



News Release

Nunavut and Greenland Agree to Manage Shared Polar Bear Populations

IQALUIT, Nunavut, (April 28, 2005) Nunavut and Greenland have reached an agreement to manage shared populations of polar bears that will help ensure their sustainability.

“I am very pleased we can work co-operatively on this issue. The Inuit of Nunavut and Greenland are committed to responsible wildlife management and are working together to ensure the sustainability of our shared polar bear populations,” said Olayuk Akesuk, Nunavut’s Environment Minister.

The agreement was reached recently at a meeting of senior officials from Nunavut and Greenland.

“I am very happy that we have an agreement to co-manage this unique and valuable resource. Polar bears are important symbols for both of our people. As Inuit we have both relied upon and nurtured this resource for centuries and we will continue to do so,” said Greenland Fisheries and Hunting Minister Rasmus Frederiksen.

The co-management agreement will be based on polar bears being a key part of the arctic ecosystem. Maintaining their populations at healthy levels is important not only to the ecosystem, but also to the culture of Inuit, and to the economies of Nunavut and Greenland. In order for polar bear populations to be healthy it is critical they be managed in a sustainable manner. This requires co-operation from all parties sharing the population.

Greenland and Nunavut officials are prepared to move forward with the process required to begin drafting an agreement to co-manage the three shared polar bear populations - Kane Basin, Baffin Bay and Davis Strait.

It is expected that the shared management agreement will outline how and when scientific research will be conducted, and contain provisions on the application of quotas or total allowable harvests. The setting of quotas or total allowable harvests will be based on international agreements, scientific research and traditional knowledge.

The agreement is based on a Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Government of Nunavut and the Greenland Home Rule Government on October 24, 2000.

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