

**Executive Summary**  
**of the 2nd Meeting of the Scientific Working Group for the**  
**U.S.-Russia Polar Bear Commission**  
**Moscow, Russia**  
**26 July, 2011**

1. The second meeting of the Scientific Working Group (SWG) designated to support the U.S.-Russia Polar Bear Commission took place on July 26, 2011 at the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology of Russia (Minpriroda) in Moscow, Russia. The SWG meeting was attended by the 10 members of the SWG (including two co-chairs) and 9 observers representing governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations.
  
2. The main objectives of the meeting were the following:
  - review the general features of a multiyear quota system (MQS) for polar bear harvest management;
  - evaluate the feasibility of a MQS for the Alaska-Chukotka (AC) polar bear population;
  - exchange information on ongoing scientific studies for the AC population;
  - exchange information on ongoing Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) studies for the AC population;
  - discuss plans for the development of a joint U.S.-Russia research plan for the AC population.
  
3. The SWG finds that a multi-year quota system offers benefits to the conservation and management of the AC population. To achieve these benefits also requires an effective harvest management plan, including methods to monitor and manage polar bear take, and a complementary program of scientific and TEK studies to evaluate sustainable harvest limits. The SWG recommends that the Commission endorse the development of a MQS that incorporates the following features:
  - adherence to harvest limits, as specified by the U.S.-Russia Commission, over a multiyear period;
  - use of harvest debits or credits, based on the actual harvest relative to the harvest limits specified by the Commission;
  - use of a multiyear period of a specified duration that is based on the life history of polar bears and interannual variability in levels of subsistence harvest (e.g., five years);
  - establishment of upper limits on the number of total polar bears and female polar bears that can be taken in a single year.

4. The SWG recommends that the Commission direct the development of joint U.S.-Russia study plan. The conceptual foundation for this plan, including a preliminary assessment of high priority research needs, should be completed by November 11, 2011.
5. The SWG recommends that TEK studies should be included in the joint U.S.-Russia research plan, and used in the conservation and management of the AC population.
6. The SWG recommends that the Commission approve an expansion of the SWG membership to include seven members plus a co-Chair, for each national section, in order to fully incorporate and represent information and values regarding the traditional, cultural, and spiritual importance of polar bears to the Native peoples of Alaska and Chukotka.
7. The SWG recommends that the Commission task it with exploring the impact of the likely increase of anthropogenic stresses on the AC polar bear population and making recommendations based on it findings.