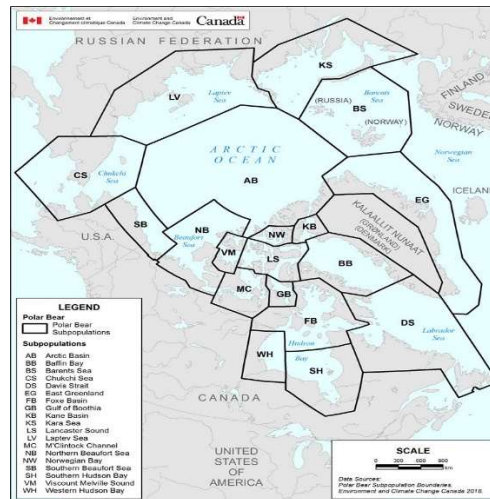


Submission to the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board for

Information: X

Decision:

Issue: Update on the National Polar Bear Management Plan



Background Information:

- Polar Bear is currently listed as Special Concern (2011) under the federal *Species at Risk Act* (SARA). Under provincial/territorial legislation, the species-at-risk listing status of polar bear varies in different provinces and territories in Canada, and ranges from not at risk to threatened. In Nunavut, polar bear is not listed under the *Nunavut Wildlife Act*.
- As required under SARA for species listed as Special Concern, and to respect co-management processes legislated by the *Nunavut Agreement*, a National Polar Bear Management Plan is being developed in cooperation with co-management partners. Once complete, the National Polar Bear Management Plan will be a compendium of six jurisdictional management plans and recovery strategies (Inuvialuit Settlement Region, Nunavut, Manitoba, Ontario, Québec-Eeyou Marine Region-Nunavik Marine Region, Newfoundland and Labrador), tied together by a federal addition.

Development of the Federal Addition to the National Polar Bear Management Plan:

- The development of the federal addition began in 2018. It was developed by Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), in consultation with an advisory working group, consisting of provincial and territorial government

representatives, wildlife management board representatives, and Inuit land claims organization representatives from throughout the species range.

- The working group had regular meetings in 2018 through 2021 and a draft final version of the federal addition was completed in February 2022.

Federal Addition content:

- The federal addition contains the required sections for a federal management plan. For example, it includes a threat assessment, a management objective and conservation measures at a national level.
- Matters such as harvest management and polar bear subpopulation-specific abundance targets and management goals are addressed in jurisdictional management plans and recovery strategies, which form parts 2 – 7 of the National Polar Bear Management Plan.
- Matters that are generally under federal management authority, such as Canada's action on climate change and arctic shipping, are addressed in the federal addition.

Summary of Consultations:

- ECCC participated in the development of jurisdictional management plans and recovery strategies throughout Canada, and took part in community-level consultations in collaboration with provincial/territorial partners.
- In Nunavut:
 - Community-level consultations on Nunavut's Polar Bear Co-Management Plan were led by the Government of Nunavut, throughout the area of application of the Nunavut Polar Bear Co-Management Plan, in 2016. A representative from the Canadian Wildlife Service of ECCC attended these consultations. During these consultations, Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) was shared, and polar bear management objectives were discussed.
 - The Nunavut Wildlife Management Board held a public hearing in November 2018 to consider the proposed final version of the Nunavut Polar Bear Co-Management Plan. ECCC was an active participant and took note of the information shared and incorporated it, as relevant, into the federal addition to the National Polar Bear Management Plan.
- Working group representatives that advised ECCC on the development of the

federal addition noted that, in many cases, an additional round of community consultations focused on the federal addition to the National Polar Bear Management Plan may not be necessary given the extensive nature of provincial/territorial-led consultations.

- To address consultation and accommodation requirements under the Nunavut Agreement, ECCC has sent letters to communities, Regional Wildlife Organizations (RWOs), and Hunters and Trappers Organizations (HTOs) in Nunavut. The letters provide a high-level overview of the federal addition, indicate what consultations have occurred in different regions of Canada on the different jurisdictional management plans and recovery strategies, and ask rights holders how they would like to be engaged on the federal addition.
- ECCC looks forward to feedback from rights holders, and is prepared to engage in any manner (e.g., virtual, in-person) that is requested.

Next Steps for the National Polar Bear Management Plan:

- ECCC proposes to seek final comment on the federal addition through two avenues: (1) direct outreach to communities, HTOs and RWOs (spring and summer 2022), and (2) posting for comment on the national [Species at Risk Public Registry](#) (60 day public comment period in fall 2022).
- ECCC is seeking input from the eight¹ Wildlife Management Boards and Advisory Councils across the species range regarding the content included in the federal addition, and to confirm their support for ECCC's proposal to reach out directly to communities, RWOs and HTOs, in parallel with posting for public comment on the national Species at Risk Public Registry.
- ECCC will consider all feedback received during consultations with rights holders, and during the 60-day public comment period, and will ensure that comments are carefully considered and addressed. ECCC will then present the 'proposed final' version of the federal addition to the eight Wildlife Management Boards and Advisory Councils. At that time, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board will have the opportunity to consider whether to approve the federal addition.

Prepared by:

Environment and Climate Change Canada - Canadian Wildlife Service, Wildlife Management Directorate, Wildlife Management and Regulatory Affairs Division; April 2022

¹ The eight Wildlife Management Boards and Advisory Councils across the range of polar bear in Canada include three in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope), the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (Northwest Territories), and the Inuvialuit Game Council), one in Nunavut (the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board), three in Québec (the Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board, the Eeyou Marine Region Wildlife Board, and the Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Coordinating Committee), and one in Labrador (the Torngat Wildlife and Plants Co-Management Board).