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BAB 3990-20

Darren Hicks  
Environmental Analyst  
Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board  
140 Water St., 4th Floor  
St. John's, NL A1C 6H6

Dear Mr. Hicks

**Subject: Fisheries and Oceans Canada Review of Addendum to the Environmental Assessment of Chevron's North Grand Banks Regional Seismic Program 2011-2017.**

As requested, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) has completed a review of the document entitled "Addendum to the Environmental Assessment of Chevron's North Grand Banks Regional Seismic Program 2011-2017" dated May 2011. Three suggestions are provided below:

<b>Page 4 of Addendum:</b>
<b>Comment (Section 4.2.8, Page 40, and Table 4.4):</b> <i>It is stated that Greenland Halibut spawn in "winter months". There may be some major spawning during this time, but evidence suggests a very poorly defined spawning season for this species with multiple peaks in spawning activity and even some degree of spawning observed throughout the entire year.</i>
<b>Response:</b> Agreed that text in Table 4.4 should be revised to reflect the uncertainty associated with the timing of spawning activity by Greenland halibut and that there may be some degree of this activity throughout the year.
<b>DFO Suggestion:</b> Table 4.4 should be revised as noted, however, the text on page 30 of the EA report should also be updated.

<b>Page 6 of Addendum:</b>
<b>Comment (Section 4.5.1.3, Page 81, 3rd sentence):</b> <i>Based on aerial searches and acoustic recordings, the south eastern edge of the Grand Banks remains an area populated by cetaceans during the winter. Therefore, the statement "although some individual baleen whales may be present in offshore waters of NL..." is not necessarily accurate.</i>
<b>Response:</b> DFO has placed autonomous acoustic recorders at the east and southeast edges of the Grand Banks and have recorded mysticete and odontocete calls throughout the winter (J. Lawson, Research Scientist, DFO, pers. comm.). PAL surveillance imagery, records, and observations by DFO staff have also shown there to be quite a few humpbacks and other large whales out in this area through the winter. Based on these observations, change the sentence referenced above to "Some baleen whales are present in offshore waters of Newfoundland year-round but most species presumably migrate to lower latitudes during winter months."
<b>DFO Suggestion:</b> It seems the comment and response is in agreement. It is suggested to simply remove the word "some" from the sentence above.

<b>Page 7 of Addendum:</b>
<b>Comment (Section 4.5.1.5, Page 91):</b> <i>More information should be provided on the importance of the area for feeding Harp and Hooded Seals. The area of the NE Grand Banks, slope and Flemish Pass is critical for seals during the spring when they need to replenish their energy reserves. Satellite telemetry studies</i>



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*have shown that this area is used extensively by Hooded Seals in May. By late May they have left the area for the moulting ice, although harps are still present through June. Harp Seals tend to remain on the continental shelf while Hooded Seals dive in the deep shelf waters. Addendum to the EA of Chevron's North Grand Banks Seismic Program, 2011-2017 Page 7*

**Response:** The Chevron EA referred the reader to LGL (2008) for a more detailed review of the biological background information on marine mammals, including seals. The following text for hooded and harp seals is taken from Sections 5.6.1.21 and 5.6.1.22 of LGL (2008), respectively:

**DFO Suggestion:** Incorporate the above response into the actual EA Report, instead of just referring.

Thank you for providing DFO the opportunity to comment on this document. Should you have any questions or comments regarding the above, you can contact me by phone at 772-4912 or by e-mail ([shawn.kean@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:shawn.kean@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)).

Regards

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