

BACKGROUND ON THE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

In 2016 the Federal Government placed a moratorium on new oil and gas activities in all offshore Canadian Arctic waters. This decision will be reviewed again in 2021.

The Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) initiated a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) on oil and gas activities in Baffin Bay and Davis Strait in response to the moratorium. The purpose of the SEA is to understand the associated risks, benefits, and management strategies of offshore oil and gas activities in Baffin Bay and Davis Strait. The SEA report and associated recommendations will inform the Federal Government's decision in 2021.

QIA'S ROLE IN THE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Since 2017, QIA has been a part of the working group for the SEA study. Our primary focus has been working with Inuit to collect Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit (traditional knowledge), which will inform the final recommendations of the SEA.



OUR RESEARCH AND INFORMATION COLLECTION WAS GUIDED BY THREE QUESTIONS:

- 1 What will the effects be on marine mammals by oil and gas activities when they are in their wintering areas, during migration and in coastal areas during the summer?
- 2 How will Inuit be affected by the potential impacts to marine mammals from oil and gas activity, and will there be a change in access and sharing of country food?
- 3 What would the potential benefits and opportunities be from this industry? Can they be compared to the potential impacts?

To support answering these questions, QIA formed six IQ committees, one with Grise Fiord, Arctic Bay, Pond Inlet, Clyde River, Qikiqtarjuaq, and Pangnirtung. These committees detailed food sovereignty, harvesting, and country food sharing surveys.

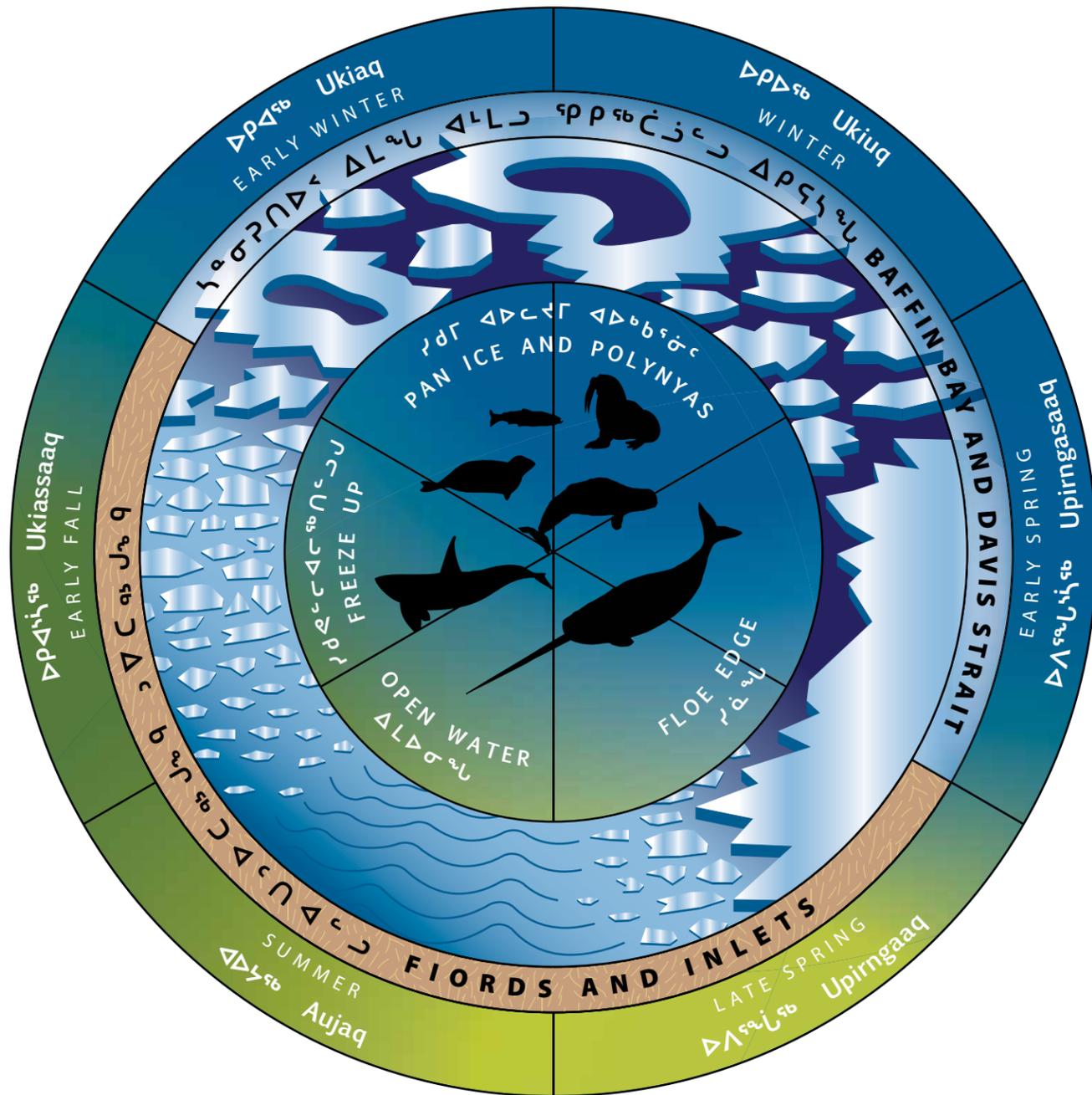
QIA worked with the committees to collect local knowledge of surrounding areas and develop seasonal calendars of wildlife activity in the marine environment.

Through these committees, and through independent research over the last two years, QIA has gathered information related to the effects of oil and gas in Baffin Bay and Davis Strait focused in four areas:

- Wildlife and wildlife habitat
- Inuit cultural changes
- Inuit food sovereignty
- Benefits and opportunities for Inuit



MARINE SPECIES SEASONAL CALENDAR



QIA'S RECOMMENDATIONS TO NUNAVUT IMPACT REVIEW BOARD

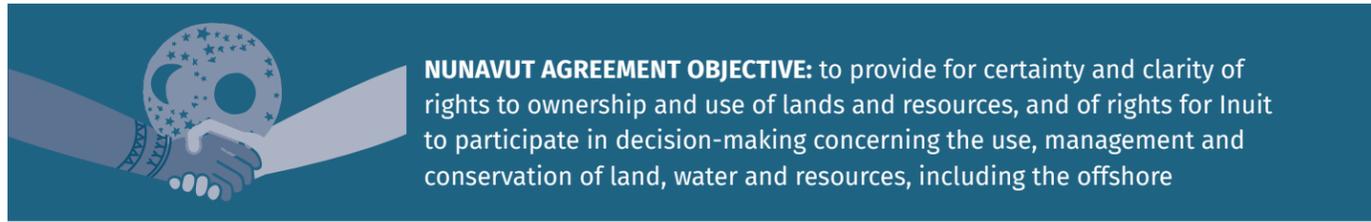
Informed through IQ, QIA is submitting to NIRB 80 recommendations. The recommendations are presented under each of the four focus areas.

Furthermore, the recommendations are separated into those that should be completed prior to lifting the moratorium, and those that should be included in any licensing process if the moratorium is lifted.

The following section summarizes the IQ and research findings for each of the four focus areas. The highlights of the QIA recommendations for each area are then presented.



WILDLIFE AND WILDLIFE HABITAT



Marine mammals winter in Baffin Bay and Davis Strait because of the food rich cold water corals, polynyas and the pan ice areas with open water. In the late fall, winter, and early spring, most marine mammals are located further offshore. This is the same location where oil and gas exploration and development activities would occur. During the summer, when seismic activities occur, most marine mammals move closer to the coast.

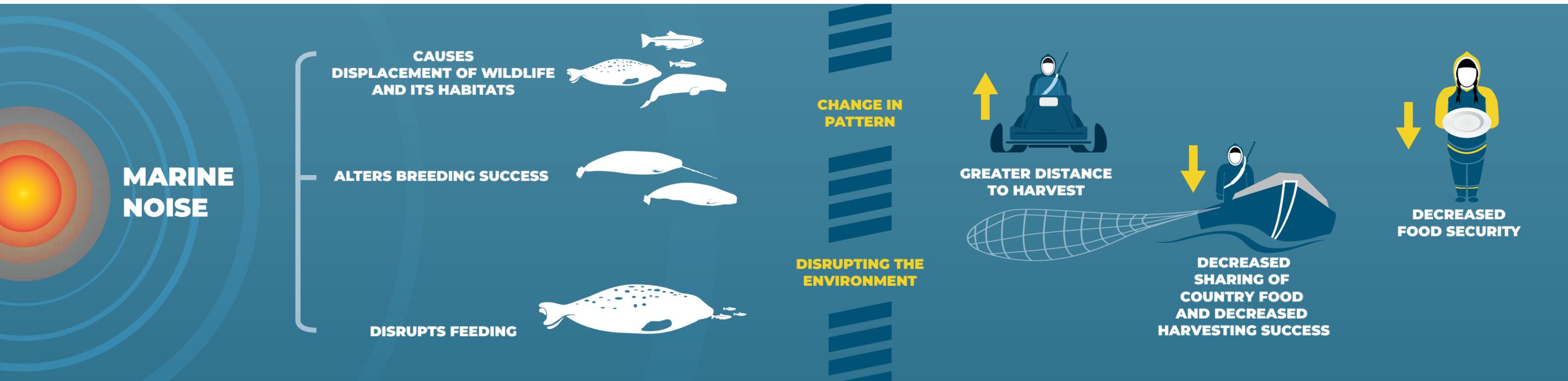
Based on IQ, it is expected that marine mammals:

- would move away from oil and gas activities because of their sensitivity to noise
- may be affected by loss of prey species
- may find it harder to hunt
- may change where they go in the summer in response to oil and gas activities

The Arctic is warming at a rate of almost twice the global average. Warming waters and diminishing sea ice are impacting marine mammals' patterns. QIA considers IQ and climate change research as critical components to understanding potential impacts on wildlife and wildlife habitat.

WILDLIFE AND WILDLIFE HABITAT RECOMMENDATION HIGHLIGHTS

- **Identification of “no-go” zones**
Existing and potential new areas in need of protection must be identified prior to the moratorium being lifted. This is necessary to avoid adverse impacts on sensitive wildlife habitat, migration zones, and high value Inuit harvesting areas.
- **Identification of seasonal restrictions**
Prior to the moratorium being lifted, seasonal restrictions should be identified that are tied to the seasonal calendar of specific Inuit communities. These should be included in the conditions for approval for seismic, exploration, production or shipping activities in Baffin Bay and Davis Strait. The dates and conditions of approval should be confirmed by the standing IQ Advisory Committee
- **Establish a dedicated oil and gas research institute**
The institute must be established prior to the moratorium being lifted. The research conducted should focus on wildlife and wildlife habitat, IQ and scientific baseline data collection. Research must be inclusive of winter data and offshore habitat such as polynyas. Research should include the ways in which arctic oil and gas development may impact marine wildlife and habitat, with a focus on the effects of noise and light on marine mammals. Climate change needs to be an emphasis of this research.
- **Establish a standing oil and gas IQ Advisory Committee**
The committee should be formed prior to the moratorium being lifted. The committee mandate will be to ensure an IQ focus on research and decision-making in relation to oil and gas development. This committee should remain in place if the moratorium is lifted.



INUIT CULTURAL CHANGES



Country food is central to Inuit culture and relies on the transfer of traditional knowledge related to harvesting, sharing, preparing and consuming country food.

Harvesting activities realize many benefits:

- **Empowers Inuit by providing opportunities to locally source and process culturally appropriate nutritious food**
- **Transmits Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit**
- **Promotes knowledge, skills and language transfer**
- **Reinvigorates Inuit leadership in Nunavut's wildlife management regiment**
- **Safeguards Inuit cultural traditions and values related to harvesting, food preparation and sharing**

Inuit culture values sharing. QIA research has shown Inuit harvesters not only feed their own families with their catch, but also feed their extended community and others in need.

Qikiqtani Inuit expressed concerns about changes in their access to marine animals resulting from oil and gas activities.

INUIT CULTURAL CHANGES RECOMMENDATION HIGHLIGHTS

- **Undertake harvesting research**
The last extensive harvester research study was completed over 20 years ago. Research must be undertaken that is focused on the marine environment prior to the moratorium being lifted.
- **Support for cultural on-the-land and mentorship programs**
Inuit knowledge is transmitted from elders to youth when out on the land. Programming and mentorship must support this knowledge transmission in relation to harvesting, harvesting skills and food preparation. These programs should be implemented when the moratorium has been lifted.

INUIT FOOD SOVEREIGNTY



Over 70 per cent of Nunavut Inuit are food insecure. Food insecurity is when you go hungry or can't get nutritious and culturally appropriate food. Food insecurity is a serious public health concern because of its close ties to a person's well-being.

Food sovereignty for Inuit means the right to nutritious locally-sourced food. In Nunavut this translates to country food. The QIA food sharing survey found that 98 per cent of Inuit households consume marine-based country foods, and 35 per cent consume marine-based country food at least every other day. Harvesters play an integral role in Inuit food sovereignty. They provide country food that feeds communities, reinvigorates Inuit cultural practices and stimulates local economies.

QIA considers that access to county food could be decreased by the effects of oil and gas development on wildlife and wildlife habitat.

INUIT FOOD SOVEREIGNTY RECOMMENDATION HIGHLIGHTS

- **Conduct research into harvesting and sharing of country food**
Baseline research on country food harvesting and sharing must be gathered prior to lifting the moratorium. This research must continue if the moratorium is lifted throughout any oil and gas development activities.
- **Ensure appropriate wildlife compensation provisions**
A framework for wildlife compensation must be developed after the moratorium is lifted that considers changes in access to country food. This framework should consider all aspects of Inuit food sovereignty.



BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR INUIT

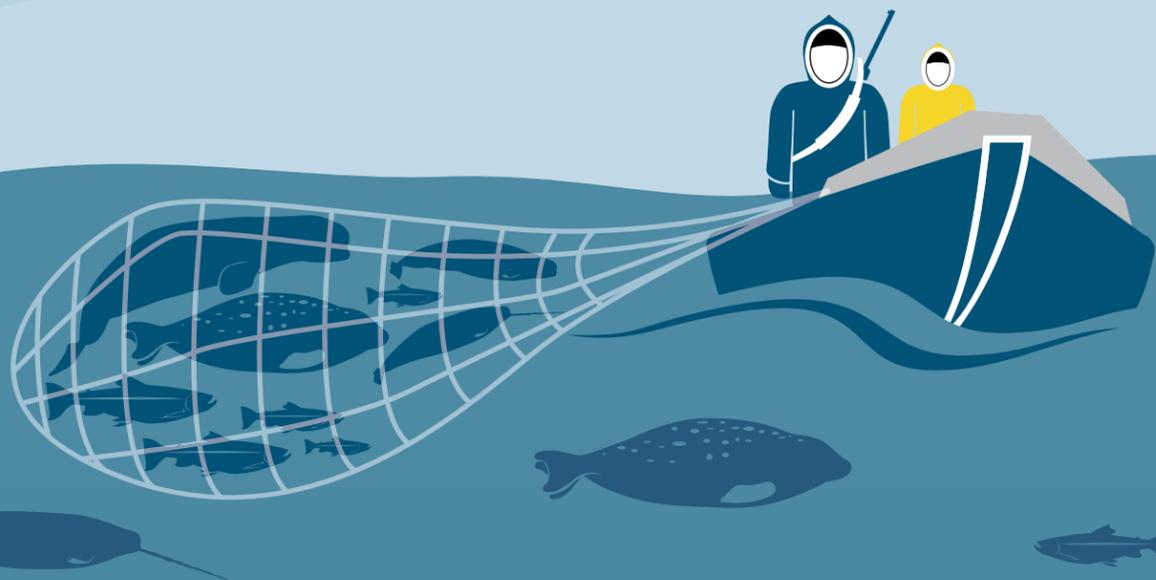


NUNAVUT AGREEMENT OBJECTIVE: to provide Inuit with financial compensation and means of participating in economic opportunities

Any future oil and gas activities will likely be located outside the Nunavut Settlement Area. Currently, it is unclear what structures are in place to ensure Inuit benefit from impacts of offshore development.

In evaluating the offshore oil and gas activities in Baffin Bay and Davis Strait is critical that Inuit rights enshrined in the Nunavut Agreement are preserved in the decision-making.

- Establish an appropriate impact and benefits regime**
 Projects outside, but adjacent to, the Nunavut Settlement Area provide less certainty to Inuit about the protection of their rights and possible benefits from oil and gas development, despite the potential impacts. The regime must be determined prior to the moratorium being lifted.
- Complete an alternatives assessment**
 The alternative assessment should include potential benefits from alternative development options (i.e. fisheries, tourism, wind, solar) in comparison to benefits from oil and gas. This assessment must inform the decision of lifting the moratorium.
- Complete research into the skills needed to participate in oil and gas activities**
 This research should be conducted prior to lifting the moratorium and include potential transferable skills from mining, tourism, and fisheries sectors.
- Complete a study to determine what infrastructure is needed**
 Prior to lifting the moratorium, requirements for onshore and offshore infrastructure and how the infrastructure could benefit Nunavut must be determined.



SUMMARY

The QIA recommendations will inform the NIRB Strategic Environmental Assessment report that will be submitted to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada.

QIA's research and recommendations were guided by the IQ advisors and the Nunavut Agreement. Qikiqtani Inuit are experiencing the impacts of climate change on our environment. QIA considers it critical that any evaluation of oil and gas activities in Baffin Bay and Davis Strait is through a climate change lens.



