

Progress Report, Action #22
2015-2017 Bilateral and Multilateral Actions,
Circumpolar Action Plan:
Conservation Strategy for the Polar Bear



Action	Reduce the risk of injury and mortality to humans and bears as a result of their interactions by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. continuing to support the work of the Range State Conflict Working Group (CWG); b. implementing and making available to all Range States the Polar Bear-Human Information Management System (PBHIMS); c. developing and implementing appropriate data-sharing agreements among the Range States and making the data available to Range State management authorities; d. entering all available data on human-bear interactions into the PBHIMS database on an ongoing basis; and, e. developing Best Management Practices (BMPs) on tools and techniques for use in preventing and mitigating human–bear conflicts
Title	Continuation of the CWG
Timeline	2015-2017
Description of Activity from 2017 Implementation Table	Continue to support the work of the Range States CWG
Baseline status	Terms of Reference (ToR), data sharing agreement and requirements document not completed. PBHIMS not fully populated.
Planned Outputs	To have completed ToR, data-sharing agreement and a requirements document. Continued population of the PBHIMS and publication of peer-reviewed papers.
Modifications	The title and description of this action were modified to better match the exact language from the CAP document “2 YearImplementationTable_FINAL.pdf”.
Progress Report Date	November 24, 2017

Progress Report on Activity

Progress:

- a. Continuing to support the work of the Range States CWG.

Description: Providing the human and financial resources necessary for the CWG to complete assigned tasks. Ideally, a financial mechanism will be established to support working group activities including priority research, pilot projects, face-to-face meetings, and data management.

No financial mechanism has been established, although the Range States Operations, Policies, and Procedures (OPP) Working Group (WG) is working with the Range States Heads of Delegation (HoD) to address this point. A decision is expected prior to the 2018 Range States Biennial Meeting of the Parties (MoP).

Support was provided by the Range States for a face-to-face meeting of the CWG in March 2015 in Copenhagen.

In 2017 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determined that it could no longer provide the sole financial support for providing technical support for the PBHIMS database. The CWG has discussed other options to pursue, but no solutions have been developed. The SMART database used by World Wildlife Fund (WWF) for other species may provide a proven solution that could be modified to accommodate polar bears.

b. Implementing and making available to all Range States the PBHIMS database.

Complete. The CWG has modified the PBHIMS database to meet their data management needs, and it is available to all Range States for use. ToR and a requirements document have been completed.

c. Developing and implementing appropriate data-sharing agreements among the Range States and making the data available to Range State management authorities.

Description: Determine goal of agreement, approval by CWG, Approval by HoD, National consultations

Finished, with caveat: The CWG has developed a draft data-sharing agreement. However, the CWG does not think a true data sharing agreement is practical at the international level. Rather, data sharing agreements will be developed between interested parties on a project and analysis specific basis. The draft data-sharing agreement developed by the CWG can provide a template for that along with data sharing within jurisdictions.

d. Entering all available data on human-bear interactions into the PBHIMS database on an ongoing basis.

Description: Historic conflict records are entered and a plan is in place to update PBHIMS annually with data from each Range State

Ongoing. Norway and U.S. data is completely entered. Within Canada, Nunavut and Manitoba have committed to entering their data and have made significant progress.

e. Developing BMPs on tools and techniques for use in preventing and mitigating human–bear conflicts.

Description: Produce a best practices detection, deterrence, and conflict prevention manual using material from around the Arctic such as the Parks Canada/Government of Nunavut and U.S. deterrence manuals that were already produced. Include recommended suite of data to be collected whenever bears are killed in conflict (e.g. age, sex, body condition, and probable cause of the attack). Continue to update as new material becomes available.

Ongoing. See response to action #7. Rather than produce a manual, the Range States will share BMPs, manuals and other materials on the Range States website to inform management of conflicts Arctic-wide. Still need to review materials from the 2014 Wildlife-Human Attack Response Training (WHART) workshop held in Whitehorse to help identify data to collect when bears are killed during conflicts.

Peer-reviewed Publications:

1. 2017. Wilder, J. M., D. Vongraven, T. Atwood, B. Hansen, A. Jessen, A. Kochnev, G. York, R. Vallender, D. Hedman, and M. Gibbons. Polar bear attacks on humans: Implications of a changing climate. *Wildl. Soc. Bull.*. doi:10.1002/wsb.783
2. *In prep.* Wilder et al. Efficacy of bear spray versus polar bears.
3. *In prep.* Smith et al. Effects of canister age, temperature, and wind on the efficacy of bear spray.

Next Steps

The CWG plans to hold a face to face meeting in early 2018 adjacent to the Biennial MoP in Alaska to develop its next two-year workplan and take care of other business.