From: EC
Sent: April 3, 2014 11:41 AM
To: C-NLOPB
Cc: EC
Subject: Multi Klient Invest Labrador Sea Seismic program 2014-2018

Good Morning

Further to EC's response sent April 2, 2014 with regards to the Multi Klient Invest Labrador Sea Seismic Program, 2014-2018, the Canadian Wildlife Service of Environment Canada (EC-CWS) offers the following comments:

EC-01 Section 4.4 Seabirds and Migratory Birds
Quote: "(2) Quaker Hat Island near Cape Harrison, (3) Gannet Islands and Bird Island in Groswater Bay/Table Bay"

These two main concentrations are not grouped correctly. Should read as follows: 2) northeast Groswater Bay and Quaker Hat Island near Cape Harrison, 3) Gannet Islands and Bird Island, 4) Table Bay, and 5) Wadham Islands and Funk Island.

EC-02 Section 4.4 Seabirds and Migratory Birds
Quote: "These five island groups support almost 660,000 pairs of breeding seabirds. More than 40% of the North American breeding population of Razorbill nests on the mid-Labrador coast alone. The Gannet Islands (including the Gannet Cluster) off Hamilton Inlet, the largest breeding seabird nesting colony in Labrador, supports more than 91,000 pairs of nesting seabirds in the summer (Table 4.7). The Wadham Islands and Funk Island, 50-100 km south of the Study Area, host over 430,000 pairs of seabirds that travel great distances on foraging sorties."

Population numbers for seabird colonies in this report in general and Table 4.7 in particular are in large part from dated sources, and should be updated through the use of the most recent information available. Seabird colony numbers are routinely assessed and updated by EC-CWS and its partners, and data are compiled and stored in the CWS Atlantic Region Colonial Waterbird Database. These data can be obtained by contacting Sabina Wilhelm, EC-CWS colonial seabird biologist, at Sabina.wilhelm@ec.gc.ca.

EC-03 Section 4.4.1 Important Bird Areas for Seabirds
Quote: "These eight IBAs contain almost 660,000 pairs of breeding seabirds of 11 species. The Gannet Islands contain the largest seabird colony on the coast of Labrador with 14,329 pairs of Razorbill (about 33% of the North American breeding population), 38,666 pairs of Atlantic Puffin, and 36,702 pairs of Common Murre (see Table 4.7)."

See EC-02.

EC-04 Section 4.4.2 Distribution and Abundance
Quote: "The seabird colonies at The Gannet Islands and Funk Island are exceptions."

Attached are two EC-CWS technical reports that can provide updated trend information on seabirds breeding in Groswater Bay and on one of the Wadham Islands. Additional more recent data for these and other colonies within the study area exist and are available upon request from EC-CWS.

Robertson, G. J. and R. D. Elliot. 2002. Changes in seabird populations breeding on Small Island, Wadham Islands, Newfoundland. Canadian Wildlife Service Technical Report Series No. 381. Atlantic Region. iii + 26 pp.

Robertson, G. J., R. D. Elliot, and K. G. Chaulk. 2002. Breeding seabird populations in Groswater Bay, Labrador, 1978 and 2002. Canadian Wildlife Service Technical Report Series No. 394. Atlantic Region. iv + 31 pp.

EC-05 Section 4.4.2 Distribution and Abundance
It should be noted in this section that the ECSAS program is ongoing, and a current focus on ECSAS monitoring is the Labrador Sea. Please see the attached report (Tranquilla et al. in press) for updated information in the region.

EC-06 Section 4.4.2.8 Alcidae (Murres, Black Guillemot, Atlantic Puffin, Razorbill, and Dovekie)
Quote: "Common Murre breeds in large colonies on the mid-Labrador coast with a total of 47,000 pairs at five main colonies (see Table 4.7)."

See EC-02.

EC-07 Section 4.4.2.8 Alcidae (Murres, Black Guillemot, Atlantic Puffin, Razorbill, and Dovekie)
Quote: "About 43% (18,526 pairs) of the North American breeding population of Razorbill nests on the mid-section of Labrador coast (see Table 4.7). Most of these (14,329 pairs) are on The Gannet Islands (CWS unpubl. data)."

See EC-02.

EC-08 Section 4.4.2.8 Alcidae (Murres, Black Guillemot, Atlantic Puffin, Razorbill, and Dovekie)
Quote: "Black Guillemot breeds on both sides of the Atlantic, north into Arctic waters. It nests in numerous small colonies on coastal headlands and many small rocky islands. Population size estimates are difficult to achieve because nesting occurs in hard to access rock crevices. Black Guillemot is partially migratory but remains as far north as there is open water. Unlike the other members of the Alcidae, it feeds near shore and is rarely found more than a few kilometres from shore or pack ice. Black Guillemot is a year round resident on the coast of Labrador."

See EC-02. It is important to highlight in this section that the Nain area of Labrador hosts high concentrations of Black Guillemots. This is in contrast to the generally low densities found along the rest of the coasts of Newfoundland and Labrador.

EC-09 Section 4.6 Species at Risk
The Ivory Gull recovery strategy has been finalized and is currently available at the Species at Risk Registry (see http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca/species/speciesDetails_e.cfm?sid=50).

EC-10 Section 5.8.6.1 Vessel Lights
Change from "migratory bird salvage permit" to "live seabird handling permit".

EC-11 Section 5.8.6.4 Sound
Change magnitude of effects from "negligible to low" to "uncertain", to reflect follow-up statements later in this section which indicate that it is uncertain what the effects of sound on seabirds are.

EC-12 Section 5.8.6.5 Presence of Vessels and Helicopters
Aircraft, particularly helicopters, have been known to cause significant negative impacts to migratory birds during various life stages (i.e. chick rearing, moulting). Mitigation measures such as timing and adjusting the altitude and pattern of helicopter flight lines can minimize disturbance. Helicopter use near seabird breeding colonies should be avoided from May 1st – August 31st (with an end-date of September 30th for Northern Gannet Colonies).

EC-13 Section 5.8.6.6 Accidental Releases
We recommend a commitment to using solid streamers instead of liquid streamers. If liquid streamers are used, a contingency plan for mitigating potential leaks in the streamers must be made. Please consult O'Hara and Morandin (2010; attached) for information regarding the effects that even very small quantities of oil can have on thermoregulatory ability in migratory birds.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding our comments.

Regards,