



NWT CONFERENCE OF MANAGEMENT AUTHORITIES

CONSENSUS AGREEMENT ON ADOPTING THE *INUVIALUIT SETTLEMENT REGION POLAR BEAR JOINT MANAGEMENT PLAN AND FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION*

The Conference of Management Authorities has reached a consensus (hereafter referred to as the "Consensus Agreement") on the following:

To adopt, in accordance with section 63 of the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*, the Inuvialuit Settlement Region Polar Bear Joint Management Plan and the Framework for Action for Management of Polar Bears in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region.

INTERPRETATION


For greater certainty, terms and processes in this Consensus Agreement are as defined and described in the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*.

For greater certainty, the Management Authorities for polar bears (*Ursus maritimus*) in the Northwest Territories are the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT) and the Government of the Northwest Territories.

WE THE UNDERSIGNED, having reached this consensus on this 13th day of March 2017, provide this Consensus Agreement to the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Government of the Northwest Territories.



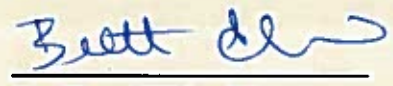
Witness



Rob Gau, Member
Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT)



Witness



Dr. Brett Elkin, Director
Wildlife Division
Dept. of Environment and Natural Resources
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ANNEX A

REASONS FOR THE CONSENSUS AGREEMENT

On February 27, 2014 the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Government of the Northwest Territories, acting on the direction provided by the Conference of Management Authorities in their *Consensus Agreement on Listing Polar Bear (Ursus maritimus)* (November 2013), added polar bears to the NWT List of Species at Risk as a species of special concern. If a species is listed as special concern, the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* provides a two year period for the Conference of Management Authorities to prepare and complete a management plan for that species unless an extension under subsection 59(2) of the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* is applied. In this case, a 16 month extension (to June 27, 2017) was applied.

The *Inuvialuit Settlement Region Polar Bear Joint Management Plan* (Management Plan) describes the management goal and objectives for polar bears in the entire Inuvialuit Settlement Region (ISR), including the Northwest Territories and Yukon. The Management Plan was developed to meet the requirements of a management plan under the territorial *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* and the ISR (Yukon and NWT) regional component of the national management plan under the federal *Species at Risk Act*, while also respecting the joint management process laid out in the *Inuvialuit Final Agreement*.

Management authority for polar bears in the ISR is jurisdictionally complex and the Management Plan is intended to facilitate an integrated and common approach by all jurisdictions. To facilitate this process, a companion document, the *Framework for Action for Management of Polar Bears in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region* (Framework for Action) was developed. This document outlines actions and areas where further work should be directed. The Framework for Action is meant to be used by management partners to develop an implementation table.

The Management Plan and Framework for Action were prepared collaboratively by Environment and Natural Resources, the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT), Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope), Inuvialuit Game Council, Environment Yukon, Parks Canada, and Environment and Climate Change Canada. The process of developing the Management Plan and Framework for Action included meetings in the ISR communities, conducting Crown consultation with regard to Aboriginal and treaty rights, and providing the opportunity for public comment.

The Management Authorities for polar bears in the Northwest Territories are confident that the Management Plan and Framework for Action satisfactorily address

management requirements for polar bears, as required by the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*.

This Consensus Agreement was informed by the review of the Management Plan and Framework for Action, the Species at Risk Committee's assessment and reasons for assessment of polar bears, the approved species status report, public input (solicited by the Management Authorities), and the results of Crown consultation duties performed by the Government of the Northwest Territories. No information was provided to the Species at Risk Committee by the Conference of Management Authorities or a Management Authority under paragraph 31(1)(c). Actions taken by the Management Authorities with respect to the required approvals and their preparation for the development of the Consensus Agreement are described in Annex B of this Consensus Agreement.

The Government of the Northwest Territories did not hear any significant concerns about the management goal, objectives, approaches and actions during development of the Management Plan and Framework for Action. After reviewing the input received through consultation, the Government of the Northwest Territories' assessment is that the Management Plan and Framework for Action and their implementation will not adversely affect asserted or established Aboriginal or treaty rights.

The Management Plan and Framework for Action were developed appropriately with input from the necessary parties. The Management Plan and Framework for Action include appropriate recommended objectives and approaches for the management of polar bears, as well as descriptions of threats and positive influences, as required under section 61 of the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*. The Management Plan and Framework for Action will help the Management Authorities decide what actions to take, how to prioritize their work, and how to allocate their resources in order to manage polar bears in the NWT.

For these reasons, the Management Authorities for polar bears under the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* (the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT) and the Government of the Northwest Territories) agree to adopt the *Inuvialuit Settlement Region Polar Bear Joint Management Plan* and the *Framework for Action for Management of Polar Bears in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region*.

ANNEX B

ACTIONS MANAGEMENT AUTHORITIES HAVE UNDERTAKEN OR WILL UNDERTAKE WITH RESPECT TO ADOPTING THE MANAGEMENT PLAN AND FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

As provided for in paragraph 66(3)(b) of the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*, the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT) and the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT), having agreed to adopt the Inuvialuit Settlement Region Polar Bear Joint Management Plan and the Framework for Action for Management of Polar Bears in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, are reporting the actions they took or agree to take with respect to the completion and approval of this Consensus Agreement:

The Wildlife Management Advisory Council (WMAC) (NWT) and GNWT held public meetings with the Hunters and Trappers Committees in all six Inuvialuit Settlement Region (ISR) communities in 2013, 2014, and 2016 to discuss the potential listing of polar bears, the draft Framework for Action, and the draft Management Plan. The six communities are Aklavik, Inuvik, Tuktoyaktuk, Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour, and Ulukhaktok.

As part of the engagement and consultation process, there were numerous discussions with representatives of WMAC (NWT), WMAC (North Slope), the Inuvialuit Game Council (IGC), GNWT Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR), Environment Yukon, Parks Canada, and Environment and Climate Change Canada to gather feedback and direction. ENR worked with other GNWT departments through the Inter-departmental Species at Risk Committee.

Input was also requested from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, North Slope Borough, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Government of Nunavut, and the ISR Fisheries Joint Management Committee. Input from all parties, including the general public and interested organizations, was solicited by the GNWT through the posting of the draft Management Plan and Framework for Action on the NWT Species at Risk website for public comment. The comment period was July 11 to September 2, 2016. The GNWT invited comments using print ads, posters, the NWT Species at Risk website, and an email distribution list.

Feedback received during engagement and consultation was fully considered when drafting the final Management Plan and Framework for Action. Detailed records of comments and how they were addressed are on file at the Wildlife Division, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Yellowknife.

The GNWT consulted on the draft Management Plan and Framework for Action with the IGC, Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., with respect to potential infringement of established or asserted Aboriginal or treaty rights. The GNWT explained the consequences of the Management Plan and Framework for Action and the implementation agreement to follow. The GNWT explained that completing the Management Plan, Framework for Action and implementation agreement would not result in any automatic prohibitions or protections for species or habitat, and would not change harvest quotas, regulations, or habitat protection already in place. The GNWT requested input on whether the proposed Management Plan and Framework for Action, if implemented, could potentially adversely affect established or asserted Aboriginal or treaty rights. No comments or concerns were expressed with respect to the Management Plan and Framework for Action or their implementation. After reviewing the results of consultation, the GNWT's assessment is that the Management Plan, Framework for Action, and their implementation will not adversely affect asserted or established Aboriginal or treaty rights. Full records of consultation are on file at the Wildlife Division, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Yellowknife

The GNWT recognizes that future management actions arising from the NWT species at risk process regarding polar bears may have the potential to adversely affect Aboriginal or treaty rights. If actions for the management of polar bears that have the potential to adversely affect Aboriginal or treaty rights are contemplated in future, such as changes to harvest regulations or legal habitat protection, GNWT would consult on these changes before implementing them.

At WMAC (NWT)'s regular meeting in December 2016, WMAC (NWT) agreed to accept the Management Plan and Framework for Action.