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- Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit indicates that there are more bears than ever before in and around the communities, that a significant number of those bears are dangerous, and that public safety is a primary concern.

In addition, the following relevant new evidence was submitted at RM 65:

- Because of the growing number of defence kills (6 in 2008-09 and 12 in 2009-10) - and pursuant to the flexible quota system - the effective WH harvest level for 2010-11 is 2 bears;
- A pilot aerial survey of the population was completed in September 2010;
- During the winter of 2010-11, the Government of Nunavut (GN) will conduct and complete a re-analysis of all recent WH data, culminating in a potentially revised population estimate in 2011;
- A complete aerial survey of the population is to be conducted in 2011, with the results from that expected to be available by 2012; and
- Affected communities and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. are agreeable to a modest TAH increase in the circumstances.

The NWMB's justification for its decision

It is not an exaggeration to say that Inuit in the WH communities are under siege from WH polar bears. Last year, the number of defence kills doubled from the year before. Two of every three WH bears harvested in 2009-10 were killed in order to preserve a human life or to protect a person's property.

Both you and the NWMB have previously agreed that public safety is the highest priority in polar bear management.¹ That view is reinforced by NLCA Section 5.3.3(c), which names public safety as one of a very small list of justifications for limiting Inuit harvesting.

The current dangerous circumstances for Inuit in the WH communities are particularly troubling: Polar bear harvest levels have been drastically reduced for conservation reasons, while the number of bear-human conflicts have soared. An appropriate balance needs to be struck between conservation and public safety measures. An increase of 6 bears to the TAH – for this year only - will provide an important contribution towards public safety. That temporary increase will help to ensure that Inuit do not find themselves in even greater danger by hesitating to make legitimate defence kills because of concerns over depleting the minimal TAH.

Other necessary measures

Of course, other mitigation measures are also necessary, including ensuring that:

¹ See, for instance, your December 11th 2009 correspondence to the NWMB concerning public safety issues related to the Baffin Bay polar bear population (page 2), and the Board's February 17th 2010 response letter (page 2).

- The Department of Environment (DOE) Problem Wildlife Specialist works closely with all affected communities;
- Effective Polar Bear Deterrent Plans are in place in those communities;
- The DOE Wildlife Stewardship Program – focusing on the prevention of bear-human conflicts, and providing technical and financial assistance for protection efforts – is also applied in all affected communities; and
- The new DOE compensation program – for individuals who suffer losses from bear damage – is offered to all individuals who qualify for compensation in the affected communities.

The way forward

This NWMB decision is for one year only. The Board and the Minister will need to re-evaluate the TAH prior to the next harvesting season, in light of any new information or developments - including a potentially revised WH polar bear population estimate. Because of procedural fairness requirements, that process should commence by no later than June 2011, in order for the Board to be in a position to make a decision for the start of the 2011-12 harvesting season.

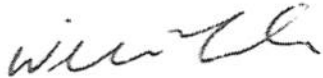
Finally, Mr. Minister, it is an understatement to say that the polar bear file has been a challenge for both harvesters and management agencies in recent years. It is important to continue to work cooperatively together, and to maintain strong communications, with respect to appropriate management solutions to the complex problems that regularly confront the co-management partners. With that cooperative spirit in mind - and in an effort to stay fully informed about relevant GN polar bear research and management initiatives - the NWMB requests that DOE provide the Board, at its December 2010 Regular Meeting No. 66, with an update on those various initiatives, including:

- The verification and documentation process employed by DOE for legal polar bear defence kills;
- The work of the DOE Problem Wildlife Specialist;
- Polar Bear Deterrent Plans;
- The DOE Wildlife Stewardship Program;
- The DOE compensation program;
- The development of non-invasive research methods, and efforts to include Inuit Qaujimaqatuqangit in GN wildlife research and management;
- Reviews of/potential revisions (if any) to the GN-Inuit Polar Bear Management Memoranda of Understanding;
- The planned 2011 aerial survey of the WH population;
- The planned inter-jurisdictional research and management agreement between the GN, Manitoba and Parks Canada;
- The status of the (draft) *Agreement on Management of the Northern Beaufort Sea and Viscount Melville Sound Polar Bear Populations*; and

- Implementation of the Canada-Greenland Memorandum of Understanding for shared polar bear populations.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this letter – most particularly, with respect to the Board's TAH decision for the WH polar bear population - please do not hesitate to contact the NWMB.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Willie Nakoolak', written in a cursive style.

Willie Nakoolak, A/Chairperson of the
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board



ጥቅምት 29, 2010

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