

NEWS RELEASE

CANADA TAKES ANOTHER MAJOR STEP FORWARD ON POLAR BEAR CONSERVATION

KANGERLUUSUAQ, Greenland -- October 30, 2009 -- Canada's Environment Minister, Jim Prentice, Nunavut's Minister of the Environment, Daniel Shewchuk, and Greenland's Minister of Fisheries, Hunting and Agriculture, Ane Hansen, today announced the signing of an agreement between the governments of Canada, Nunavut, and Greenland to ensure the protection of shared polar bear populations.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) proposes the creation of a Canada - Greenland joint commission that would recommend a combined total allowable harvest, and a fair division of the shared harvest. The joint commission, which includes representatives from Canadian Inuit organizations Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and the Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board, would also be used to coordinate science, traditional knowledge, management and outreach activities.

Between Aboriginal peoples and all levels of government, an unprecedented level of effort has been put forth to conserve and manage polar bears in Canada. The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding today represents another important step forward in our ongoing commitment to protect the polar bear.

"The Government of Canada is committed to working collaboratively to protect one of Canada's true natural — and national — symbols. An iconic animal, whose rare and rugged beauty stands as a stark reminder that Canada is one of the world's true Nordic nations. The Memorandum of Understanding will help ensure conservation and sustainable management of Kane Basin and Baffin Bay polar bear populations into the future," said Minister Prentice.

"Conservation and sustainable management of polar bears is very important for Greenland, for cultural, social and economic reasons. That is why I am so proud to be part of the signing of the first MOU on polar bears between Greenland, Canada and Nunavut. We find it important that co-management agreements are developed between nations sharing polar bear population to ensure that combined harvests does not exceed sustainable levels. It is also important that traditional knowledge is used together with science in this process. Greenland is looking forward to continue its effort to implement the co-management agreement with Canada / Nunavut", said Ane Hansen Greenland Minister for Fisheries, Hunting & Agriculture.

"With this MOU we open the door for further collaboration on key priorities for polar bear management," said Nunavut Environment Minister, Daniel Shewchuk. "Coordinating our efforts with respect to research methodologies and the exchange of multiple sources of



knowledge will help us make the wisest possible management decisions for our polar bear populations. We look forward to exploring the many ways this joint commission can work toward our shared vision for polar bear conservation.”

Earlier this year, Minister Prentice hosted a National Roundtable on polar bears with the territories, the provinces, wildlife management boards and others who have a management and conservation role to protect Canada’s approximately 15,500 Polar Bears. At the meeting, the need to form an agreement on managing shared polar bear subpopulations was identified as a high priority.

Of Canada’s 13 polar bear subpopulations, the Kane Basin and Baffin Bay subpopulations are shared exclusively between Nunavut and Greenland.

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