

**Mobilizing Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit in Narwhal Management through Community Empowerment:  
A Case Study in Naujaat, Nunavut  
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The findings of this research address the second core FishWIKS questions: **Can varied IKSs be used to improve the effectiveness of fisheries governance at national, regional, and local scales in Canada and internationally?**

**A brief introduction on the specific issue being addressed**

In June 2015, Erin spent five weeks in Naujaat conducting field research on the role of Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit (IQ) in decision-making within the current narwhal management system in Nunavut as part of the Fish-WIKS partnership project. This research included ten in-person interviews with a range of individuals from Naujaat, a public radio presentation, and was licensed by the Nunavut Research Institute with the approval of Arviq Hunters and Trappers Association.

**Why it was important to address this issue**

Prior to 1971, Inuit had autonomy over narwhal harvesting activities; in 1971 the federal government introduced a quota-based management system. Although the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA) mandates that wildlife in Nunavut are co-managed, DFO has the final decision-making power for management. The research aimed to identify if and how a narwhal management regime which reflects Inuit priorities and enables Inuit direction of the management process could be established in Nunavut, through a case study approach. The research attempted to characterize the relationship between the current narwhal management system and IQ at a local level and identify corresponding policy challenges and opportunities.

**What are the key findings from the research?**

To address this issue, the research pursued two major questions aimed at understanding “*How has the existing management system influenced the use of IQ within the community of Naujaat?*” and “*What would be the ideal relationship between the management system and IQ?*” The in-person interviews addressed three themes: memories and IQ relating to narwhal harvesting, changes in the use of IQ and narwhal harvesting practices over time, and ongoing issues and options for the future.

Key research findings relating to the two major questions include:

*How has the existing management system influenced the use of IQ within the community of Naujaat?*

- Hunting activities are more rushed because hunters must meet their needs before the community’s quota is used up for the season
- Increased competition between hunters
- The traditional pace and pattern of winter preparation activities is altered
- Hunters pursue narwhals rather than waiting for narwhal to approach shore
- Opportunities for knowledge transfer are limited

*What would be the ideal relationship between the management system and IQ?*

- IQ is meant to be expressed through Inuktitut, Inuktitut should be integrated into decision-making process
- Poor communication across all levels of management impedes the ability of Inuit stakeholders to identify opportunities for mobilizing IQ in decision-making
- Government has an important role to play in regulating harvesting now that hunters are accustomed to a quota system
- Community-based management could be a way to enable mobilization of IQ in management by empowering local level actors, such as Hunters and Trappers Organizations

**What are some of the main policy Implications arising from the findings**

Four main recommendations for improvements to the existing narwhal management system came out of the research:

- Improve communication between high-level management and community stakeholders;
- Promote knowledge-sharing (e.g. include communities in aerial surveys) between managers and community-level stakeholders;
- Create equitable knowledge-sharing partnerships;
- Situate more decision-making power with local management authorities (Regional Wildlife and local Hunter and Trapper Organizations).

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