

**IUCN/Species Survival Commission  
Polar Bear Specialist Group**



Ben Kovic  
Chairperson  
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board  
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Tromsø, Norway, 12 November 2014

**Re: Total allowable harvest for the Western Hudson Bay polar bear subpopulation**

Thank you for your email reminder about the deadline for input to the NWMB hearings on the quota for the Western Hudson Bay polar bear population, sent out by Ms. Sataa, the Administrative Finance Assistant, on 7 November. I seriously regret that we haven't been able to translate our letter. The PBSG has no available translation service and in such cases we have to rely on the gracious assistance from others and did not have the time to do so in this instance.

At this point we have received no information on what possible options the NWMB, Government of Nunavut, or other participants, have proposed for review, or what analyses have been undertaken to support such suggestions. The previous MOU signed by the Western Hudson Bay communities and the Government of Nunavut set a target population size of 1400 bears for purposes of determining the TAH. At that time the population was estimated to number about 1200. The recent (non peer-reviewed) report from Environment Canada estimates a population of approximately 800 in the core area and concludes that the population has been relatively stable over the past decade.

In the absence of a proposal, analyses, or management rationale for either change or no change that we can review, we are unable to comment further at this time. However, the results of the Environment Canada report along with the small proportion of yearlings in the population suggests survival of cubs has been low in recent years, and that the body condition and reproductive rates of adult females are declining. These observations coupled with continued changes in the duration of the ice free season in Hudson Bay suggest the need for precautionary management in setting TAH for this sub-population.

The PBSG remains supportive of sustainable harvesting of polar bear populations in Nunavut, and is willing to provide technical evaluation of new proposals based on scientific information and analyses showing how recommended TAH estimates have been determined.

Thank you for including the PBSG in your review process. Should the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board require any additional information or clarification, please contact me and I will coordinate the request with the Specialist Group.

Sincerely yours,

Dag Vongraven  
Chair, IUCN/Polar Bear Specialist Group

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