

# **Holman Char Fishing Plan**



***2004-2006***



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This plan was prepared by the Holman Char Working Group on behalf of the Holman Hunters and Trappers Committee (HTC). Financial support was provided by the Fisheries Joint Management Committee (FJMC) and Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO).

### **Goals of the Fishing Plan**

1. To preserve and protect char stocks and habitats in Holman area lakes and rivers.
2. To manage and conserve Holman area char stocks to ensure subsistence needs of Holman residents are met for today and the future.
3. To encourage co-operation among all users to ensure sound management and use of all Holman area char stocks.



## **BACKGROUND TO THE PLAN**

The need for a char plan in the Holman area was originally identified as early as 1987 when residents of Holman expressed concern over a decline in the size and abundance of char captured in the Kuujjua River system. By 1993 the Holman HTC closed Fish Lake for a period of three years due to their concern that the area was being over-fished. During 1992-1993, DFO weir counts and tagging of char with their subsequent recapture by Holman residents revealed that at least 50% of the coastal char harvest was of Kuujjua River origin. Therefore, reducing harvests in one area (e.g., Fish Lake) was not going to accomplish the objective of stock rebuilding and protection of the Kuujjua char if they were over harvested at an alternative location (e.g., along the coast). Hence, a larger plan was needed to ensure that all stocks within the area were effectively managed so that no single stock was over-harvested.

From 1987 to 1992 DFO carried out weir counts in Holman area rivers and tagged char. Weir counts provided estimates as to the number of fish using each river system while tag returns provided an estimate of the size of harvests from each of these stocks. Weir counts suggested large char stocks in some rivers although in some cases, none of the fish tagged at these weirs were ever recaptured.

The Holman Char Working Group held its' first meeting in July 1996 following discussions and presentations of the results of weir, tagging and monitoring studies within the area. An open house held during this same period was attended by 66 adults. After being closed for three years, the Working Group, comprised of Holman, DFO and FJMC representatives, and the general HTC membership agreed to a limited re-opening of Fish Lake allowing a harvest of 25 char per household.

From 1997 to 2000 Working Group meetings have been held, and followed up each time with a community open house. During the 2000 meeting, data up to and including 1999 was reviewed. The highlight of this meeting was a discussion and subsequent decision to increase the per household take of char from Fish Lake from 25 to 30 fish. Considering that Fish Lake had been voluntarily closed from 1993-1995 and a household take had been put in place, an increase in the allowable safe harvest suggested that slight improvements in the fishery were becoming apparent.

DFO and FJMC attended the HTC Annual General Meeting in May 2001 to provide updates on monitoring studies and harvest results from 2000. A public meeting was attended by 32 adults who gave approval to proceed with the printing of this plan.

In 2004 the Working Group, FJMC and Fisheries & Oceans Canada Staff once again met and reviewed the old plan. This is the current plan that the Working Group, FJMC and Fisheries and Oceans agreed upon and presented to the support of the community at the public meeting.

## About Holman Area Char

A large number of arctic char (*Salvelinus alpinus*) stocks inhabit the Holman area. While some of these stocks are fished on a regular basis, others are fished only occasionally. The fishing locations that are covered by the Plan include: the Holman coast, Kuujjua River system (which includes Red Belly Lake), Kuuk River system, Kagloryuak River, Kagluk River and the Naloagyok River.

The Holman coast can be broadly delineated as that area from Coast Point in the west to the area inside Safety Channel east of the community. The primary area fished on the Kuujjua River system is Fish Lake, but it also includes all other lakes tributary to the system. The Kuuk River, including Tahiryok Lake, and the Kagloryuak River are not fished on a regular basis and several years may pass between people fishing these areas. Similarly, both the Kagluk and Naloagyok rivers on the south side of Prince Albert Sound receive very limited fishing pressure.

While a large number of smaller rivers and lakes within the Holman area also support char stocks (many of them landlocked), it is only the above named locations that are covered by the Plan. Smaller inland lakes are generally harvested at low levels, often on a rotating basis, and thus are not in need of a detailed plan and long-term monitoring.

## Historic Harvest Levels

Information from the Inuvialuit Harvest Study suggests that, on average, approximately 6,099 char (range 3,514-8,585) were harvested annually by Holman residents from the period 1988-1992. While not all of these fish were harvested in areas covered by the Plan, it points out the level of char harvest required by Holman residents and the need for a plan that will ensure that these requirements are met.



## Recommended Safe Harvest Levels

The following harvest levels have been determined through extensive consultation with the Working Group and the HTC membership during public meetings. Pre-Plan and Plan era harvests are shown in Table 1. In the case of the Kuujjua River and Fish Lake, the safe harvest levels are also based on the results of annual monitoring projects that collect biological information (e.g., sex and maturity, length, weight, age) from harvested char. Safe harvest levels for all locations are, in part, based on the result of weir counts, the rate of tag returns and the annual fishing harvest. In all cases, subsistence use takes priority over commercial use.

## The Coast

The total harvest of char from the coast in the summer of 1999 was 4,181. This harvest is lower than the summers of 1992 through 1997 (average = 5,254), but higher than in 1998 when 3,714 char were reported harvested. In 2000, an estimated 3,828 char were harvested along the coast. In 2001 there were 3,469 char reported harvested in the subsistence fishery and 500 in the commercial fishery for a total of 3,969 char. In 2002 there were 4,061 char reported harvested in the subsistence fishery and 500 in the commercial fishery for a total of 4,561 char. In 2003 there were 2,263 char reported harvested in the subsistence fishery and 293 in the commercial fishery for a total of 2,556 char.

Total harvest along the Holman coast should be no higher than 4,500 char. From tag returns it is known that at least half the char taken along the coast are from the Kuujjua River system. Any char taken along the coast under the authority of a commercial fishing licence must be considered part of the 4,500 fish limit. So the Holman Coast limit is further broken down in to 4000 fish for subsistence harvests and 500 fish for commercial harvests.



## Kuujjua River and Fish Lake

The harvest from Fish Lake in 2000 was approximately 886 (about 1,200 char per year lower than it was before the closure of Fish Lake from 1993-1995). People seemed to follow the guideline of 30 char per household recommendation made in 1999 in 1999 and 2000. This has turned out to be good for the char stock. However, a great deal of additional harvesting (approximately 1000 char) also occurred within the Kuujjua River system in 2000. This high harvest may have a negative effect on the recovery of char within the system and may reduce harvests along the coast. Therefore, it is stressed that the guideline of 30 fish from Fish Lake means the Kuujjua River system as a whole and must include Red Belly Lake too. Harvests from any area within the system should be limited to 30 fish per household. In 2004, the Working Group decided to continue to limit the fishery to 30 fish once again.

A weir set up on the river in 1992 counted 10,493 char of which 992 were tagged and released. Almost one-half of these fish (473) were recaptured by the winter of 1994. An additional 487 char were tagged at the Kuujjua River mouth in 1993. Almost one-half of these fish (186) were recaptured by the winter of 1995. Therefore, the rate of exploitation on these fish is very high (e.g., > 40%). Assessment work was carried out in the Kuujjua River and Fish Lake in 1998 and 1999 to document spawning areas, rearing areas and habitat measurements. Sampling was carried out in a number of areas in which young arctic char were captured. Sampling after freeze up located several areas in which char are thought to spawn.

Results from the 1999 and 2000 monitoring at Fish Lake continue to show consistent upward trends in the average length, weight and age of the harvested char. There were no apparent downtrends in any of these parameters. Catch per effort has increased from the 1990s and remained consistent within the past few years. Continued monitoring is necessary to document the status of the stock.

Total harvest at Fish Lake, including Red Belly Lake, should not be higher than 30 char per household (which works out to approximately 1000 char). The fishing season will be from October 15 to November 30 to prevent the harvest of too many char prior to spawning. It is important to follow this guideline so that the char stock can continue to recover.



## **PRINCE ALBERT SOUND AREA RIVERS**

### **Kagloryuak River**

A total of 351 fish were reported harvested from the Kagloryuak River in 2000. Some people feel that the stock is depleted while others suggest that the large variation is due to between year differences and timing of fishing. The Kagloryuak seems to be a staging area for char from distant areas. This may explain why the numbers appear to go up and down in different years. Some char tagged at the Naloagyok River weir were caught in the Kagloryuak the following year and a char tagged at Coppermine was captured there in 1998. The number of char harvested by the Kagloryuak fishery has varied widely with only 210 fish harvested in 1998, but 5,502 harvested in 1995. On average, 1,970 fish have been harvested annually from the period 1992 to 1998. A 1990 weir recorded 13,072 char with 498 of these being tagged and released. In 2001 there were 453 char harvested, in 2002 there were 283 fish harvested and in 2003 there was only 105 char reported as harvested.

The char harvest from the Kagloryuak River should not exceed 1500 fish, and no commercial fishing is permitted.

### **Kuuk River**

No harvest was reported from the Kuuk River and Tahiryok Lake in 2000 or 2002 except for 55 fish taken by char monitors in 2000. In 2003 there were only 29 fish reported as harvested. In 1999 there were 320 fish reported harvested in this area. In 1998, 178 char were taken from Tahiryok Lake and about half of those were current year spawning (red) char. Silver char were found, but spread out in deep-water areas in the middle of the lake. Similar to the Kagloryuak River, harvesting in the Kuuk system is somewhat sporadic and anywhere from none to 454 char have been harvested in any year. On average, annual harvests of 181 char have been made from the period 1992 to 1998 in the Kuuk River system. A weir erected on the river in 1987 counted a total of 9,204 char and tagged 494 of these fish. Many of these tagged char were recaptured along the Holman coast near the community.

The annual fishing limit for the Kuuk River system, including Tahiryok Lake, is 1,500 char, with no commercial fishing permitted.

### **Naloagyok River**

No one fished at the Naloagyok River in 2000. Although 22,386 char were counted at the weir site in 1989 and 412 char were tagged, three years of fall fishing there since that time has not resulted in the harvest of any char. The Working Group believes that the system is a summer feeding area and that the river itself does not support a large run of char. Char counted and tagged at the river in 1989 are suspected of having been in the area to feed due to special circumstances of wind and tides.

The fishing limit for the Naloagyok River is 500 char for the season, and no commercial fishing is permitted.

## Kagluk River

No fishing was reported at the Kagluk River during 1998-2003. Commercial catches of approximately 227 char at the Kagluk in 1997 showed a mixture of post-spawners and silver fish. The char were relatively large, old and easy to catch. The only other harvest reported from the Kagluk River was a commercial harvest of 550 fish in 1996. Char from the Read Island area of the eastern Arctic were found overwintering in this system in 1996. A 1988 weir count resulted in the enumeration of 1,878 char with 438 of these being tagged.

The fishing limit for the Kagluk River will be 500 char. Subsistence use will take priority over commercial harvests.

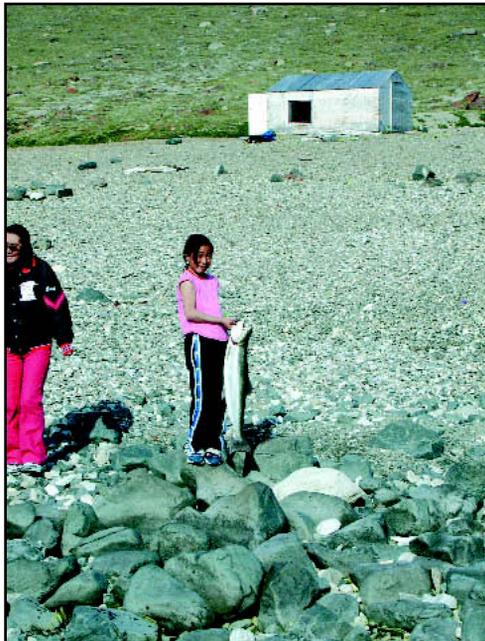


## ALLOCATION OF HARVEST

In the event that harvest restrictions are necessary, it is the responsibility of DFO and FJMC, in consultation with and using input from the HTC, to make recommendations as to what the total allowable harvest level would be. It would be the responsibility of the HTC to divide this allocation among their membership.

## Types of Fisheries

1. Subsistence use: Consistent with the Inuvialuit Final Agreement and subject to conservation, the first priority under this plan will be subsistence use.
2. Other uses: Other fisheries (e.g., sport angling) is allowed so long as this does not compromise the stocks and so long as all subsistence needs are met first.
3. Commercial use: Commercial fishing will be allowed in some areas, but only if it does not interfere with subsistence fishing.



## COMMERCIAL FISHING

Only the Kagloryuak River can be opened to commercial fishing as it possesses a quota. However, the Plan and the HTC must be consulted prior to any opening of any river. During the 2004 Working Group meeting it was decided that the Kagloryuak would be closed to commercial fishing throughout the duration of this current 2004-2006 Plan.

The Holman HTC applied for and received two exploratory community commercial fishing licences in 2000. The licences were valid for the Holman Coast area and the Kuuk River system for 500 char and the Kagluk River system for 500 char. Only a small number of char (~100) were harvested from the coast in 2000. In 2003 the reported commercial harvest for the Coast was 293 fish.

The HTC applied for and received an exploratory commercial licence for 500 char from the Holman coast area for the 2001 season. The HTC is responsible for recording the location and number of fish harvested. These fish will be included as part of the coastal harvest recommended limit.

Fish cannot be caught for sale until the fisherman is in possession of a copy of the licence obtained from the HTC. All fish harvested must be reported to the HTC so that the HTC can keep accurate records for DFO, FJMC and the Working Group. This will prevent any problems with the illegal sale of char and ensure that the commercial fishery does not interfere with the subsistence harvest.

The HTC executive and membership must give approval to any commercial or exploratory fishery applications prior to the issuing of a licence. All commercial licences will follow DFO regulations and the guidelines outlined in the Plan. Any commercial harvest within any of the areas covered by the Plan will be considered part of the Plan's recommended safe harvest level.

## Storage and Processing

1. Nets must be checked every 30 hours in the summer months and at least every 72 hours in the winter (November 1 – May 15) (DFO regulation).
2. All catches must be stored and processed so as to eliminate wastage (DFO regulation).

## Research and Monitoring

1. DFO and FJMC will provide information to the community and HTC on all char studies that are being planned and conducted. The HTC will be notified and consulted prior to, during and after any and all projects are completed. The HTC will review and approve project proposals before the projects proceed. Local information and expertise will be used in the design, delivery and interpretation of all projects concerning Holman area char.
2. Persons fishing for Holman area char, especially in the Fish Lake area, will provide the char monitors and any harvest study field workers with accurate information about their catches. When requested and practical, persons fishing will make their catches available for measuring and sampling by the char monitors.
3. Fishermen will return any and all tags recovered from char and also provide DFO or the char monitors with accurate information about when and where any such tagged fish were caught. DFO and the char monitors will ensure that accurate records of all recoveries are kept and that rewards are promptly distributed.

## LIFE OF THIS PLAN

This plan shall be in effect until December 2006 at which time it shall be reviewed again prior to the 2007 fishing season. The interval for reviewing the plan after this time shall be determined then. DFO and FJMC representatives will make every effort to continue to attend the Holman Annual General Meeting each year to update the public on results from the various char projects and to present new information from these studies.



**Table 1:** Historic and recent harvest levels of char for areas covered by the Holman Fishing Plan.

Year	Holman Coast Subsistence	Holman Coast Commercial	Fish Lake Including Red Belly Lake	Kuuk/Tahiryokak	Kagloryuak Subsistence and Commercial	Kagluk River Commercial	Total
1988	4,838		4,386	15	0	0	9,239
1989	2,609		3,218	70	0	0	5,897
1990	4,021		3,160	186	0	0	7,367
1991	1,752		1,465	14	0	0	3,231
1992	4,934		2,485	454	399	0	8,272
1993	4,753		0	282	2,800	0	7,835
1994	6,297		269	157	3,327	0	10,05
1995	5,631		2,000	0	5,502	0	11,33
1996	5,549		1,000	50	1,330	550	8,479
1997	4,365		1,166	150	224	227	6,132
1998	3,714		1,260	178	210	0	5,362
1999	4,449		1,045	320	0	0	5,814
2000	3,928	100	1786	0	351	1	6166
2001	3,469	500	1137	54	453	0	5,613
2002*	4,061	500	1,180	-	283	0	6,024
2003*	2,263	293	743	29	105	0	3,433
Safe Harvest Level	4,000	500	1,000 (30 per family)	1,500	1,500	500	9,000

Total estimated harvest of Arctic char by residents of Holman (1988-2003) (data from Inuvialuit Harvest Study and DFO Harvest study).

\* 2002-PAS data was not broken down by individual river, so had to assign based on month- Oct. Fish Lake, Nov. Kagloryuak, June-Sept. Coastal. Data from 2003 is from Harvest Study only and may be incomplete, monitors reported harvest was 503 fish for Fish Lake.

## **FISHERIES AND OCEANS CANADA NORTHWEST TERRITORIES FISHERY REGULATIONS THAT APPLY TO SUBSISTENCE FISHERIES FOR HOLMAN AREA CHAR:**

- 1) Nets must be checked every 30 hours in the summer (May 16 to October 31) and every 72 hours in the winter (November 1 to May 15).
- 2) At least one third of a stream must be left open to allow fish to pass.
- 3) Indian, Inuk or persons of mixed blood may fish without a license by angling or gillnets, set lines, spears, snares or dip nets, for food for himself or for dogs.
- 4) No person shall fish by snagging.
- 5) No person shall dispose of dead fish or any remains or offal of fish by leaving it in the water or on the ice over the water.
- 6) Fish that is suitable for food shall not be wasted.
- 7) All nets must have the name of the net owner clearly marked.
- 8) Fishery Officers may determine or prescribe the distance between each and every fishery and shall forthwith remove any fishing apparatus or material that the owner neglects or refuses to remove.

We the undersigned members of the Holman Char Working Group met in Holman on June 9, 2004 and we have agreed to the recommendations contained herein should remain in place until December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2006 at which time they will again be reviewed. Dated this date in Holman, NT, June 9, 2004.

**Working Group Members:**

John Alikamik John Alikamik

Joseph Haluksit Joseph Haluksit

Colin Okheena Colin Okheena

Jilbert Olifie Jilbert Olifie

**Witnesses:**

Don Dowler

Don Dowler  
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