

Annex II

Details of bilateral agreements between the Range States for the management and conservation of polar bears.

Memorandum of Understanding between Environment Canada and the United States Department of the Interior for the Conservation and Management of Shared Polar Bear Populations

Subpopulation: Southern Beaufort Sea

In May 2008, Canada (Environment Canada) and the United States (Department of the Interior) entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the conservation and management of shared polar bear populations. The purpose of the MOU is to facilitate and enhance coordination, cooperation and development of partnerships between the signatories regarding the conservation and management of polar bears. Under the MOU, a Bilateral Oversight Group was established in order to provide an organizational contact and to develop sub-committees or working groups, as required. The Oversight Group is made up of high-level federal government officials, representatives from Canadian and Alaskan Indigenous organizations and state/provincial representatives. The MOU also calls for a framework for the development and implementation of short-, medium- and long-term actions that focus on specific components of polar bear conservation. Participants will develop, implement, review and coordinate specific cooperative conservation projects and programs. Importantly, the two countries recognize the value and efficacy of the Inuvialuit–Inupiat Polar Bear Management Agreement for the Southern Beaufort Sea (see subsection below).

Inuvialuit–Inupiat Polar Bear Management Agreement in the Southern Beaufort Sea

Subpopulation: Southern Beaufort Sea

The Inuvialuit people in Canada and the Inupiat people in Alaska (U.S.) both harvest polar bears from the Southern Beaufort Sea subpopulation. Due to concerns related to the combined harvest level, in 1968, Canada established harvest quotas. After the passage of the *Marine Mammal Protection Act* in the U.S. in 1972, only coastal-dwelling Alaskan Natives were allowed to harvest polar bears for subsistence purposes and for making and selling handicrafts. No quota

was established although authorized take was required to be non-wasteful. At the time, there was no mechanism to cooperatively manage the harvest between the two countries. Joint concern about the population led the Inuvialuit Game Council (on behalf of the Inuvialuit in Canada) and the North Slope Borough Fish and Game Management Committee (on behalf of the Inupiat of the North Slope in Alaska) to negotiate an agreement to help ensure the health and stability of this subpopulation and maintain a sustained harvest for traditional users. Originally signed in 1988, the agreement is updated regularly.

Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Canada, the Government of Nunavut and the Government of Greenland for the Conservation and Management of Polar Bear Populations

Subpopulations: Kane Basin and Baffin Bay (note: while the Davis Strait subpopulation is geographically shared between Canada and Greenland, at the first meeting of the Parties of the Canada-Nunavut-Greenland MOU it was noted that given the scarcity of bears from Davis Strait that are harvested in Greenland, the MOU would concern the Kane Basin and Baffin Bay subpopulations only).

In 2009, the Government of Canada, the Government of Nunavut and the Government of Greenland entered into a memorandum of understanding to manage the polar bears within the Kane Basin and Baffin Bay subpopulations in order to ensure their conservation and sustainable management into the future. The MOU led to the creation of a Canada–Greenland Joint Commission that recommends a combined total allowable harvest and a fair division of the harvest for the two, shared subpopulations. The Joint Commission, which includes representatives from the three governments, the Canadian Inuit organizations Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and the Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board, and the Greenlandic fisherman and hunters organization, KNAPK, is also being used to coordinate scientific, Traditional Ecological Knowledge, management and outreach activities. Supporting the Joint Commission are Scientific, Traditional Ecological Knowledge and User-to-User Working Groups. Under the guidance of the Scientific Working Group, a comprehensive research program was designed and carried out in both subpopulations from 2010-2014. A new, genetic mark-recapture methodology (via biopsy darting) was employed in Baffin Bay and Kane Basin, given a commitment by

Canada to develop and implement less-intrusive research techniques. Results from this research program will serve to determine population size and inform sustainable harvest levels.

Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Russian Federation on the Conservation and Management of the Alaska–Chukotka Polar Bear Population

Subpopulation: Chukchi Sea

On October 16, 2000, the United States and the Russian Federation concluded an agreement on the conservation and management of the Alaska–Chukotka polar bear population, which entered into force on September 23, 2007. The Agreement provides a structure for the two countries to coordinate efforts to conserve the shared Chukchi Sea subpopulation and its habitat and to manage subsistence harvest by indigenous people at sustainable levels. The Agreement recognizes the importance of Traditional Ecological Knowledge and ensures the full participation of Indigenous peoples in the conservation of this subpopulation. The Agreement also specifies that the two countries pay particular attention to denning areas and to areas of high polar bear concentration during feeding and migration. The Agreement contains provisions that limit the taking of polar bears in the shared population of Alaska and the Chukotka autonomous region of Russia, and seeks to ensure that any taking does not adversely affect the population. The Agreement also establishes a bilateral commission, with equal federal governmental and Native representation in each country, to coordinate conservation efforts and research involving the Alaska–Chukotka population. The Commission identified the first-ever sustainable harvest limit for the Chukchi Sea subpopulation in 2010 is currently working to implement quotas.

Bilateral Environmental Agreement between the Government of Russia and the Government of Norway, including Provisions on Polar Bear Conservation

Subpopulation: Barents Sea

The Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of Norway concluded a bilateral environmental agreement, including provisions to conserve the shared Barents Sea polar bear subpopulation, which entered into force on September 3, 1991.

Expert meetings are conducted to exchange information on issues of relevance to the conservation of the Barents Sea subpopulation. A joint survey to estimate the population size was carried out in 2004.

Russia and Norway have agreed to strengthen their bilateral cooperation with regard to research, monitoring and management of the Barents Sea subpopulation, as follows:

- Begin planning a new survey to establish a population estimate.
- Develop a plan for further cooperation on enhanced monitoring of the population.
- Establish a bilateral working group of researchers and managers that will meet regularly to exchange information and to plan and coordinate cooperation and joint efforts related to research, monitoring and management of the shared population.

An MOU between the Governments of Norway and Russia was signed in 2015.