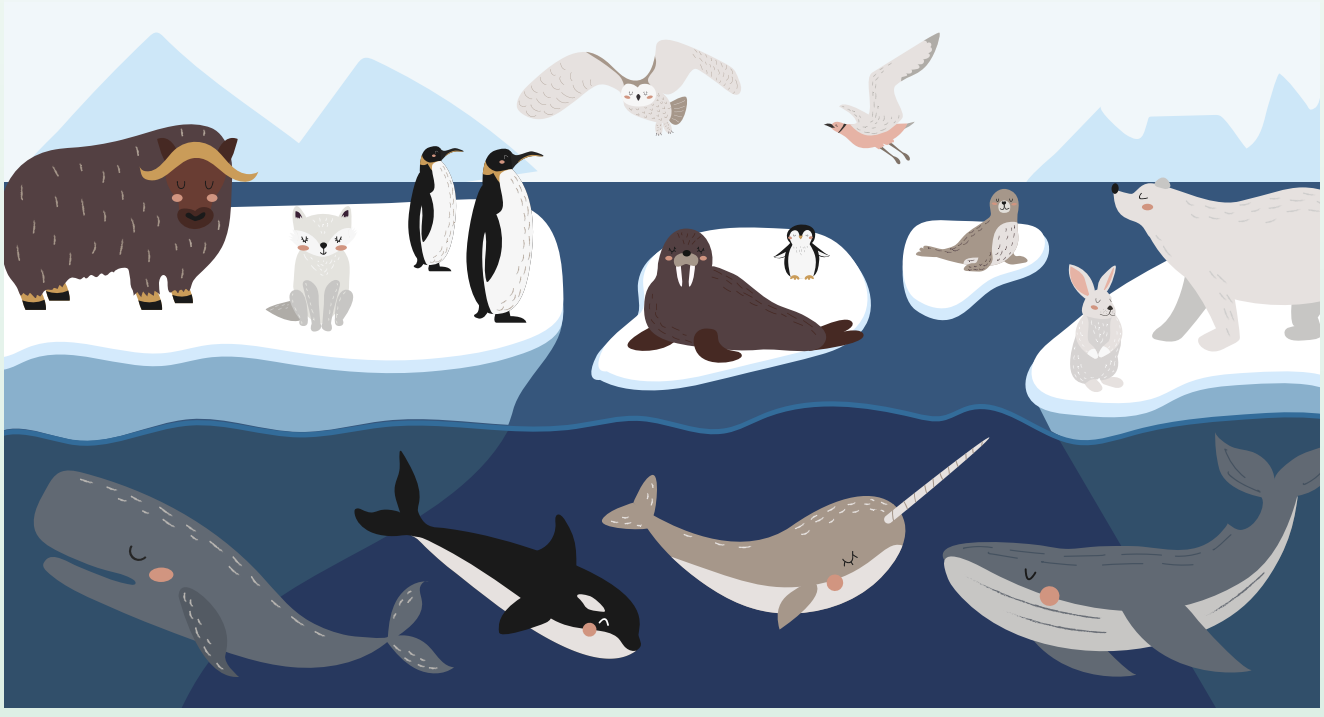
Give a purpose, say why people are coming together and how the discussions will be used.
We shared information on who we are, what we are doing, and how input shared during the Wellbeing Workshops would influence marine planning in the Nunavik Marine Region.

APPENDIX 3

Plants and Animals Mentioned

A list of the plants and animals discussed by participants:

- Arctic char
- Arctic terns
- Barnacles
- Belugas
- Blackberries
- Blueberries
- Caribou
- Clams
- Cloudberries
- Cod
- Crabs
- Crowberries
- Eel
- Eider ducks, including down and eggs
- Falcons
- Foxes
- Geese
- Geoducks
- Gulls, including down and eggs
- Labrador tea
- Lingonberries
- Murres, including down and eggs
- Muskoxen
- Mussels
- Narwhals
- Orcas
- Penguins [animals that resemble penguins – possible translation issue]
- Polar bears
- Porpoises
- Rhubarb-like plant
- Seaweed
- Scallops
- Sculpins
- Sea anemones
- Sea cucumber
- Sea snails
- Sea urchins
- Seal (bearded, ringed, harp)
- Starfish
- Stingrays [animals that resemble stingrays – possible translation issue]
- Walruses
- Wolves



APPENDIX 4

Wellbeing in Nunavik Graphic



Nunavik Marine Region Planning Commission
Commission d'aménagement de la région marine du Nunavik

QUESTIONS? Contact the NMRPC or visit us online.

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