

04 June 2010

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Workshop on Native Subsistence Harvest of the Alaska-Chukotka Polar Bear Population

02-04 June, 2010

US Fish and Wildlife Service Regional Office
1011 E. Tudor Rd.
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

1. The first meeting of an ad hoc working Group (the “Group”) was held at the *Workshop on Native Subsistence Harvest of the Alaska-Chukotka Polar Bear Population* in Anchorage, Alaska, USA from 02-04 June, 2010. A list of participants and their affiliations is available.
2. The Group recognized that information shared at this workshop will improve the ability of the US and Russia to successfully implement a regulated and monitored polar bear harvest, contingent upon a decision regarding harvest by the US-Russia Polar Bear Commission.
3. The Group recommended that future workshops continue the exchange of information regarding the standardization of harvest regulation and monitoring practices. The Group recommended that future workshops include participants with experience in regulated polar bear harvest (e.g., a wildlife manager from Canada) and with knowledge of historic trends in polar bear harvest.
4. US and Russian members of the Group exchanged the following materials: presentations given at the workshop, written materials related to polar bear harvest, the structure of a polar bear harvest database developed in Microsoft Access by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), USFWS harvest certification forms, and USFWS tool kits used to obtain samples from harvested bears.
5. The Group identified the need to standardize and prioritize the collection of data (e.g., location and type of kill) and biological samples (e.g., premolar tooth and body measurements) from harvested polar bears, and the need to provide Russian stakeholders with some of the equipment necessary to take samples from harvested bears. The Group identified people to address these needs.
6. The Group identified the need to determine legal aspects of the sale and trade of parts from polar bears harvested from the Alaska-Chukotka population, with attention to the following

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topics: consistency with national and international agreements and regulations, the definition of “significantly altered” regarding Native handicrafts, and prohibition of the sale and trade of polar bear rugs or un-altered skulls and parts to non-Natives.

7. The Group recommended the consideration of a multiple-year interval between re-evaluation of the quota (e.g., 3-5 years), the length of the interval to be determined based on biological and practical considerations. The Group recognized that changes to the quota may be necessary within the multiple-year interval at the recommendation of the Scientific Working Group.
8. The Group recommended the consideration of how a quota, once established, would be administered from year to year. The Group recommended consideration of an average quota applied over multiple years, or a flexible quota system that allows credits and debits to carry over from year to year (e.g., similar to Nunavut, Canada).
9. The Group recognized concerns associated with polar bears killed by non-Natives in defense of life counting against a quota. The Group recommended that efforts be made to eliminate defense-of-life kills using polar bear deterrence and education programs.
10. US members of the Group indicated that the USFWS and Alaska Nanuuq Commission will develop a draft document describing a co-managed harvest regulation and monitoring program, and that this draft document will be subject to community consultation and legal review.
11. The Group affirmed the importance of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) in a regulated and monitored polar bear harvest. The Group called for the development of systems to collect TEK and incorporate it into the decision making process under the US-Russia Agreement.
12. The Group identified outreach and education as essential to the implementation of an effective harvest regulation and monitoring program.
13. The Group recommended that the US and Russia allocate sufficient financial resources to implement an effective harvest regulation and monitoring program, to include funding for outreach and education, community-level monitoring and enforcement, scientific and TEK studies, and future meetings of stakeholders.