



PHOTO: GORDON COURT

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES POLAR BEAR

Nanuq (Siglit/Uummarmiut), Chehzhi' (Teet'lit Gwich'in), Chehzhyè'e' (Gwichya Gwich'in), Sahcho degoo (Tłı̨chǫ)

SHOULD POLAR BEAR CONTINUE TO BE LISTED IN THE NWT AS A SPECIES OF SPECIAL CONCERN?

Special Concern means that they may become threatened or endangered in the NWT because of limiting biological characteristics and identified threats.



Polar bear is a large solitary mammal, living at very low densities. They are uniquely adapted to and live mostly in marine environments, but will den, travel, and occasionally, feed on land. There are 19 subpopulations of polar bears across its circumpolar range; four are found in the NWT (Northern Beaufort Sea, Southern Beaufort Sea, Viscount Melville Sound, and Arctic Basin).

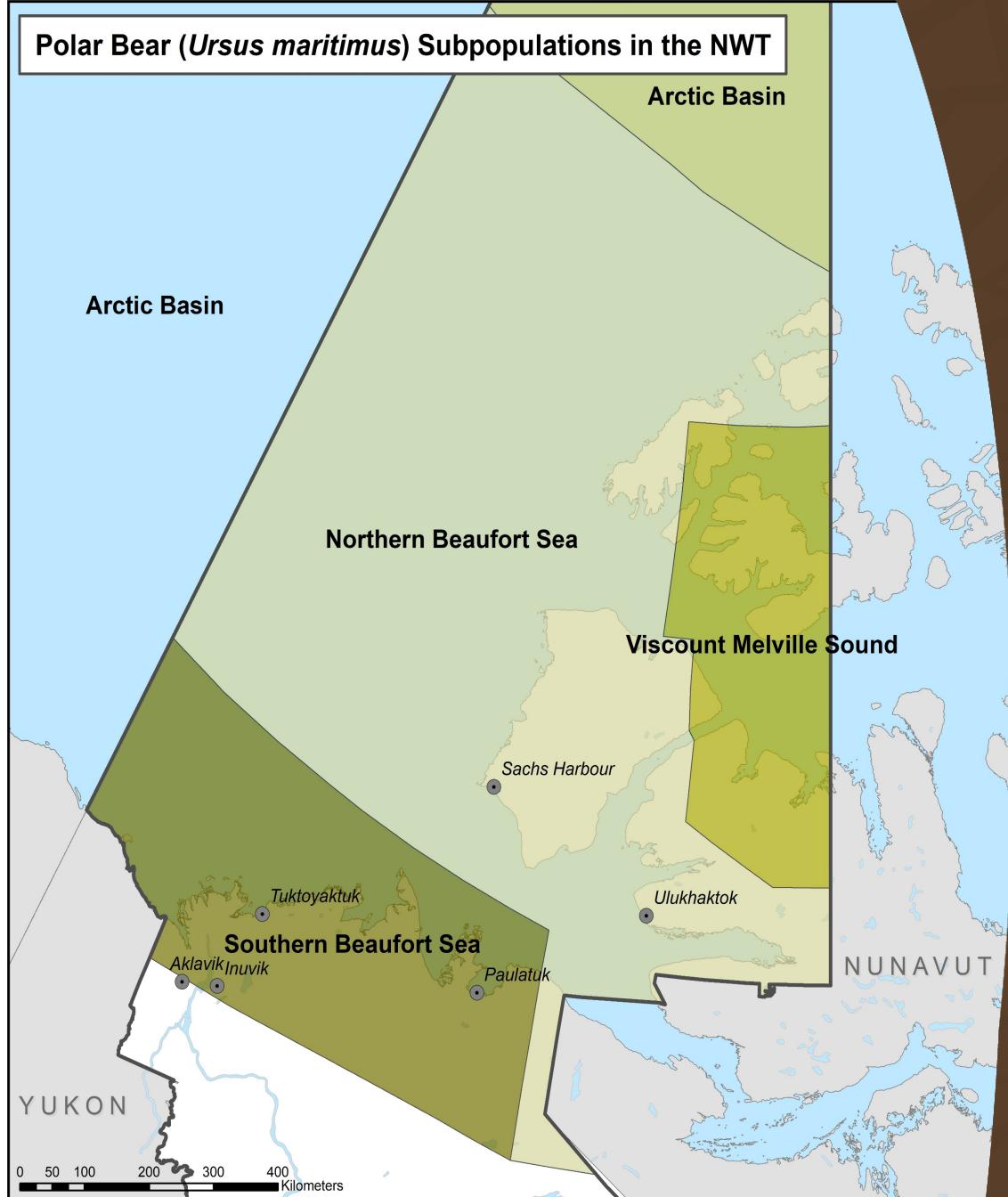
The NWT Species at Risk Committee (SARC) determined that polar bear is a species of **Special Concern** in the NWT, reflecting concerns that changing climatic conditions may alter polar bear denning habitat, render previously important habitats unsuitable, and/or alter polar bear movements and range. Changes to the quality and quantity of polar bear habitat may negatively influence polar bear condition, reproduction and prey availability – these changes have been associated with declines in some polar bear subpopulations. Other threats to polar bear include invasive research techniques, pollution, potential offshore development of hydrocarbon reserves, increased ship traffic, transportation and service corridors, increased pathogens, changes in foraging ecology and other cumulative effects.

SARC is an independent group of experts who hold Indigenous and community knowledge (ICK), and scientific knowledge (SK) about species and habitat in the NWT. Their species assessments are based on ICK and SK objective biological criteria and a status report containing the best available information on the species.

Details of the assessment and information on polar bear can be found here:
www.nwtspeciesatrisk.ca



Polar Bear (*Ursus maritimus*) Subpopulations in the NWT



Contact your local NWT renewable resources board OR the NWT Species at Risk Secretariat for more information at sara@gov.nt.ca or toll-free at 1 (855) 783-4301.

RE-LISTING POLAR BEAR

The legal re-listing of polar bear as a species of **Special Concern** in the NWT would further allow implementation actions to be fulfilled under the existing Inuvialuit Settlement Region (ISR) Polar Bear Joint Management Plan and Implementation Table for Actions on Management of Polar Bears in the ISR, which are required to manage and conserve polar bears in the NWT.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Why was polar bear re-assessed as **Special Concern** in the NWT?

Knowledge holders are observing changes in abundance, habitat quality/quantity, movements, or range, but these changes are not yet large enough to qualify the species for Threatened. Knowledge holders are also concerned that the species is being adversely impacted by one or more natural or human-caused threats – if these threats are neither reversed nor managed the species may become Threatened.

2. Does being on the NWT List of Species at Risk affect harvesting?

Adding a species to the NWT List of Species at Risk does not mean harvesting must stop. Re-listing polar bear to the NWT List of Species at Risk will not automatically change quotas, by-laws, or regulations already in place.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

*Should polar bear be re-listed as a species of Special Concern? Why or why not?

*If polar bear was re-listed, do you think there would be any impacts (positive or negative) from the re-listing? If so, what?

*Is there new or missing information that was not considered in the status report? If so, can you provide it to us or tell us where to find it?