

- What:** Summary notes of HTO consultation meetings
- Where:** For the Western Hudson Bay polar bear sub-population
- Why:** Presenting recent aerial survey results
- Who:** Attendees were HTO board members in Rankin Inlet, Arviat, Chesterfield Inlet, Whale Cove, Baker Lake; representatives of DOE, NWMB, NTI
- When:** Meetings were conducted between 26 and 30 March 2012 in the Kivalliq Region

Community consultations were held with HTO representatives from Rankin Inlet, Baker Lake, Arviat, Whale Cove and Chesterfield Inlet in March, 2012. The communities indicated they would like a new (increased) TAH based on concerns for public safety, and the common perception of more bears in the population.

As part of DOE's social science/Inuit Qaujimatugangit research program, a public opinion poll was conducted in WH communities in March, 2012 (Kotierk, 2012). The most common response when participants were asked for their opinion on current polar bear abundance in the population was that there are, "the most they have seen" in recent history. When asked about their preference for the number of bears in the population, the majority of people surveyed indicated that they would prefer to have fewer bears.

### **Specific Issues:**

#### *a) Rankin Inlet*

- Concerns were raised in Rankin Inlet that perhaps the survey missed bears on offshore islands or in open water;
- Residents were scared of bears because of their proximity to the community
- Individuals raised concerns of the behavior of bears and whether this change towards higher aggression is related to habituation to people through research and tourism activities at Churchill, MB.
- There was an interest to conduct more local IQ studies;

#### *b) Arviat*

- Were bears possibly missed during the survey because they are already denning?
- Arviat commented that they conducted a 2-yr IQ study;
- The perception was that there are more bears in the area when compared to 10-15 years ago;
- Felt that more bears were possibly driven towards Quebec due to forest fires;
- People are frustrated that bears steal food from caches, or individuals are not safe when on the land;

- Concerns over bears being “tamed” in Churchill;
- Bears show up near town because of the dump and whale carcasses;
- How long will it take to get old quota back?
- Liked the WWF involvement and employment through the programme;

c) *Chesterfield*

- Observe brown bears in vicinity now
- Will there be more aerial surveys in the future?
- HTO passed a bylaw restricting harvesting of PBs to winter only when quality of meat and hide is higher

d) *Whale Cove*

- The arrival of bears has become quite predictable. Their route overland takes them directly to the dump and the community
- Beluga carcasses have been an issue in past
- CO and HTO have taken steps that have reduced this issue
- Expressed a desire to see the quota increased