

**Summary of Community Consultations
on the draft Nunavut Polar Bear Management Plan
development and process**

Conducted February to April 2014
by the Polar Bear Management Pan Working Group

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the Working Group, May 2014

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1. Introduction

In Nunavut polar bears have been managed by a series of Memoranda of Understanding (MOU's) which outline research and monitoring, harvest rates or Total Allowable Harvest (TAH), sample submission, the flexible Quota System, and more. The MOU's were inherited from NWT and the first Nunavut specific MOU's were developed in 2003-2004 and signed early 2005. The 2005 MOU's had a 7 year review clause which passed in 2012. Recognizing that the MOUs, still did not adequately meet the demands of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA) and that there was some dissatisfaction with the complexity of the MOU's by all stakeholders the Department of Environment (DoE) discussed with co management partners the idea of redeveloping the MOUs into a Nunavut wide management plan to replace the MOU's.

The idea was supported and the course agreed to by all was to form a working group of co management partners to identify a process to develop a new Nunavut wide management plan for polar bears. The working group consists of staff from GN-DoE, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. Wildlife(NTI), the Chairs and Co-Chairs of the three Regional Wildlife Organizations (RWO's), and staff from the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB). Initial meetings of the group identified a process to develop a potential outline for the management plan, and to identify a process to develop a draft, seek consultation and input and finalize a draft for submission to the NWMB.

Over the course of 2013 and early 2014 meetings were held in Rankin Inlet and Iqaluit. During this time and outline was developed, input on the outline was collected, and an initial draft management plan was developed. The draft was then further revised and a community consultation process was established. The Working Group decided upon consultations to be conducted in all Nunavut communities during February to April 2014, with two meetings per community; one with the Hunters and Trapper's Organisation (HTO's) Board and the second a public meeting.

Prior to consultations HTO's a letter was sent to all HTO's to advise them of the plan and process. Additionally all Nunavut Households were mailed a flyer (Appendix A) explaining the process. Further public service announcements were made on radio. The draft management plan was made available to all HTO's prior to consultation with the request that the boards review the draft prior to consultation dates.

2. Consultation Process

In order to ensure meetings were consistent across regions, and Nunavut, the Working Group chose a team approach to consultations. Where possible the team would be consistent for a region and would consist of the DoE Regional Manager, NTI staff, RWO chair, facilitator, Polar Bear Biologist, a meeting

recorder, and translator. We also ensured that a local translator was available for each community so that we had consistency but also local dialect expertise.

The regional teams were as follows;

Kitikmeot

Facilitator - Chris Hotson
NTI staff - Gabriel Nirlungayak
RWO Chair - Attima Hadlari
DoE Regional Manager - Not available
Polar Bear Biologist - Paul Frame
Note Taker - Gailene Pigalak
Translator - Lazarus Arreak

Kivalliq

Facilitator - Chris Hotson
NTI staff - Bert Dean (only at end)
RWO Chair - Michel Akkuardjuk
DoE Regional Manager - David Vetra
Polar Bear Biologist - Paul Frame
Note Taker - Leah Muchpah
Translator - Leetia Janes

South Baffin

Facilitator - Chris Hotson
NTI staff - Paul Irgaut
RWO Chair - James Qillaq
DoE Regional Manager - Jason Aliqatuqtuq
Polar Bear Biologist - Paul Frame
Note Taker - Jackie Price
Translator - Lazarus Arreak

North Baffin

Facilitator - Chris Hotson
NTI staff - Paul Irgaut
RWO Chair - James Qillaq
DoE Regional Manager - Brenda Painikapoocho
Polar Bear Biologist - Paul Frame
Note Taker - Jackie Price
Translator - Leetia Janes

Both the HTO meeting and the public meeting were conducted with the same format (PowerPoint Appendix A). In general HTO meetings were more specific in nature as board members tend to have a better understanding of the current MOUs and polar bear issues, and the community meetings tended to be more general in nature. The result was good as we had a mix of responses and a good representation of community members including elders and active hunters.

A designated website - nupolarbears.ca - was also established that had all consultation materials and meeting dates available in all languages. There was also a map of population which provided subpopulation information and an online comment form for people to provide input into the process.

3. Consultation Dates and Attendance

Community	Date	Attendance
Kugluktuk HTO	Feb. 6	7
Kugluktuk public	Feb. 7	12
Cambridge Bay HTO	Feb. 8	5
Cambridge Bay public ¹	Feb. 8	0
Gjoa Haven HTO	Feb. 10	8
Gjoa Haven public	Feb. 11	40
Taloyoak HTO	Feb. 12	9
Taloyoak public	Feb. 13	40
Kugaaruk HTO	Feb. 14	5
Kugaaruk public	Feb. 15	8
Arviat HTO	Feb. 20	6
Arviat public	Feb. 21	22
Whale Cove HTO	Feb. 22	5
Whale Cove public	Feb. 23	24
Baker Lake HTO	Feb. 24	8
Baker Lake public	Feb. 25	Cancelled due to blizzard
Repulse HTO	Feb. 27	8
Repulse public ²	Feb. 27	6
Coral Harbour HTO	Feb. 28	1
Coral Harbour public ²	March 1	15
Chesterfield Inlet HTO	March 2	6
Chesterfield Inlet public	March 3	10
Rankin Inlet HTO	March 4	6
Rankin Inlet public	March 5	0
Qikiqtarjuaq HTO	March 10	
Qikiqtarjuaq public	March 11	40
Pangnirtung HTO	March 12	5
Pangnirtung public	March 13	19
Cape Dorset HTO	March 14	6

Cape Dorset public	March 15	5
Sanikiluaq HTO	March 16	
Sanikiluaq public	March 17	35
Kimmirut HTO	March 18	
Kimmirut public	March 19	
Iqaluit HTO	March 20	
Iqaluit public	March 21/ April 9/ 10	0/0/1
Resolute ³	March 28	HTO x/ public x
Grise Fiord ³	March 29	HTO x/ public x
Arctic Bay HTO	March 30	6
Arctic Bay public	March 31	30
Pond Inlet HTO	April 1	
Pond Inlet public	April 2	7
Clyde River HTO	April 3	5
Clyde River public	April 4	11
Hall Beach HTO	April 5	
Hall Beach public	April 6	20
Igloolik HTO	April 7	
Igloolik public	April 8	20

¹ Cambridge Bay meetings were combined to avoid meeting on a Sunday

² HTO and public meetings were combined due to blizzard

³ Combined HTO/public meeting at HTO request

4. Feedback

Overall the HTO and public reception was positive. There was dissatisfaction with how restrictions have been historically imposed. and a sense of fatigue as Inuit have been saying the same thing for many years, that polar bears are increasing. This is scientifically this is correct and the result of successful management actions borne by Inuit. However Inuit are exposed daily to international media depiction and public perception that the polar bear is in danger of going extinct, a position that is at odds with the everyday reality of living in Nunavut's communities.

The majority of meetings, HTO and public, had moments of expressed dissatisfaction with past and current polar bear management but this was outweighed by a willingness to see improved dialogue in hopes of improved management. In many cases the consultation team was thanked simply for coming and asking questions and listening. Most thought that the current efforts to develop a new management plan were positive and expressed hope for a successful outcome.

Primary comments and concerns

The following comments and concerns were expressed during HTO Director and public meetings. These are the top issues that were raised in almost every community.

1. There are more bears now than in the past and more bears coming into communities
2. We want to harvest equal number of males and females
3. The flexible quota system hurts us as we lose harvest due to defense kills

4. It is not safe to camp on the land in our camps and cabins
5. Defense kills should have a separate quota
6. There are too many bears now
7. We want to harvest more bears
8. Keeping international trade is important economically for hunters and the community
9. There are so many bears that seals and bird colonies are being negatively impacted
10. People are misled by inaccurate media about polar bears, more should be done to show the truth [that there are more bears now than ever]

Secondary comments and concerns

The following comments and concerns were expressed during HTO Director and public meetings. These are the secondary issues that were raised in at least 10 communities.

1. reductions in TAH hurt and there should be compensation
2. loss of sport hunts has an impact beyond just the value of meat and hide and includes loss of knowledge on how to hunt, handle dogs teams. etc.
3. There is no harvest restriction in Quebec and yet populations are shared
4. Populations surveys should be done more regularly
5. Research needs to include more IQ
6. Inuit should participate in research
7. There should be compensation for damage to cabins/caches
8. The hides that are taken for defense kills are spoiling before being turned over to HTO
9. Current subpopulation boundaries do not reflect how bears actually move and use the land
10. younger bear meat tastes better than older bear meat

Online Comments received

Few online comments were received, 6 in total (Appendix C). The comments indicated that there were too many bears (2), the new biopsy survey method is still invasive, increased bears are a public safety concern, translation concern with the term polar bear management, access to credits needs to be improved, high numbers of bears are impacting seals, and if TAH is not increased will there not be an increase in illegal harvest.

Written comments received

Comment forms in all four languages were available in paper form at all Wildlife Offices along with copies of the draft management plan should people not have computer access.

**Written comments still pending
to be included in final draft**

5. Meeting Summaries

Kugluktuk

HTO Meeting

The HTO indicated that polar bear hunting is not a big issue in Kugluktuk as the bears are usually far away and only a few harvesters regularly hunt them. Also ice can be bad for a few years and no harvest occurs than there is a good ice year and travel is easier and they can harvest them. Being able to access credits in good ice years is a benefit. Overall there is satisfaction with the status quo. Think that the population should be maintained at the current level. Overall the meeting was positive and the board was supportive of the initiative.

Public Meeting

Community members present were interested in finding out how to access credits in good ice years and in ensuring telemetry collars are no longer used. Overall community members felt there was little of concern with polar bears and that the population should be maintained.

Cambridge Bay

Combined HTO and Public Meeting

This meeting was combined at the HTO's request to avoid having the public meeting on a Sunday, despite this no community members attended. The board was glad that a new survey was starting this year as they feel the population has increased. Were concerned about past management actions that did not adequately consult or include Inuit. Want to see improved communication (at all levels) and better inclusion of IQ into reporting of surveys.

Gjoa Haven

HTO Meeting

The moratorium and subsequent low harvest for the last 10 years has been hard on the community. It is not just about the hide and meat but passing on of knowledge. They have seen recovery and are now seeing bears were they did not see them and they are coming into town, It is hard to not harvest when they are seeing more bears but they are complying. There are enough bears now (however many that is).

Public Meeting

Restrictions have hurt economically and culturally. The ability to have international trade/sport hunts helps economics which has cultural benefits as well. There are more bears and the TAH needs to be addressed. Increasing bear/human conflict is a concern along with restrictions of sex selective harvest as many prefer meat of females and a balanced sex ratio is more appropriate. A management goal of 300-500 would be enough bears

Taloyoak

HTO Meeting

Another positive meeting. The main issue is the long term economic and cultural impacts of the TAH reduction. Concerns that science is not accurately estimating numbers and that bears are “missed” because they migrate seasonally between GB and MC. A belief that the MC population has recovered and more tags are required is constant along with MC and GB being one population.

Public Meeting

Concerns about survey methods, although no longer used, were a big issue. Also the issue of MC and GB being one population. As for Management objective for GB no opinion but for MC thought current level (although not a known number) is good. Sex selective harvest is also a recurring concern and most want to see equal ratio.

Kugaaruk

HTO Meeting

The distribution of tags among regions/communities is a concern (but outside of the scope of a management plan). Generally concerns about increasing defense kills and the loss of hides was main concern as some hides that are seized are allowed to spoil. Sex selective harvest is the other consistent complaint.

Public Meeting

Increasing defense kills was the main concern. Other communities harvesting within Kugaaruk area when they had closed season to local harvesters was also a big concern. In general the feeling is that there are enough bears in GB and more tags would help with defense kills.

Arviat

HTO Meeting

Ongoing polar bear conflict in the community was the main issue. They HTO/Hamlet/Environment and WWF are working cooperatively to develop effective bear deterrent programs with good success. The restrictions of sex selective harvest and flexible quota are not supported in current format. Equal sex ration and less punitive for overharvest of females is desired. Many feel that bears behaviour has changed, less fear full and Churchill ecotourism is responsible. There are too many bears and TAH should be increased. Distribution of TAH between communities does not seem equitable and should be improved. Boundaries do not reflect what Inuit believe to be how bears move and use the land.

Public Meeting

There are too many bears for safety in town and on the land. Cabins are being damaged and can no longer cache food. Would like to harvest more bears. Would like to see improved education about polar bear safety. Defense kills should not come of community TAH.

Whale Cove

HTO Meeting

The HTO felt there are too many bears and they would like an increase in TAH. There has been a big increase in bears in the community and defense kills are using up the tags. Feel that if Sanikiluaq gets 25 tags then why is TAH less in WH? Community safety is the big issue.

Public Meeting

Public perception is that there are too many bears for safety in the fall and harvest should be increased. Bears have lost fear and deterrence is partly to blame. Bears damage cabins and caches, no compensation. There needs to be discussion about boundaries as bears move outside boundaries that we manage by.

Baker Lake

HTO Meeting

The board's biggest concern was that they currently do not have a base allocation for either WH or FB but occasionally get a floating tag for FB. Would like to have a permanent base allocation. This would help with teaching youth how to hunt and provide some income for a hunter.

Public Meeting

The Baker Lake public meeting was cancelled due to a blizzard.

Repulse

HTO/Public Meeting

The HTO and public meetings were combined due to a blizzard. Main issues revolved around public safety in the community and on the land as there are too many bears. The compensation for damage to cabins is too hard to get, too many steps and nothing happens. The sex selective harvest is hard, would rather harvest females, would like to see equal ratio.

Coral Harbour

HTO Meeting

Was cancelled due to late arrival because of blizzard.

Public Meeting

The public meeting did include some HTO board members. The main concern was that sex selective harvest should change to equal ration. Other concerns were that bears are increasing and there are too many and that bears are becoming less fearful of people. Like the idea of a new plan and want to see their input included.

Chesterfield Inlet

HTO Meeting

The board's main concern was with increasing defense kills and resulting loss of TAH for community. Would like to see separate amount for defense kills. Public safety was another main concern as the number of bears coming into the hamlet is increasing. Also do not like the sex selective harvest and would like to see equal ratio. All thought there were too many bears now.

Public Meeting

The public was also concerned with public safety however the bigger issue was increased defense kills which has used all the regular harvest for the last 4 years. They used to be able to harvest from WH as well as FB but that has changed and only have FB tags now, they would like to have WH tags as well. Also loss of bird colonies from polar bear predation for egg picking is a concern.

Rankin Inlet

HTO Meeting

The board feels that the population has increased and past estimates were wrong. Media are misrepresenting the facts and spreading misinformation and it impacts Inuit. Concerns about boundaries and that WH and SH are one population. Quebec harvests from this combined population, and without quota, it is an impact that affects WH communities. Tourism [in Churchill] is changing bears behaviour, they are losing fear of people. There are the same number of bears as a few years ago can we not increase TAH back to the level at that time?

Public Meeting

No public showed up so the HTO board and team met again with 1 additional board member. This was more of an informal discussion.

Qikiqtarjuaq

HTO Meeting

Discussions were about increases in bears from the 50's and 60's when they were low until a high now. They used to have to travel far for bears and they are easy to get close to town now. Trade and the Environment Canada ban on export has been hard for the community and they would like this reconsidered. Also Loss of TAH has been hard further community. There are so many bears now seal pups are low in number and bird colonies are being impacted.

Public Meeting

The general perception that there are more bears now than in the past. Defense kills should not come off the TAH. Historically it was to be safe in camp when men were away hunting and now it is not. Exploration activities can harm bears and Inuit need to have input into that.

Pangnirtung

HTO Meeting

There are far more bears now than in the past. The sex ratio needs to change to be equal. Polar bears are impacting seal populations. Would like more tags. Younger hunters need to be trained how to hunt polar bears including how to identify males and females.

Public Meeting

There are far more bears now than in the past. The sex ratio needs to change to be equal. Polar bears are impacting seal populations. Would like more tags. Trade and economics of polar bear hunting is important. Defense kills should not come off TAH. Protection of people and property is important.

Cape Dorset

HTO Meeting

The population (DS) has exploded since the 70"s. There are too many bears, they are impacting duck colonies, are a danger to the public. Trade is important to the community economically. Need improvement and better access to damage compensation program.

Public Meeting

There are too many bears, seeing more in town. Would like to increase TAH. Bears are impacting seal populations. Trade is important to the community economically. Would like to see more males harvested.

Sanikiluaq

HTO Meeting

Bears have increased locally, used to overnight on other islands and not see bears, now they do. There are too many bears now, damaging eider nesting areas. Defense kills should not come off TAH. Equal sex ratio harvest would be better. Would prefer to harvest cubs as meat is better. Climate change will help polar bears.

Public Meeting

Too many bears. Would like equal sex ratio harvest. Bears have ruined eider colonies. Elders crave cub meat. Trade is important. Hunters should receive payment if they look after hide in case of defense kills so it does not spoil.

Kimmirut

HTO Meeting

Sex selective harvest should be equal. Bears are more numerous now. Bears are impacting bird colonies and seal pups. Boundary division around community does not make sense. Need to lower bear numbers too much property damage.

Public Meeting

Too many polar bears in community. People are losing knowledge on how to handle hides. Need to make sex ration equal. Need more clarity and information on damage compensation programs. Polar bears are not declining, very few in the past and now they are everywhere.

Iqaluit

HTO Meeting

Used to be no bears had to go way down the bay and now they are close and in town. Harvest sex ratio should change to equal. Defense kills should not come off the TAH. Keep population under 2000 (DS) now there are too many. Damage compensation program needs to be made easier to access. Seal pups have been impacted by polar bears.

Public Meeting

We tried to have meetings on 3 different nights, only one member of the public showed up on the last night. He asked questions and took a copy of the draft to review and provide comments via the website.

Resolute

HTO/Public Meeting

There are more bears now than in the past. Need to increase the TAH to push bear numbers down. Sex ratio-we are killing too many males now. Tags need to be increased for public safety. So many bears seal pups are being depleted.

Grise Fiord

HTO/Public Meeting

In the past you could cache dog food but now there are so many bears you cannot cache. Would like to be able to harvest some cubs. Arctic Basin needs a TAH as defense kills in Eureka are coming off our LS TAH. Overpopulation of polar bears has meant a decline in seals.

Arctic Bay

HTO Meeting

Used to be no polar bears in town now there are lots. Polar bears are so many they are affecting seal populations. Bears are becoming more dangerous, less afraid of people. We can no longer cache food. Public safety at camps and cabins is becoming dangerous. Too many bears now TAH is used in 2 weeks all close to town. Trade provides important benefits to town.

Public Meeting

Defense kills should not come off TAH. Too many bears, population is increasing. Should increase TAH. Bears are becoming more dangerous and harder to camp out. Bears are impacting seal populations.

Pond Inlet

HTO Meeting

So many bears they are impacting seal pups. There are more bears now. Would like equal sex ratio harvest. Should study polar bear-ringed seal dynamics. Seeing less snow for polar bear dens. Baffinland has already impacted with defense kill. Should have different tags for defense kills.

Public Meeting

We are seeing huge, miles long ice flows moving south on currents (new phenomenon) and bears ride these down and out of LS population. Defense kills should not come off TAH. Sex selective harvest should be equal. Too many bears, coming into town, destroying caches, should increase harvest to reduce population. Bears are impacting seal pups. Trade is important to the community.

Clyde River

HTO Meeting

Would like equal sex ratio harvest. Concern about unregulated harvest in Greenland. Need greater Inuit involvement in research. Environment Canada export ban needs to be reviewed as trade is important to the community.

Public Meeting

Too many bears. Bears are eating Inuit food source (i.e. seals). Polar bears used to be fewer in number and bigger. Now there are more but they are smaller. Hire locals to conduct population surveys by ground.

Hall Beach

HTO Meeting

Want to see equal harvest sex ratio. Would like to see improvements to flexible quota system as it is too punitive. Have a separate TAH for defense kills. shorten survey cycle to 10 years. More bears eating more seal pups and duck colonies (Island colonies not mainland) are being destroyed. Would like to see training , infrastructure and support for community bear monitors. Increase TAH for problem bears

Public Meeting

Public safety is the number one issue as there are now so many bears in town. Sex selective harvest needs to be equal. Can no longer cache meat. Polar bears are becoming less afraid of people. Polar bears are impacting seal populations. Defense kills should not come of TAH. Hides from defense kills should not be allowed to spoil.

Igloolik

HTO Meeting

Loss of TAH to defense kills is the main concern. Need for improved polar bear monitor training and support. Sex selective harvest should be equal. Increase TAH and separate defense kills from regular harvest. Need education for younger hunters to identify male and female bears.

Public Meeting

Include community and IQ in research. Need a conference for all jurisdictions where Inuit can come together and talk. Harvest sex ratio should be equal. So many polar bears that seals are decreasing. Public safety is more important than bears. Climate change is increasing polar bears not decreasing them. Camps and cabins are no longer safe.