



COMPENDIUM OF CANADA'S ENGAGEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS AND INSTRUMENTS

Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Canada, the Government of Nunavut, and the Government of Greenland for the Conservation and Management of Polar Bear Populations

SUBJECT CATEGORY:

Biodiversity / Ecosystems

TYPE OF AGREEMENT / INSTRUMENT:

Multilateral

FORM:

Memorandum of Understanding

STATUS:

- 2009 MoU expired in 2014 however collaborative work is ongoing
- New MoU expected in 2023

LEAD & PARTNER DEPARTMENTS:

Lead: Environment and Climate Change Canada

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**Web Links:**

The text of the MOU is available on the website of the [Polar Bear Specialist Group](#) (PBSG).

Contacts:

[ECCC Inquiry Centre](#)

COMPENDIUM EDITION:

July 2022

PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY

Canada and Greenland share management responsibilities for the Kane Basin and Baffin Bay polar bear subpopulations. Indigenous peoples from both countries have harvesting rights and as such, it is important for the countries to share Indigenous Knowledge and science about their respective regions and adaptively manage as required.

This arrangement is important to Canada because it successfully brings together governments and Indigenous people living with polar bears to discuss species management.

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to manage shared polar bear subpopulations (Kane Basin and Baffin Bay) in order to ensure their conservation and sustainable management into the future.

KEY ELEMENTS

The MOU outlines the creation of a Canada (Government of Nunavut and Environment and Climate Change Canada) - Greenland Joint Commission that recommends a combined total allowable harvest, and a fair division of the shared harvest. The Joint Commission is also used to coordinate science, Indigenous Knowledge, management and outreach activities.

EXPECTED RESULTS

This MoU helps achieve enhanced, collaborative action on polar bear management and conservation via a set of described activities. The Joint Commission meets as required to ensure advancement of coordinated action.

CANADA'S INVOLVEMENT

This MoU is important to Canada because Nunavut shares polar bear subpopulations with Greenland, and polar bear conservation is priority issue for all parties. Canada has a similar arrangement in place with the United States for another shared subpopulation.

This MOU is not legally binding and creates no legal obligations on the Participants. However, the need for cooperative action for a shared species is noted as being essential for effective management and the development of appropriate conservation measures.

RESULTS / PROGRESS

Activities

Environment and Climate Change Canada, the Government of Nunavut, the Government of Greenland, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., and Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board (i.e. the Joint Commission) last met in 2017, along with the Scientific, Indigenous Traditional Knowledge and User-to-User Working Groups, to discuss the status of

the Kane Basin and Baffin Bay subpopulations, total allowable harvest and allocation between the two countries.

Results

Following a harvest reduction and diligent management by both countries and a robust and comprehensive research program, using state-of-the art methodologies the Baffin Bay and Kane Basin subpopulations now have up-to-date population estimates, as well as changes in range and habitat information which have informed harvest and management decisions in both countries.