

Minimum Population Estimates for Walrus in the Penny Strait/Lancaster Sound and West Jones Sound Stocks, Canada

Robert E. A. Stewart¹, Erik W. Born² and J. Blair Dunn¹

1. *Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Freshwater Institute, 501 University Crescent, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N6, Canada*

2. *Greenland Institute of Natural Resources, P.O. Box 570, DK-3900 Nuuk, Greenland*

Abstract

Aerial surveys to estimate the minimum number of walrus alive in the Penny Strait-Lancaster Sound (PS-LS) and West Jones Sound (WJS) stocks began in 1998. The best recent estimates derive from surveys in 2007, 2008 and 2009. Previous surveys were used to assess methods. The maximum count for PS-LS was obtained in 2009 when 22 haulouts accounted for 557 walrus. The maximum count of WJS walrus (401) was obtained in 2008 at 8 of the 9 known haulouts. These counts may be extrapolated to account for animals at sea, resulting in estimates of approximately 2200 walrus in PS-LS and 1600 in WJS. These estimates should, however, be viewed with caution until better data on the frequency, duration, and independence of hauling behaviour are available for these regions and seasons.