



News Release

Interim polar bear hunting quota announced for Gjoa Haven

IQALUIT, Nunavut (May 1, 2002) – Sustainable Development Minister Olayuk Akesuk and Chair of the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board Ben Kovic announce that Gjoa Haven will receive a temporary quota of three tags to hunt polar bears in the area known as Gulf of Boothia.

A moratorium was placed on hunting polar bears in M'Clintock last year in response to Government of Nunavut research findings. This moratorium left the community of Gjoa Haven with no polar bear tags during the 2001/2002 hunting season and the prospect of future long-term restrictions on hunting in the area.

“This announcement will have a positive impact on the community, and it reflects our Government’s commitment to work co-operatively to help the community deal with the impacts of the moratorium,” Minister Akesuk said. “By working together as we are, we will meet the challenge of developing a strong economy for our territory.”

The Government of Nunavut and the NWMB made the announcement in response to further government research released earlier this year, which indicates that the Gulf of Boothia polar bear population, was in a healthy state and could sustain an increase in hunting. The Gulf of Boothia is an area lying to the east of M'Clintock Channel.

Although Gjoa Haven has not previously had a share of the quota in the Gulf of Boothia population, the proposal to establish an interim quota was supported by the communities using this area as a way of helping hunters in Gjoa Haven deal with the impacts of the moratorium in M'Clintock Channel.

“With this temporary quota, I am pleased that Gjoa Haven will have the opportunity to harvest polar bears this current season,” Mr. Kovic said.

The Department of Sustainable Development plans to use the results of recent studies to develop new polar bear management agreements for both M'Clintock Channel and Gulf of Boothia during the upcoming fall and winter. These agreements will be developed in consultation with affected communities.

The quota of three tags is valid for the current hunting season that ends May 31. The Hunters and Trappers Organization in Gjoa Haven is expected to oversee allocation of the tags to local hunters.

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