KIVALLIQ WILDLIFE BOARD

WRITTEN SUBMISSION

NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER THE GOVERNMENT OF NUNAVUT PROPOSAL ON THE REVISED POLAR BEAR CO-MANAGEMENT PLAN

Kivalliq Wildlife Board Stanley Adjuk, Chairperson

October 12 2018



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1. Introduction, Background, and Objectives

The Kivalliq Wildlife Board (KWB) is the Regional Wildlife Organization (RWO) for the Kivalliq Region. The board consists of representatives from each community Hunters and Trappers Organization (HTOs) in the Kivalliq region and a chairperson elected by the HTO representatives.

The mandate of RWOs and HTOs is provided in Article 5.7 of the 1993 *Nunavut Agreement*. The *Nunavut Agreement* gives HTOs and RWOs a broad mandate to oversee and manage Inuit wildlife harvesting in their respective communities and regions. The *Nunavut Agreement* also provides HTOs with a mandate to represent the interests of Inuit hunters and their hunting rights, including the right to sue on behalf of members for rights infringements (5.7.15).

KWB has been actively involved in the co-management of the Western Hudson Bay (WH) and Foxe Basin (FB) Polar Bear Sub-Populations for several years. Before and after the signing of the *Nunavut Agreement* and the creation of the Nunavut territory, KWB has been a strong proponent of including Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit of Elders and expert hunters in management decisions about polar bears as well as other wildlife. KWB, along with five Kivalliq HTOs, worked with the Government of Nunavut (GN) Department of Environment (DoE) and the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) to create and sign the *Polar Bear Management Memorandum of Understanding* for the Management of the "Western Hudson" Polar Bear Population². Also, KWB, along with three Kivallig HTOs, worked with the Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board, four Qikiqtani HTOs, the GN DoE, and the NWMB to create and sign the *Polar Bear Management* Memorandum of Understanding for the Management of the "Foxe Basin" Polar Bear *Population*³. These MOUs currently provide the framework for polar bear management in the Kivalliq. Every year the KWB works with the HTOs to allocate tags that correspond to the Total Allowable Harvest (TAH) of these sub-populations and does its best to meet management requirements.

¹ Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. and Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians. (2010). Agreement Between the Inuit of the Nunavut Settlement Area and Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada as amended.

² Arviat HTO, Baker Lake HTO, Aqigiq HTO (Chesterfield Inlet), Aqiggiaq HTO (Rankin Inlet), Issatik HTO (Whale Cove), Kivalliq Wildlife Board, and GN Department of Environment. (2005). *Polar Bear Management Memorandum of Understanding for the Management of the "Western Hudson" Polar Bear Population*.

³ Aqigiq HTO (Chesterfield Inlet), Arviq HTO (Naujaat), Aiviit HTO (Coral Harbour), Hall Beach HTO, Igloolik HTO, Aiviq HTO (Cape Dorset), Mayukalik HTO (Kimmirut), Kivalliq Wildlife Board, Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board, and GN Department of Environment. (2005). *Polar Bear Management Memorandum of Understanding for the Management of the "Foxe Basin" Polar Bear Population*.



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Recently, in January 2018, KWB participated in the public hearing on the modification of the WH polar bear TAH⁴. In KWB's written and oral submissions to the NWMB for that hearing, KWB's positions about certain aspects of polar bear management in Nunavut were addressed, with specific reference to the WH sub-population. In this written submission, these positions are further elaborated upon and clarified as being important in regards to the proposed Polar Bear Management Plan. In the following sections comments and recommendations, KWB emphasizes that maintaining Inuit ways and knowledge of hunting polar bears and ensuring public

maintaining Inuit ways and knowledge of hunting polar bears and ensuring public safety should be included as part of the overall goal of the polar bear management plan. Recommendations are made on improving bear deterrence programs and wildlife damage prevention and compensation programs in Nunavut. Finally, in the last section, further comments are made to reiterate KWB's stance on how polar bear populations are understood, concerns with the polar bear tourism industry, and concerns with how polar bear research is carried out in Nunavut.

2. Comments and Recommendations

2.1 Maintaining Inuit Ways and Knowledge of Hunting Polar Bears

The 2016 *Draft of the Nunavut Polar Bear Co-Management Plan*⁵ (Draft NU PBMP) states that the goal of polar bear management in Nunavut should be: "To maintain viable and healthy polar bear subpopulations for current and future generations and to ensure that polar bears remain an integrated and functioning part of the ecosystem while monitored and appropriate harvests are allowed" (p. 8).

KWB contends that a primary goal of polar bear management in Nunavut should be maintaining Inuit hunting practices and cultural learning that has existed since time immemorial and that this should be expressed more clearly in the goal of the polar bear management plan. Inuit do not want to change their ways for management plans; if they must exist, KWB wants management plans to accommodate Inuit hunting traditions and practices.

In order for this goal to be achieved, it is extremely important that Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit become even more integrated into polar bear management and that the deep historical understanding of bears in the Kivalliq is respected by wildlife managers.

Recommendation: Maintaining Inuit hunting practices and cultural knowledge of polar bears should be included in the overall goal of the polar bear management plan.

⁴ Kivalliq Wildlife Board. (2017). "Kivalliq Wildlife Board Written Submission – NWMB Public Hearing on the Total Allowable Harvest for the Western Hudson Bay Polar Bear Sub-Population."

⁵ Government of Nunavut Minister of Environment and Nunavut Wildlife Management Board. (2016). *Draft of the Nunavut Polar Bear Management Plan*.



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2.2 Public Safety is a Top Priority

KWB has strongly advocated that public safety in regards to polar bears is of the utmost importance in the Kivalliq^{6, 7}. This concern has become even more pressing after the recent deaths of a man from Arviat⁸ and a man from Naujaat⁹ who were both mauled by polar bears in the summer of 2018. These tragic events lead to public outcries about the dangers presented by polar bears and have tested community members' limits with how polar bear management currently is practiced¹⁰. Communities in the Kivalliq, particularly Arviat, Chesterfield Inlet, Coral Harbour, Naujaat, and Whale Cove, are experiencing more and more encounters with polar bears, which pose a significant threat to life and property¹¹.

Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit about polar bears reaches far into the past and many Inuit express that polar bear populations are currently higher than they ever were from the early 1900s to the 1970s. In an IQ study done by Nirlungayuk and Lee¹², hunters and Elders who frequently and extensively travelled the land and sea in the Kivalliq and Western Hudson Bay reported seeing very few polar bears during this time period and note that more recently, since the 1980s, polar bears have been seen with greater frequency.

⁶ Ducharme, S. (2017, September 14). Kivalliq hunters demand increase in Western Hudson Bay polar bear quota. *Nunatsiag News*,

http://nunatsiaq.com/stories/article/65674kivalliq hunters demand increase in western hudson bay polar be ar quot/, accessed August 15, 2018.

⁷ Kivalliq Wildlife Board. (2017). "Kivalliq Wildlife Board Written Submission – NWMB Public Hearing on the Total Allowable Harvest for the Western Hudson Bay Polar Bear Sub-Population."

⁸ CBC News. (2018, July 4). Man killed by polar bear 'died a hero,' cousin says. *CBC News*, https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/polar-bear-attack-arviat-1.4733550, accessed August 15, 2018.

⁹ Rogers, Sarah. (2018, August 28). Nunavut hunter killed in summer's second fatal polar bear attack. *Nunatsiag News*,

http://nunatsiaq.com/stories/article/65674nunavut_hunter_killed_in_summers_second_fatal_polar_bear_attack/, accessed September 12, 2018.

¹⁰ Punter, C. (2018, August 8). Arviat polar bear slaughter sparks debate. *Nunavut News*, https://nunavutnews.com/nunavut-news/arviat-polar-bear-kills-spark-debate/, accessed August 15, 2018.

¹¹ At the 2017 KWB AGM, Rob Harmer, Kivalliq Regional Manager, GN DoE reported 185 polar bear observances without deterrence and 205 polar bear observances with deterrence in Arviat alone in a single year (KWB AGM, October 18, 2017).

¹² Nirlungayuk, G. & Lee, D. S. (2009). A Nunavut Inuit perspective on Western Hudson Bay polar bear management and the consequences for conservation hunting. In M. M. R. Milton & L. Foote (Eds.), *Inuit, polar bears, and sustainable use: Local, national, and international perspectives* (pp. 135-142). Edmonton, AB: CCI Press.



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KWB wants polar bear and human encounters to be reduced for the safety of both humans and bears. As expressed in the teachings of Elders who grew up and lived on the land and ice, one way to do this is to actively hunt polar bears.

Recommendation: Ensuring public safety and the protection of people and property should be included in the overall goal of the polar bear management plan.

2.2.1 Increase Bear Deterrence Programs

The community of Arviat, the GN, and the World Wildlife Fund have worked towards creating a strong bear deterrence program which involves a GN Conservation Officer and two to four bear guards using live trapping, bear bangers, rubber bullets, and ATVs to deter bears from entering town.¹³ Luring sites and scent trails have also been created in the past, using seal and beluga meat, to successfully lure polar bears away from Arviat.¹⁴

KWB would like to see this type of program setup in other communities in Nunavut to help deter bears from entering the communities and causing public safety concerns. This would include the training of bear deterrers, the provision of equipment and the funding to keep this program running and working. The people who do this type of work need to be compensated fairly and provided with the best possible equipment and procedures to keep them safe. In particular, in Whale Cove and any other communities in similar situations, it is very important that a permanent Conservation Officer is hired and trained to coordinates these types of duties in the town.

Recommendation: The polar bear management plan should have a plan in place with specific details and a timeline to provide funding, training and the long-term sustainability for bear deterrence programs in communities that experience frequent encounters with polar bears.

Recommendation: All communities in Nunavut should have a permanent and full-time Conservation Officer.

¹³ Rob Harmer, Kivalliq Regional Manager, GN DoE presentation at KWB AGM, October 18, 2017

¹⁴ Government of Nunavut, Department of Environment. (2014). Operation Arviat Polar Bear Summary Report. Report prepared by Conservation Officer Joe Savikataaq Jr. This report notes that in 2014, 249 polar bears were deterred away from Arviat, 14 bears were live captured and transported away from the community and successfully released, and bear guards drove 8,000 kilometres during patrols.



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2.2.2 Increase Funding and Access for Wildlife Damage Prevention and Compensation Programs

The Government of Nunavut currently has some funding dedicated to programs for a Wildlife Damage Prevention Program¹⁵ and Wildlife Damage Compensation Program^{16, 17}. KWB feels that these programs are underfunded and difficult to easily access for people of Nunavut. In the case of the Wildlife Damage Compensation Program, each claimant can only claim a maximum amount of \$2,000, despite the damage to property often far exceeding this amount.

KWB wants these programs to receive more funding and for there to be an easy and transparent way for Inuit to access these programs to help prevent polar bears and other wildlife from damaging their properties as well as to receive compensation for damaged property.

Recommendation: The Polar Bear Management Plan should define a clear plan to increase funding and support for Wildlife Damage Prevention Program and Wildlife Damage Compensation Programs, identifying expected funding targets and timelines in the plan. These programs should be widely advertised in the territory and made as easy as possible for Nunavummiut to access.

2.3 Moratorium on Flexible Quota System Penalizations for Overharvesting Females

The 2M:1F sex-selective harvesting requirements in the flexible quota system creates too many penalizations and can be burdensome and difficult to maintain, particularly when the TAH is very low and DLPKs are very high. Too often, Inuit are severely penalized when a female bear is caught. When penalizations add up, it can lead to several years of a community not having the ability to hunt. Hunting is one of the main ways that ecological knowledge of bears develops, and if youth and other hunters are not hunting polar bears, they are likely not learning ways to distinguish living male bears from female bears, making sex-selective harvesting even more difficult to follow

¹⁵ GN Department of Environment. (n.d.). Wildlife Damage Prevention Program. https://www.gov.nu.ca/sites/default/files/pictures/wildlife damage prevention program 0.pdf, accessed September 13, 2018.

¹⁶ GN Department of Environment. (n.d.). Wildlife Damage Compensation Program. https://www.gov.nu.ca/sites/default/files/pictures/wildlife_damage_compensation_program.pdf, accessed September 13, 2018.

¹⁷ At the 2017 KWB AGM, Rob Harmer, Kivalliq Regional Manager, GN DoE reported that the Wildlife Damage Prevention Program has \$60,000 of annual funding and the Wildlife Compensation Program has \$40,000 of annual funding for the entirety of Nunavut.



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into the future. ^{18, 19} Furthermore, when defence kills are necessary, there is not an opportunity to selectively choose the sex of the bear.

KWB would like to see a five-year moratorium on severe penalizations resulting from overharvesting females in the flexible quota system. Instead, hunters should be encouraged by RWOs, HTOs, and other co-management partners to hunt bears at a 2M:1F ratio, but there should not be punishment if this ratio is not maintained perfectly. If overharvesting occurs beyond the TAH, a one to one reduction should occur in the next year's TAH.

After five years, a harvesting analysis and population survey can be done to determine what ratio of males and females were actually caught during the time period and evaluate the impact on the overall WH PB population to determine whether severe penalizations for overharvesting females need to be reinstated.

Recommendation: Initiate a five-year moratorium on sex-selective harvesting in the flexible quota system. Conduct a harvesting analysis and population survey after the moratorium and reassess whether a sex-selective ratio is necessary in polar bear management.

2.4 Further Comments

2.5 Disagreement with Sub-Population Understanding of Polar Bears

As the 2016 Draft NU PBMP notes, the knowledge of Elders and hunters as expressed through Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit tells us that polar bears do not know the boundaries created by human wildlife managers. Polar bears move up and down the coast and travel on ice pans across the Hudson Bay. The same bears can be WH, FB or Southern Hudson Bay (SH) polar bears during their lifetimes.

Sometimes the borders cause issues for humans in the Kivalliq as well. The WH sub-population and FB sub-population boundary is south of Chesterfield Inlet, which can cause disagreements within the Kivalliq about who should get tags from the TAH. Issues are noted with the sub-population boundaries. However, there are also concerns about too many levels of government and bureaucracy existing in polar bear comanagement, and if any sub-population boundaries are reconsidered, KWB would not want to open up management of polar bears in the Kivalliq to even more jurisdictions, which could create even more political-legal complications.

¹⁸ Wenzel, G. (2008). Inuit TEK and the sport-hunt. In G. Wenzel, *sometimes hunting can seem like business: Polar bear sport hunting in Nunavut* (pp. 21-31). Edmonton, AB: CCI Press.

¹⁹ Tyrrell, M. (2009). Guiding, opportunity, identity: The multiple roles of the Arviat polar bear conservation hunt. In M.M.R. Freeman and L. Foote (Eds.), *Inuit, polar bears, and sustainable use: Local, national, and international perspectives* (pp. 25-38). Edmonton, AB: CCI Press.



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2.6 Concern with Manitoba Polar Bear Tourism

There are issues with how people in Nunavut and how people in Manitoba interact with bears. In Nunavut, bears are hunted by Inuit, while in Manitoba, they are a tourist attraction and part of the tourism industry. KWB is concerned with the Manitoba tourism industry because it is felt that increased human interactions with polar bears may be habituating polar bears to humans^{20, 21}. This is a public safety concern because it means that bears may come around humans more often. KWB would like to see the GN DoE and NWMB work more with the appropriate agencies in Manitoba to research and address concerns about the effects of tourism on polar bears. Nunavut should also encourage Manitoba to ensure that a strong set of regulations exists around polar bear tourism and that those regulations are followed.

2.7 Concern with Invasive Wildlife Research

KWB has concerns with the impact of invasive research on polar bears overall health. The continued mark and recapture practices of researchers from Environment and Climate Change Canada's Canadian Wildlife Service in Manitoba that includes flying close to bears, tranquilizing bears, handling bears to take measurements, tagging and tattooing bears, taking samples from living bears and putting satellite radio collars on bears²² are a concern to Inuit. Inuit ancestors stressed that animals are not to be played with and have feelings and that they are to be respected; hunting animals is a form of respect, and certain rules have to be followed after a successful hunt to respect animals in death.²³ KWB questions what impact invasive research has on bears and whether bears frequently getting tranquilized and examined contributes to deteriorating body conditions.

KWB supports less invasive research methods like aerial surveys, fur collection through snagging hair on scratch posts and sample and measurement collection after harvesting. The 2016 Draft NU PBMP suggests such research methods will be the goal in Nunavut; however, it notes "there may be instances when collaring and physical mark-recapture"

²⁰ Sanders, C. (2018, July 4). Nunavut dad mauled to death by polar bear while protecting children. *Winnipeg Free Press*, https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/nunavut-dad-mauled-to-death-by-polar-bear-while-protecting-children-487353651.html, accessed September 14, 2018.

²¹ Fida, K. (2018, July 5). Manitoba tourism operator feels online anger after polar bear attack. *The Star – Edmonton*, https://www.thestar.com/edmonton/2018/07/05/manitoba-tour-operator-feels-online-anger-after-polar-bear-attack.html, accessed September 14, 2018.

²² McCue, D. (2017, November 1). Polar bears in Churchill face bleak future, researchers warn. *CBC News*, http://www.cbc.ca/news/multimedia/polar-bears-in-churchill-face-bleak-future-researchers-warn-1.4380568, accessed September 14, 2018.

²³ For just a few examples of the importance Inuit place on respecting animals, see chapters by Kalluak, M.; Angutinngurniq, J.; Ayalik, A.; Uluadluak, D. (2017) In J. Karetak, F. Tester & S. Tagalik (Eds.), *Inuit Oaujimajatuqangit: What Inuit have always known to be true.* Halifax & Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing.



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studies are needed to provide more detailed information about a particular population or populations" (pg. 25). What instances might necessitate such invasive research practices should be specifically defined in the polar bear management plan.