

# Muskoxen harvest advice 2005-2006 for Inglefield Land: Advisory document to the Greenland Home Rule Government

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This document presents advice for the 2005–2006 muskoxen harvest in Inglefield Land (ca. 78° – 79°N), northwest Greenland. The advice is from the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources (GN) to the Ministry of Environment and Nature (DMN) of the Greenland Home Rule Government.

### Inglefield Land Muskoxen Stock

Muskoxen are indigenous to Inglefield Land. Still, in 1986, 14-yearling muskoxen were released at Rensselaer Bay, Inglefield Land (Vibe 1986). These included 10 females and 4 males, which had been captured from the Kangerlussuaq muskoxen population in west Greenland. In 1999, the Inglefield Land muskoxen population was estimated at ca. 270 (Landa et al. 2000). The observed 13% calves, suggests an annual recruitment of about 30 muskoxen. However, the abundance estimate from 1999 is likely negatively biased (Cuyler et al. 2003), but no new field data are available.

Although DMN's expressed management objective is to stabilise this muskoxen population, while maintaining a natural sex and age structure, no direct harvest recommendation based on scientific data is available. In 2004 Inglefield Land had a quota of 20 muskoxen. GN suggests DMN may consider a quota increase, and that the catch for 2005 be ascertained through consultation with local Qaanaaq authorities and hunters, while considering the three points below.

- 1) **Hunting season** – This region is inaccessible to hunters for most of the year, and given current means of transport difficult even when possible. Given the latitude of the region, conditions suggest only two reasonable hunting seasons; a summer/autumn harvest, i.e., August, September and early October, and a winter harvest in March and April.
- 2) **Protected reserve in ENE Inglefield Land** – If Qaanaaq hunters continue to rely on small outboard boats in summer and dogsleds in winter, then Inglefield Land will remain remote owing to distance, climate, ice conditions and day length. However, better boats and access to snowmobiles quickly could change this situation. A protected muskoxen reserve in the remote far northeastern end of Inglefield Land is a suggested conservation initiative. A reserve the size of approximately 1/3 of the total area of Inglefield Land, might preserve this stock regardless of possible quota increases or disastrous stochastic weather events.
- 3) **Harvest reports** – the date, location, sex, age (calf, juvenile, adult) and body condition of each animal taken should be registered.

## References

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