Polar Bear Management Plan for Québec, the Eeyou Marine Region and the Nunavik Marine Region

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2021-2031

For details about the information presented herein, please consult the full version of the management plan

Introductory remarks

The following summary provides an overview of key elements of the Québec-Eeyou Marine Region-Nunavik Marine Region Polar Bear Management Plan. This summary document is intended only to facilitate consultation on the management plan and to promote dialogue around the objectives and actions presented therein.

Any comments or concerns about this management plan should be based on the full management plan. It contains detailed information about the available scientific and Indigenous knowledge of polar bear, the legal framework within which this plan applies as well as the threats and management challenges related to polar bears. The management plan also explains the rationale and context behind the objectives and actions that are presented here. It is therefore inappropriate to consider them independently.

The management plan is the result of a collaborative approach involving representation from each of the following groups:

- Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS), Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC)
- Cree Nation Government (CNG)
- Cree Trappers Association (CTA)
- Eeyou Marine Region Wildlife Board (EMRWB)
- Government of Nunavut Department of the Environment (GNDoE)
- Hunting Fishing Trapping Coordinating Committee (HFTCC)
- Makivik Corporation
- Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs (MFFP)
- Nunavik Hunters, Fishermen & Trappers Association / Regional Nunavimmi Umajulirijiit Katujjiqatigiinninga (NHFTA/RNUK)
- Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board (NMRWB)

Each of the organizations noted above has appointed representatives to a working group tasked with the creation of the polar bear management plan. Representatives were appointed in their capacity as experts in the field of polar bears or polar bear management, and not in the capacity of representing the views or opinions of their organizations. Consultations were undertaken throughout the region affected by the management plan, and we have endeavoured to make sure all relevant stakeholders have had an opportunity to provide input into the plan. To the extent possible, we have attempted to ensure that Inuit, Cree and scientific perspectives have been reflected appropriately throughout the development of the Management Plan.

Plan Duration and Review

The Polar Bear Management Plan for Québec, the Eeyou Marine Region and Nunavik Marine Region will be in effect for a period of 10 years, subject to ongoing monitoring of its effectiveness and a full review and assessment after 5-years. Changes to the management plan may be proposed prior to its expiration should issues be identified in the course of these assessments.

Prior to the end of this 10-year period, a new management plan will be tabled for adoption in accordance with applicable Land Claims Agreements, and all relevant laws and regulations in force at the federal, provincial, and territorial governments.

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1. Introduction

Polar bears play an important role in the culture and livelihoods of Inuit and Cree who inhabit the coastal region of northern Québec. Inuit have used polar bear (*Nanuq* in Inuktitut, *Whabhskewh* in Cree) for food and clothing for millennia; the Cree of Eeyou Istchee have traditionally harvested fewer polar bear than the Inuit, but also place a high value on polar bears as socio-cultural symbols. Accompanying these traditional usages and views have been traditional harvest management practices that largely remain in place to this day.

However, while traditional harvesting practices have existed throughout centuries, the context in which they occur has not. Following the signing of the *1973 Agreement on the Conservation of Polar Bears* by the five polar bear Range States (Canada, United States, Norway, Denmark (Greenland), and Russia), formalized written management regimes were established in most Canadian jurisdictions, with Northern Québec, and adjacent marine areas, being an exception. There has also been increasing international scrutiny of polar bear management and harvesting and international polar bear trade. This has manifested itself in international bans by certain countries and international pressure for stricter control of international trade in polar bear under the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). In this context, the lack of a formally-regulated harvest-management regime in Québec, could be a factor in increased international scrutiny of polar bear management. Any sanctions against the trade of polar bear, including hides, to foreign countries, could deprive Inuit and Cree communities of important sources of income which could in turn negatively impact an important component of their culture – the hunting of polar bears and transformation of their parts for traditional uses.

Partly in response to the above-noted concerns, on January 10, 2012, the then Federal Minister of the Environment requested that the Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board (NMRWB) establish a management regime, including a Total Allowable Take (TAT), for the three subpopulations of polar bear that occur in the Nunavik Marine Region (NMR), namely Davis Strait, Foxe Basin and Southern Hudson Bay subpopulations (Figure 1). Given the need for a provincial polar bear management plan, the distribution of polar bears and the jurisdictional complexities of Northern Québec, it was deemed to be desirable and practical to develop a single management plan that could be applicable to both the onshore portion of Québec and adjacent marine regions (the NMR and the Eeyou Marine Region [EMR]). The management plan is, therefore, intended to encompass the territories covered under the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (JBNQA), the Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement (NILCA) and the Eeyou Marine Region Land Claims Agreement (EMRLCA). The management plan will be approved by the relevant management authorities in accordance with the decision-making mechanisms set out in each of these Agreements and will not be applicable beyond the boundaries defined within them (Figure 1).

For each of the three polar bear subpopulations that occur within the management plan area, information about its abundance, health and observed trends along with management recommendations are included in the appendices that accompany the management plan (see Appendix 2). This information includes an overview of historical data and the most-recent information available for each subpopulation. Because polar bear research is ongoing and since abundance estimates are updated regularly, likely multiple times within the lifespan of this management plan, it is more appropriate to include this information in the

appendices, which can be updated as new information becomes available.

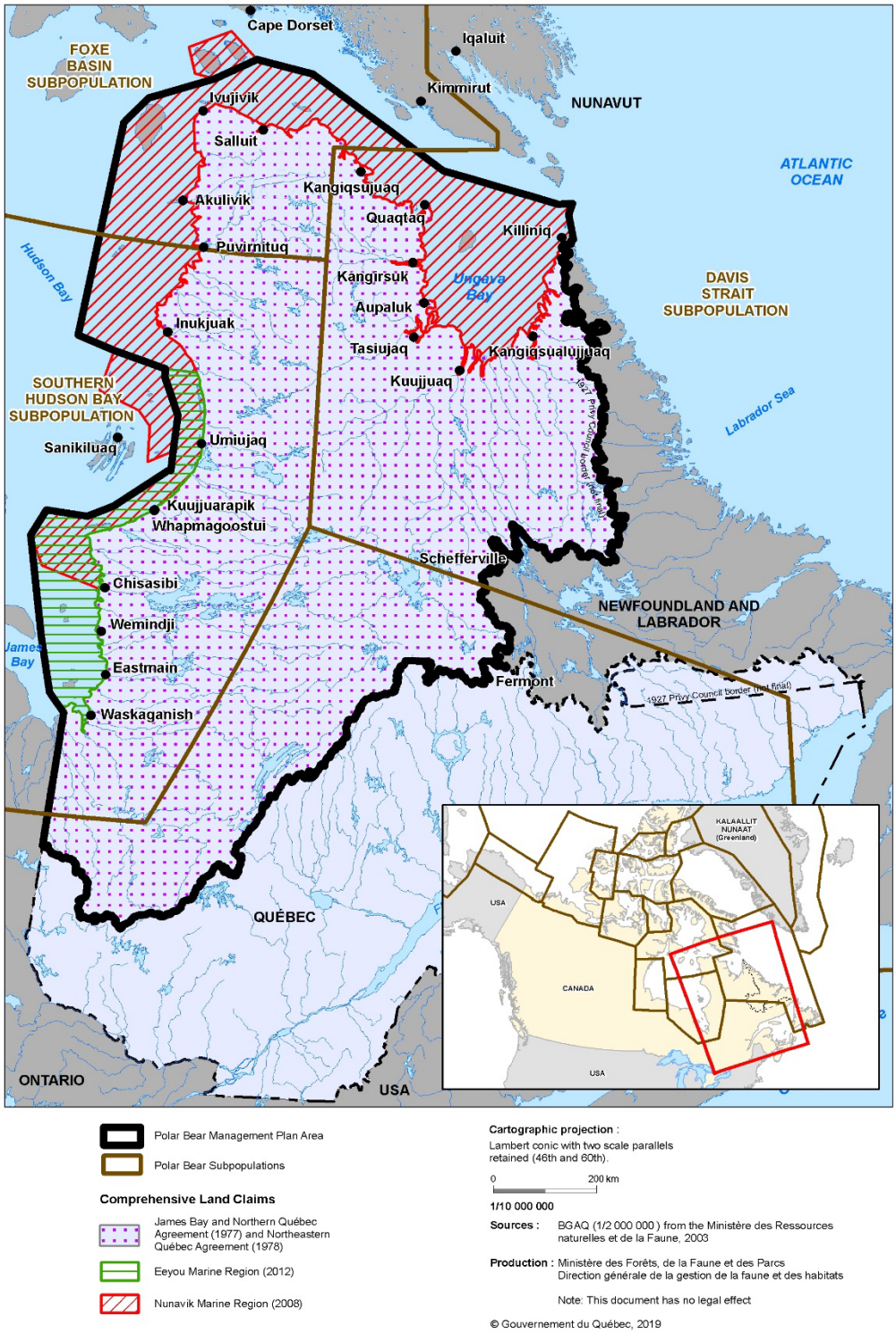

Figure 1. Management Plan Area Based on Relevant Land Claims Agreement Boundaries and polar bear subpopulations present in Québec and adjacent marine regions

2. Guiding Principles

This proposed polar bear management plan is guided by the following principles:

1. The polar bear management plan must recognize and respect the roles, responsibilities and authorities of each organization involved within its area of application (i.e. those areas defined under the Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement (NILCA), the Eeyou Marine Region Land Claims Agreement (EMRLCA) and the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement ("JBNQA")); collaboration and coordination between these authorities is important for effective polar bear management in Northern Québec.
2. Planning and decision making with regards to the conservation and management of polar bears must be founded upon the best-available Traditional Knowledge (TK) and scientific information; when there is divergence between the two, both perspectives must be considered. Up-to-date information on the status and trends of each polar bear subpopulation is essential for effective management and conservation.
3. The protection of human lives and property is paramount and must be considered when discussing the management and conservation of polar bears.
4. The management plan must be consistent with the wildlife management principles detailed in applicable Land Claims Agreements, including the principles of conservation.
5. Engagement and participation of Nunavik Inuit and the Crees of Eeyou Istchee during the development and implementation of this management plan is important to ensure that their approaches to wildlife management as well as their rights, priorities and concerns are fully considered.
6. Polar bear management in Québec, the Nunavik Marine Region (NMR) and the Eeyou Marine Region (EMR) should be adaptive and able to respond in a timely manner to new information and changing conditions.

The goal of this plan is to maintain healthy polar bear populations which remain an important component of the local ecosystem and which will be available for use by current and future generations in a way that respects and embodies the rights, culture and traditions of the Nunavik Inuit and the Crees of Eeyou Istchee.

3. Management Plan goal, objectives and proposed actions

The fundamental mechanism of a management plan is to identify a small number of overarching objectives that should be met in order to meet the overall goal of the management plan. **The goal of this management plan is to maintain healthy polar bear populations which remain an important component of the local ecosystem and which will be available for use by current and future generations in a way that respects and embodies the rights, culture and traditions of the Nunavik Inuit and the Crees of Eeyou Istchee.** This goal applies to the territories covered under the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement, the Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement and the Eeyou Marine Region Land Claims Agreement. In order to achieve this goal, four objectives have been developed and the plan identifies specific approaches that must be implemented in order to accomplish each of the broader objectives. Concrete actions that will provide a means of attaining the management objectives are also identified. The objectives and approaches defined below have been developed based on the views collected during public consultations conducted in Nunavik and in the Eeyou Istchee territory, and on an understanding of polar bears, their habitat and the issues facing them in the management plan area.

Because the Polar Bear Management Plan for Québec, the Eeyou Marine Region and the Nunavik Marine Region is the first comprehensive management plan for polar bears to ever be developed in the Management Plan Area, further dialogue with Nunavik Inuit and the Crees of Eeyou Istchee will be necessary to prioritize and implement management actions. Therefore, once the management plan has been approved by all relevant authorities, management partners will develop a companion document in which lays out a framework for action including an implementation table that sets out specific timelines for action to address the threats and information gaps according to subpopulations listed below. The table will provide the basis for an implementation agreement among management partners. The following actions will be implemented over the course of the management plan and may be updated as necessary to reflect any changes that occur.

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Proposed Actions for the Management of Polar Bear in Quebec, the Eeyou Marine Region and the Nunavik Marine Region	
Objective #1: Establish a management system, based on the best available information, that reflects Inuit and Cree values and that can be adapted as necessary to ensure the long-term persistence of polar bears in the management plan area.	
Approach 1.1	***Review and, as appropriate, renew the 1984 Anguvigaq Polar Bear Regulations and all commitments made therein (see Appendix 1).***
▪ Action 1.1.1	Review the commitments made under the 1984 Anguvigaq Polar Bear Regulations and identify changes needed to align these commitments with present-day realities.
▪ Action 1.1.2	Formally recognize/adopt revised regulations, as relevant for each of the management partners and, where appropriate, have them enshrined in formal regulation by the responsible governments.
Approach 1.2	***Base polar bear management decisions upon the best available information.***
▪ Action 1.2.1	Develop clear policies and/or guidelines for the integration of Traditional Knowledge and Science in decision-making, to aid the creation of a fully representative management system.
▪ Action 1.2.2	Factor ecosystemic variables into polar bear management decisions (e.g. health and abundance of prey, impacts of climate change and anthropogenic activities, etc.).
▪ Action 1.2.3	Recognize the value of Inuit and Cree knowledge and their approaches to wildlife management, and integrate those approaches with knowledge gained through scientific research during decision-making.

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Approach 1.3	***Revise the harvest registration process with the goal of achieving complete reporting of all human-caused mortality of polar bears.***

▪ Action 1.3.1	Identify common obstacles encountered within the current registration process.
▪ Action 1.3.2	Identify most appropriate organization to administer/oversee harvest registration at the community level.
▪ Action 1.3.3	Establish clear protocol for harvest reporting and ensure all necessary implementation tools are in place.
▪ Action 1.3.4	Develop and implement a communications plan and public outreach tools that ensure familiarity with process and the importance of complete registration of the harvest.
▪ Action 1.3.5	Regularly assess effectiveness of the harvest registration system and identify necessary improvements, including implementation of regulatory mechanisms if voluntary reporting is ineffective.
Approach 1.4	***Implement a harvest management system that provides the tools necessary to achieve agreed-upon management objectives and long-term persistence of polar bear subpopulations; these can include mechanisms such as NQLs and TAT.***
▪ Action 1.4.1	For each subpopulation, review its status, identify management objectives and determine whether the current management framework: a) is sufficient to ensure that harvesting is sustainable, in line with the principles of conservation and consistent with the management objectives; and b) does not unduly limit Inuit/Cree harvesting rights.
▪ Action 1.4.2	For subpopulations where the existing management framework is deemed to be inadequate to address a conservation concern, or when it unduly restricts harvesting rights: a) amend the current management system as appropriate to address the issue identified; and b) ensure that communities are informed of the options, and allowed an opportunity to provide input; and c) initiate decision-making processes defined under the JBNQA, NILCA and EMRLCA, as necessary and make all attempts to ensure that management decisions are aligned with the processes occurring in neighbouring jurisdictions.

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Approach 1.5	***Annually review all pertinent information to inform adaptive management of polar bears.***
▪ Action 1.5.1	For each subpopulation, establish a forum where all relevant information can be shared amongst the management partners on a regular basis.
▪ Action 1.5.2	Annually review the information available for each subpopulation (e.g. harvest, abundance, health, DLP kills, etc.) and assess whether the existing management framework is effective.
▪ Action 1.5.3	Make necessary changes to the management system (process is defined under Approach 1.4, above).
Approach 1.6	***Maintain an age-selective and male-biased harvest.***
▪ Action 1.6.1	Maintain, using the most appropriate measures, the protection of young bears (e.g., local LNUK bylaw, formal government regulations, etc.).
▪ Action 1.6.2	Document the sex of all harvested polar bears (including bears killed in defense of life and property).
▪ Action 1.6.3	When there is a significant or sustained increase in the proportion of females killed, implement measures to lower the take of female bears (e.g. hunter education, etc.).
▪ Action 1.6.4	If necessary, develop and implement a regulatory framework that ensures sex-selective harvesting.
Approach 1.7	***Explore the implications and social acceptability of implementing a polar bear sport hunt and, as appropriate, identify the means by which such an activity could be established.***
▪ Action 1.7.1	Identify the obstacles, implications and potential benefits of a sport hunt (including experiences from other jurisdictions).
▪ Action 1.7.2	Obtain a clear mandate from Nunavik Inuit about whether to pursue the establishment of a sport hunt, after they have been given an opportunity to weigh all of the information.

▪ Action 1.7.3	If Nunavik Inuit are clearly in support of a sport hunt, undertake the necessary consultative processes with the Crees of Eeyou Istchee prior to developing and implementing a framework under which a sport hunt could be initiated.

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Objective #2: Collect Traditional Knowledge and scientific information related to polar bears to inform management decisions.	
Approach 2.1	***Ensure coordination and collaboration towards monitoring the health and abundance of polar bears, at a frequency that allows robust decision-making.***
▪ Action 2.1.1	Maintain a collaborative effort to monitor polar bear health, abundance and trends through regular surveys.
▪ Action 2.1.2	Identify gaps and obstacles encountered in current and previous sampling programs and implement revisions that are practical, agreeable to hunters, and which allow collection of information that complements the data gathered during surveys.
▪ Action 2.1.3	Identify additional opportunities for community-based monitoring that can contribute to knowledge relevant for polar bear management.
▪ Action 2.1.4	Encourage the complementarity of research methods and priorities between regions, in collaboration with partners from other jurisdictions.
Approach 2.2	***Document the Traditional Knowledge of Nunavik Inuit and the Crees of Eeyou Istchee to inform research and guide management efforts.***
▪ Action 2.2.1	Ensure that the holders of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit/Cree Knowledge are afforded a meaningful opportunity to provide input on polar bear management.

▪ Action 2.2.2	Identify current gaps in the extent of documented Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit/Cree Knowledge and in its availability to decision-makers (and re-assess periodically).
Approach 2.3	***Improve our understanding of the changes to polar bear habitat, behaviour and interaction with other species and the potential impacts of these changes on polar bears.***
▪ Action 2.3.1	Assess the availability of ecosystemic information relevant to the management of polar bear (i.e. habitat use, behaviour, prey, competitors, etc.) within the management plan area.
▪ Action 2.3.2	Establish research priorities that seek to address any identified knowledge gaps.
▪ Action 2.3.3	Gather the baseline information needed to better understand the potential impacts of future habitat alteration and increased human activity.
▪ Action 2.3.4	Seek to understand the evolving relationship between polar bears, their prey and the expansion or contraction of the range occupied by other species with which they may interact.
Approach 2.4	***Promote and encourage the training and meaningful involvement of Cree and Inuit in polar bear research and management, and provide tools to facilitate the documentation of Inuit and Cree observations related to polar bear.***
▪ Action 2.4.1	Encourage the participation of Inuit and Cree in the planning and interpretation of research and monitoring programs.
▪ Action 2.4.2	Build local capacity to undertake and actively participate in polar bear research, including the establishment of community-based monitoring programs.
Approach 2.5	***Work towards improving non-invasive research methods and develop alternative means to collect biological information.***
▪ Action 2.5.1	Provide information to communities about polar bear research methods and best-practices, including the pros and cons of invasive methods of research (e.g. what information is lost when researchers cannot handle/collar polar bears).

▪ Action 2.5.2	Obtain the Inuit and Cree positions with regards to the immobilization of polar bears.
▪ Action 2.5.3	Develop a clear protocol that defines the necessary steps and authorizations, whenever invasive research methods cannot be avoided (e.g. identify an appropriate consultation process).
▪ Action 2.5.4	Identify means of obtaining the necessary biological information that are non-invasive, or less-invasive.

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Objective #3: Establishing strategies to minimize the effects of human activities on polar bears and their habitat, as well as to reduce human-bear conflicts.	
Approach 3.1	***Document all instances of human-bear conflicts.***
▪ Action 3.1.1	Put in a place and maintain a standardized system to track all instances of polar bear – human conflict; regardless of whether a DLP kill occurs or not.
▪ Action 3.1.2	Ensure that Inuit and Cree communities are informed about this system and that there is local capacity to document this information.
▪ Action 3.1.3	Ensure that the information about polar bear – human interactions is flowing to decision-makers such that the information is considered when management measures are developed.
Approach 3.2	***Develop programs and tools aimed towards reducing human-bear conflicts within the management plan area to increase public safety while reducing the number of Defense of Life and Property (DLP) kills.***
▪ Action 3.2.1	Where relevant, establish community polar bear response plans and support their implementation.
▪ Action 3.2.2	Put in place programs and tools to assist Cree/Inuit in dealing with dangerous bears (e.g. support polar bear patrols in high-risk areas, make polar bear deterrents available, etc.).
▪ Action 3.2.3	Increase public awareness about the danger of polar bears and share best-practices on how to prevent interactions and/or deal with dangerous bears.

Approach 3.3	***Clarify the rights of Inuit and Cree in respect to defense of life and property kills and provide clear guidance on the steps that must be followed when such circumstances arise.***
▪ Action 3.3.1	Develop a practical protocol for dealing with DLP kills in the management plan area, which reflects provisions of the NILCA and EMRLCA related to emergency kills and is consistent with the JBNQA.
▪ Action 3.3.2	Implement this protocol and ensure that it is effectively communicated throughout the region.
▪ Action 3.3.3	Ensure that Inuit, Cree and other visitors to the region are aware of their rights concerning DLP kills, and of other means to deal with problem bears.
Approach 3.4	***Promote the respect and ethical treatment of polar bears by all users.***
▪ Action 3.4.1	Reaffirm the engagement of all -management partners not to send polar bear cubs from the management area into zoos and aquariums.
▪ Action 3.4.2	Promote Inuit and Cree traditional values regarding polar bears to visitors and to local communities.
Approach 3.5	***Minimize the impacts of industrial development, shipping, tourism and other human activities on polar bears in the management area.***
▪ Action 3.5.1	Identify sensitive polar bear habitats for which protections and stewardship measures may be needed and ensure that this information is available to land use planners and during impact review processes.
▪ Action 3.5.2	Establish industry guidelines and best-practices aimed at minimizing the detrimental effects cause by human activities.

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Objective #4: Collaborate, coordinate, communicate and promote the exchange of knowledge and information related to polar bears.	
Approach 4.1	***Foster the transmission of traditional knowledge between elders and youth.***

▪ Action 4.1.1	Develop approaches, such that the knowledge of elders related to polar bears is available to the benefit of future generations of Inuit and Crees (including knowledge about preparation and use of polar bear products).
▪ Action 4.1.2	Collaborate with the appropriate institutions towards developing educational materials that foster this exchange.
Approach 4.2	***Strengthen the two-directional flow of information between community members, researchers, management authorities and other relevant stakeholders.***
▪ Action 4.2.1	Promote the exchange of information between community members, researchers, management authorities and other relevant stakeholders (including with regards to rights and responsibilities) and ensure that these exchanges inform the National/International stage.
▪ Action 4.2.2	Encourage Crees/Inuit representation in scientific meetings.
▪ Action 4.2.3	Encourage researchers to visit Cree/Inuit communities, or to utilize local/regional events and communications tools (e.g. community radio) to inform Inuit and Crees about their research and findings.
▪ Action 4.2.4	Promote (to the scientific community, management authorities and relevant stakeholders) the value and importance of working collaboratively with Inuit and Crees on matters related to polar bear.
Approach 4.3	***Create a permanent forum wherein information and best-practices related to polar bears can be discussed, and which will facilitate the coordination of polar bear management by the relevant parties.***
▪ Action 4.3.1	Formalize the Québec – Eeyou Marine Region – Nunavik Marine Region Polar Bear Working Group into a permanent committee, and maintain its functionality.
▪ Action 4.3.2	Task the Working Group with development of an Implementation Plan that will give effect to the Actions proposed herein, and with the monitoring of its execution.

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Approach 4.4	***Enhance collaboration with other jurisdictions to guide polar bear management on a national and international level.***
▪ Action 4.4.1	Recognizing extent of each jurisdiction's authority, maintain dialogue towards ensuring a coordinated polar bear management effort across jurisdictional boundaries.
▪ Action 4.4.2	Evaluate the effectiveness of current means for inter-jurisdictional coordination of polar bear management and, as appropriate, consider implementing structures to facilitate this exchange.
▪ Action 4.4.3	Ensure that management partners participate in provincial, national and international forums (e.g. ICG, PBAC, PBTC, Polar Bear Range States, CITES, etc.).

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Appendix 1: 1984 Anguvigaq Polar Bear Regulations

1984 Anguvigaq Polar Bear Regulations

1. That a closed season on polar bear hunting be in effect from June 1st to August 31st.
2. That female bears with cubs not be killed at any time of the year unless they are problem bears.*
3. That polar bears not be killed in their dens. Further, that no one, including scientists and Inuit, disturb a bear in its den unless authorized after consultation with Anguvigaq Wildlife Management Inc. and review by the Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Coordinating Committee.
4. That polar bears less than 2 years old not be killed at any time of the year unless they are problem bears.*
5. That polar bear cubs not be sold to any person or organization unless authorized after consultation with Anguvigaq Wildlife Management Inc. and review by the Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Coordinating Committee.
6. That the responsibility for issuing polar bear tags to Inuit hunters rests with the local government municipal corporations in northern Québec.
7. That the moratorium on drugging polar bears in northern Québec be continued.
8. That each Inuit community will recognize the right of all other Inuit communities to harvest polar bears and will continue to help each other in matters relating to polar bears.

* Problem bear is defined as any polar bear that is a threat to life or property.

Appendix 2: Subpopulation status, harvest and management recommendations

Globally, polar bears are divided into 19 subpopulations for management purposes. This is based on movement patterns estimated from satellite telemetry data, and ear tags returned from harvested bears. Although these boundaries are accepted for management purposes, frequent movement of bears occur between subpopulations and both scientists and Traditional Knowledge holders believe these subpopulations are not isolated. The three subpopulations that occur at least partially in Québec are presented here along with a brief characterization of their population history, status, and proposed management recommendation(s). **The management plan provides detailed information about the status, harvest records and management history for each subpopulation. This information is essential to a proper assessment of the information presented below.**

2A - Davis Strait subpopulation status, harvest and management

The Davis Strait (DS) subpopulation is delineated in Canada within the Labrador Sea, eastern Hudson Strait, Davis Strait south of Cape Dyer, and along a portion of southwest Greenland. This delineation is based on the recapture or harvest of previously tagged animals and tracking adult female polar bears with satellite collars. This subpopulation is therefore shared between Greenland, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nunavut and Québec.

In Québec and the Nunavik Marine Region, the 5-year average reported harvest in DS for the 2014/15 to 2018/19 period is 20.2 bears per year. The main Nunavik communities harvesting from DS subpopulation are, in order of importance of the average annual reported harvest, Quaqtaq, Kangiqsualujjuaq, Kangiqsujuaq, Aupaluk, Kuujjuaq, Kangirsuk and Tasiujaq.

Latest population estimate: 2,158 bears (95% CI: 1,833–2,542) - 2007

Recent trend (scientific): likely increased (PBTC, 2020)*

Trend according to TEK: increased (PBTC, 2020)*

Current harvest limits: Nunavut = 61

Nunatsiavut = 12

Greenland = 3

Québec = 35 (voluntary limit)

***The Polar Bear Technical Committee (PBTC) reviews annually the status and trends of all polar bear subpopulations in Canada. The Polar Bear Administrative Committee (PBAC) use this information to support management decision making.**

Management recommendations:

- Maintain current population abundance and review management objective(s) once the new Traditional Knowledge studies and results from the recent genetic mark-recapture study become available.
- Take necessary measures to ensure complete harvest reporting from this subpopulation.
- Increase cooperation among all jurisdictions that share this subpopulation to ensure a sustainable harvest.
- Hold joint wildlife management board public hearings to consider management options.
- Encourage inter-jurisdictional discussions between governments and user groups to identify appropriate management objectives and the allocation of the harvest between regions.

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2B – Foxe Basin subpopulation status, harvest and management

Based on decades of mark-recapture studies and satellite tracking of female bears, the Foxe Basin (FB) subpopulation appears to occur in the Foxe Basin, northern Hudson Bay, and the western end of Hudson Strait. This subpopulation is shared between Nunavut and Québec but only a very small portion of the total range occupied by that subpopulation occurs within Québec and the Nunavik Marine Region.

Currently there are no harvest limitations in Nunavik for FB and the 5 year average reported harvest for the 2014/15 to 2018/19 period is 6 bears per year. The main Nunavik communities harvesting from FB subpopulation are, in order of importance of their reported harvest, Ivujivik, Akulivik, Puvirnituq, Salluit and Kangiqsujuaq.

Latest population estimate: 2,585 bears (95% CI: 2,096–3,189) - 2010

Recent trend (scientific): stable (PBTC, 2020)*

Trend according to TEK: increased (PBTC, 2020)*

Current harvest limits: Nunavut = 123

Nunavik = no harvest limit

***The Polar Bear Technical Committee (PBTC) reviews annually the status and trends of all polar bear subpopulations in Canada. The Polar Bear Administrative Committee (PBAC) use this information to support management decision making.**

Management recommendations:

- Maintain current population abundance and review management objective(s) once new Traditional Knowledge or Scientific knowledge becomes available.
- Take necessary measures to ensure complete harvest reporting from this subpopulation.
- Increase cooperation with Nunavut to ensure a sustainable harvest.
- Hold joint wildlife management board public hearings (HFTCC, NMRWB and NWMB) to consider management options.
- Encourage inter-jurisdictional discussions between governments and user groups to identify appropriate management objectives and the allocation of the harvest between Nunavut and Nunavik Inuit.
- Collaborate with Nunavut and ECCC for reassessing the abundance and trend of this subpopulation before 2025.

2C – Southern Hudson Bay subpopulation status, harvest and management

The range of the Southern Hudson Bay (SH) subpopulation includes much of eastern and southern Hudson Bay and James Bay and large expanses of the coastline of Ontario and Québec as well as areas up to 120 km inland. There are three Nunavik Inuit communities (Inukjuak, Umiujaq, and Kuujjuaraapik) and three coastal Cree communities (Whapmagoostui, Waskaganish, and Chisasibi) that potentially harvest from this subpopulation. The 5-year average reported harvest for the 2014/15 to 2018/19 period is 12.4 bears per year.

Latest population estimate: 780 bears (95% CI: 590–1,029) - 2016

Recent trend (scientific): likely declined (PBTC, 2020)*

Trend according to TEK: stable in James Bay; likely increase in Eastern Hudson Bay (PBTC, 2020)*

Current harvest limits: Nunavut = 25

Nunavik Marine Region = 23

Eeyou Marine Region + Québec = no harvest limit

Ontario = no harvest limit

***The Polar Bear Technical Committee (PBTC) reviews annually the status and trends of all polar bear subpopulations in Canada. The Polar Bear Administrative Committee (PBAC) use this information to support management decision making.**

Management recommendations:

- Take necessary measures to ensure complete harvest reporting from this subpopulation.
- Continue inter-jurisdictional discussions between governments and user groups to identify appropriate management objectives, evaluate sustainable harvest levels and ensure agreement on the fair allocation of the harvest between users.
- Hold joint wildlife management board public hearings to consider management options.
- Considering the likely declining trend of the subpopulation and the conservation concerns identified according to Scientific Knowledge, review harvest restrictions for Nunavik Inuit and Crees from Eeyou Istchee within the NMR, EMR and on mainland Québec (e.g. TAT, NQL, etc.) to ensure the sustainability of the total harvest within the whole subpopulation range.
- Collaborate with Nunavut, ECCC and Ontario for reassessing the abundance and trend of this subpopulation before 2025.

- Review management objective(s), sustainable harvest level and management options once new Traditional Knowledge or scientific knowledge becomes available.