**Terms of Reference**

**Joint Working Group Meeting of the**

**NAMMCO Scientific Committee Working Group on the Population Status**

**of Narwhal and Beluga in the North Atlantic**

 **and the**

**Canada/Greenland Joint Commission on Conservation and**

**Management of Narwhal and Beluga Scientific Working Group**

*Online October 26-30, 2020*

Background

Narwhal and Beluga are a key Arctic species in Canada and Greenland. Both species are a traditional Inuit food source and continue to supply subsistence hunts by Inuit in both countries. The sustainable domestic management of these hunts requires comprehensive and updated science advice and a documented management approach. Domestic management measures must also conform to requirements of international agreements, such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

The *Joint Commission on the Conservation and Management of Narwhal and Beluga* was formed in 1989 via a Memorandum of Understanding between Fisheries & Oceans Canada, and the Ministry of Fisheries and Industry of the Greenland Home Rule Government. The role of the *Joint Commission on the Conservation and Management of Narwhal and Beluga* is to make recommendations to the Parties with respect to research, conservation and management of shared stocks of narwhal and beluga. A Scientific Working Group was also established to provide scientific advice as requested by the Joint Commission and to coordinate the exchange of data and assessment of research results.

The Scientific Working Group of the *Joint Commission on the Conservation and Management of Narwhal and Beluga* jointly with the *North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission Scientific Committee Working Group on the Population Status of Narwhal and Beluga in the North Atlantic* are known collectively as the Joint Working Group (JWG). The JWG will meet 26-30 October, 2020, Online. The meeting will be held to discuss procedures for the allocation of the animals taken in hunts to the summer stocks.

The **Terms of Reference** of this JWG online meeting are to:

• review information on abundance, distribution, movements and harvest locations of narwhal and beluga;

• update and review the narwhal allocation model to assign harvested animals to individual summer stocks;

A future in person meeting of the JWG will be held when travel restrictions have been lifted with **Terms of Reference** to include:

• review the newest abundance estimate for East Greenland narwhal;

• assess the impacts of climate change on narwhal and beluga movements, distribution, population dynamics, habitat and hunt methods, timing and location;

• revise advice models to incorporate climate change impacts where information is available and identify additional information requirements.