Polar Bear Source Book for Kaktovik Area

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Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (Arctic Refuge, Refuge) surrounds Kaktovik, Alaska. The Refuge’s lands and waters provide habitat important to polar bears for denning, feeding, resting, and seasonal movements. Arctic Refuge has regulatory responsibilities for commercial activities on waters surrounding Kaktovik. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) oversees the National Wildlife Refuge System, and has regulatory responsibilities for protecting polar bears wherever they exist in the United States, including within Arctic Refuge. With increasing numbers of people interested in viewing polar bears in Alaska, USFWS has developed this Polar Bear Source Book for the Kaktovik area. This source book is intended to insure that polar bears are not disturbed, so that opportunities for the public to enjoy, observe, and photograph these bears in the wild can continue. Whether you are a resident, researcher, commercial filmer, visitor, or employee, it is each individual’s responsibility to insure that their activities around polar bears are safe and remain lawful. This source book compiles in one location useful information that will help you understand your legal requirements and your stewardship obligations while in polar bear habitat.

This source book is divided into six sections: Orientation (page 2), Safety (page 10), Viewing (page 18), Management (page 28), Contacts (page 47), and Appendix (page 48). If you have suggestions to improve this source book, contact Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Services Coordinator Jennifer Reed by phone (directly at 907-455-1835, or toll-free at 800-362-4546) or by email (directly at jennifer_reed@fws.gov or by contacting the Refuge at arctic_refuge@fws.gov).

Part I: Orientation

This section of the source book provides the basis for understanding your responsibilities to polar bears when using the north coast of Alaska in the Kaktovik area. Polar bears are protected by federal laws wherever they occur in the United States. Primary federal laws and regulations that influence how people use areas where polar bears may be encountered include Coast Guard regulations, the Endangered Species Act, the Marine Mammal Protection Act, and the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act.

Federal laws and regulations are implemented in ways that a) enhance collaborative management; and b) encourage public participation in addressing concerns about polar bears.

Municipal laws that influence how people use areas where polar bears might be encountered may apply as well. Local governments should be contacted directly for this information. Though Arctic Refuge lands surround a broad area outside of the community of Kaktovik, private lands surround the immediate area. Maps are available at http://www.fws.gov/alaska/nwr/realty/map/ that illustrate where Arctic Refuge jurisdiction applies (on bays and lagoons surrounding Kaktovik), and where local municipal decisions apply. The diagram on page 4 and key on page 5 illustrate, for the Kaktovik area, the diverse range of entities with decision-making responsibilities concerning people and polar bears.

The “Kaktovik Visitor Information” pamphlet on pages 6 and 7 provides a convenient list of community resources, contact information, and a map for locating the City of Kaktovik, Kaktovik Inupiat Corporation, and the Native Village of Kaktovik offices.

A basic set of guidelines and polar bear information has been developed by local authorities for people visiting the community of Kaktovik. These “Kaktovik Guidelines” appear on pages 8 and 9. In addition, German and Japanese language versions are available in the appendix at the end of this booklet (pages 49-56).
What general activities are allowed near polar bears?

**A- General recreational viewing.** It is legal to view and photograph polar bears for recreational purposes. It is illegal to disturb them. Information appears on page 19.

**B- Commercially-led viewing.** It is legal to provide polar bear viewing guide services on Refuge waters if authorization is obtained before activities occur. Information appears on page 20. For land areas, contact land owners to seek authorization.

**C- Commercial or educational photography.** A and B above apply; a permit may be required from U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Information appears on page 21.

**D- Subsistence harvest of polar bears.** It is legal for coastal dwelling Alaska Natives to harvest polar bears as outlined under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (see page 24).
Entities and authorities with direct decision-making responsibilities for issues affecting polar bears and people:

**Native Village of Kaktovik (NVK) (land manager)**, the governing body of the Kaktovik Village (aka Barter Island) Tribe, offers local services through the tribal government, non-profit Native organizations such as the Kaktovik Community Foundation, and by grants and contracts with state and federal agencies. NVK helps oversee the Kaktovik Youth Ambassadors program, which provides education to visitors about polar bear safety and community concerns.

**Kaktovik Inupiat Corporation (KIC) (land manager)** develops economic opportunities for its shareholders and has a role in decision-making about managing filming/viewing occurring on Corporation lands.

**North Slope Borough Village Police Officers (VPOs)** respond to calls for service, provide community education, and are often the first personnel notified of a crisis, and the first to respond. When the Polar Bear Patrol (coordinated by the North Slope Borough Department of Wildlife Management) cannot respond, community members contact the VPOs.

**U.S. Air Force (USAF) (land manager)** seeks a community-based approach to monitoring public use of U.S. Air Force property. They have an interest in supporting education about human-bear conflicts and community-led efforts to manage polar bear filming/viewing in and around Kaktovik.

**Kaktovik business owners** orient, house, feed, and transport visitors. Business owners distribute information from U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and local entities about polar bear viewing.

**North Slope Borough Department of Wildlife Management (NSB-DWM)** helps involve residents in management of local wildlife. They work to keep wildlife resources at healthy population levels so residents can continue subsistence activities. The NSB-DWM coordinates the Polar Bear Patrol.

**The City of Kaktovik (land manager)** is a municipal government that passes ordinances that benefit Kaktovik residents, funded primarily through grants and gaming profits. The City of Kaktovik engages local leaders/businesses in collaboration to achieve effective management of filming/viewing, and helps oversee the Kaktovik Youth Ambassadors program.

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) works with others to protect and conserve wildlife and their habitats. Within the Service:

**Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (land manager)** surrounds Kaktovik. Refuge staff conducts biological studies, manages Refuge wildlife and habitats, develops public information about polar bear viewing, helps orient visitors who come to see polar bears, and helps oversee the Kaktovik Youth Ambassadors.

**Marine Mammals Management (MMM)** is responsible for conservation/management of sea otters, walrus, and polar bears. The Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Endangered Species Act provide direction for MMM’s activities.

**Division of Management Authority (DMA)** implements domestic laws and international treaties to promote long-term conservation of global fish and wildlife resources. Because the polar bear is protected by laws and treaties, some human activities such as marine mammal filming/photography are regulated by DMA.

**Law Enforcement** is conducted by officers working primarily to preserve Refuge resources, and by officers whose priority is to enforce national/international treaty laws for protected species including polar bears.

The Alaska Nanuuq Commission is a partner to the USFWS in the co-management of polar bears. The Commission represents Alaska Native people from coastal communities, including Kaktovik, on matters related to polar bear subsistence and conservation.

The Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission represents subsistence whalers in Alaska. Locally, the Kaktovik Whaling Captain’s Association makes decisions concerning bowhead whale harvest, including management of whale remains which attract polar bears to Kaktovik.
Visitors to Arctic Refuge:

Arctic Refuge lands and waters are managed for all Americans by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, a federal agency within the U.S. Department of the Interior.

The Refuge was created in 1960 “For the purpose of preserving unique wildlife, wilderness and recreational values...”

Wildlife- and wilderness-oriented public uses at the Refuge include hiking, camping, river floating, wildlife viewing, photography, fishing and hunting.

Please minimize your impacts on the Refuge by following the guidance provided in the Refuge’s pamphlet “Strategies for Minimizing Your Impacts.” Leave natural objects and artifacts where you find them unless you have a pre-approved collecting permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

For more information about planning your trip to Arctic Refuge please visit http://arctic.fws.gov/ or call 800-362-4546.

Mixed flock of waterfowl on Arctic Refuge coastal plain.

Visitors to Kaktovik:

The community of Kaktovik on Barter Island is managed by various governing groups. Each plays a key role addressing community and visitor needs.

Recent increases in the number of visitors, and the number of polar bears using coastal habitat, are straining the community. The peak visiting season coincides with community-based whaling activities, exacerbating the burden on the community.

Visitors and their service providers should minimize their demands on the community by learning about orientation opportunities, by reading the public notifications that provide guidance to visitors, and by following respectful practices. “Kaktovik Guidelines for Community Visitors” and other information sheets are widely available throughout the community.

For more information, see the “Polar Bear Source Book for Northeast Alaska.”

September 2015

Kaktovik, airport and eastern half of Barter Island

Artwork by Flora Rexford of Kaktovik
There are no youth hostels, home stays or public campgrounds available on Barter Island. Limited options exist for visitors to purchase rooms, meals and showers. Tent spots may be available seasonally and on a limited basis. Please be respectful of the community by being aware of private lands in and surrounding Kaktovik, and by removing your trash. If you are on private lands, get permission to set up camp. It is prudent to ask a resident of Kaktovik for an appropriate camping location.

**Governmental Organizations:**
- **City of Kaktovik Office and Community Center**
  - Phone: 640-6313
  - Office hours: 8:30-5 (public hours vary)
- **Kaktovik Inupiat Corporation (KIC) Administrative Offices**
  - Phone: 640-6120
  - Office hours: 9-5 (closed for lunch)
- **Native Village of Kaktovik (NVK)**
  - Phone: 640-2042
  - Office hours: 9-5 (closed for lunch)
- **North Slope Borough (NSB) Public Works**
  - Phone: 640-6128
  - Office hours: 8:30-5 (closed for lunch)
- **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Residence**
  - (Fairbanks office: 1-800-362-4546)
  - No permanent staff in Kaktovik

**Medical and Emergency Information:**
- **NSB Fire Department**
  - Phone: 640-6212 (non-emergency)
  - Call 911 after hours (rings in Barrow)
- **NSB Police Department**
  - Phone: 640-6911 (non-emergency)
  - Call 911 after hours (rings in Barrow)
- **NSB Tom Gordon Health Clinic**
  - Phone: 640-6413
  - Clinic hours: 1-4 walk-ins Monday-Friday
  - Call 911 after hours (rings in Barrow)

**Places of Worship:**
- **Assembly of God Church**
  - Sunday Services: 11am and 7pm
  - Wednesday Service: 7pm (All in English)
- **Presbyterian Church**
  - Sunday Services: 11am (English) and 7:30pm (Inupiaq)

**Services available during summer season:**
- **City of Kaktovik**
  - Phone: 640-6313
  - Services: sale of clothing and local artwork
- **Ravn Alaska**
  - Phone: 640-7902 (local agent)
  - or 800-866-8894 (reservations)
  - Services: flight services
- **KIC Fuel Office**
  - Phone: 640-6011
  - Services: fuel, machine parts, camping supplies
- **KIC Kikiktak Store**
  - Phone: 640-6520
  - Services: general store, groceries, some clothing
- **KIC Marsh Creek Inn**
  - Phone: 640-5500
  - Services: hotel rooms, meals, showers, baths
- **NSB Kaktovik Mayor’s Office & Planning Dept.**
  - Phone: 640-6329
  - Services: public internet access (first priority to Ilisagvik College students)
- **NSB School District Kaveolook High School**
  - Phone: 640-6626
  - Services: open gym, library
- **Sims Store**
  - Phone: 640-6615
  - Services: general store, groceries, some rentals, local artwork
- **U.S. Post Office**
  - Window hours: 8:30-4 (closed for lunch)
  - Mail drop: 24 hours
- **Waldo Arms Hotel**
  - Phone: 640-6513
  - Services: hotel rooms, meals, showers, equipment rental, flight services (air charters and commercial airline agent)
Kaktovik Guidelines for Viewing Polar Bears

It is legal to view and photograph polar bears. It is unsafe and illegal to disturb polar bears.

- Review bear safety information before coming to bear country (at http://arctic.fws.gov/visitors.htm).
- View bears only during daylight hours. Be in a group and in a vehicle or boat.
- Respect bears’ personal space—avoid close encounters.
- Approach slowly with minimal noise, lights, or movement.
- Stop your approach if a bear notices you. Allow it to resume what it was doing before you proceed.
- Do not herd, follow, or chase bears.
- Do not feed or otherwise attempt to attract bears.
- Do not get between a mother and her cubs.
- Allow swimming bears to pass.
- Do not allow bears to make contact with you or your vehicle or boat.

Respect bears. Your proper conduct will ensure that polar bear viewing opportunities can continue in the future. Thank you for your efforts!

Kaktovik Guidelines for Community Visitors

- Please be conscientious when visiting our community. We welcome safe and respectful viewing of polar bears and whaling activities.
- Take photos from a distance. Obey barriers set to ensure safe viewing.
- To continue the community’s traditional food-gathering activities, federal law permits community members to hunt bowhead whales. Please respect these traditional activities by staying out of the way during butchering.
- When you view polar bears, use a trained guide. This will ensure safe conduct that obeys federal polar bear protection laws.
- It’s OK to purchase handcrafted items made from marine mammals. The Marine Mammal Protection Act allows only Native Alaskans to sell handcrafted items made of marine mammal parts. Except for these handcrafted items, it is illegal for non-Natives to possess, transport, or sell marine mammal products. Check to ensure that import of marine mammal parts into your country is legal.

Respect our community. Your proper conduct will ensure that polar bear and whale viewing opportunities can continue in the future. Thank you for your efforts!
About Polar Bears

Polar bears have an important place in the cultural traditions of Alaska Natives, who recognize the bears’ amazing strength, hunting ability and stealth.

Residents and visitors have a unique opportunity to see polar bears in Kaktovik. These bears are part of the Southern Beaufort Sea population, estimated at 1,500 animals. This population uses an area extending more than 800 miles along the north coast of Alaska and Canada. Polar bears prefer to be on ice but as it diminishes each summer and fall the bears come to the coast surrounding Kaktovik to rest, feed, wait for the ice to re-form, and sometimes to den and give birth.

At Barter Island, polar bears on land may encounter brown bears. Polar bears are much larger than brown bears. Adult male polar bears typically measure 8 to 9 feet from nose to tail and can weigh up to 1,320 pounds. Adult female polar bears are typically about half the size of males. Despite their larger size, polar bears are often displaced by brown bears when feeding at the bone pile.

Polar bears are specially adapted to the Arctic environment. Bears have white coloration for camouflage; water repellent guard hairs and dense underfur; black skin for absorbing warmth; small “suction cups” on the soles of their feet for traction on slippery ice; teeth specialized for a meat-eating rather than a meat-and-plant diet; and the ability to store large amounts of fat when food is available and then use it later when food is scarce.

Polar bears primarily eat ringed seals but they also hunt bearded seals, walrus, and beluga whales, and will scavenge beached carcasses they find along the coast.

Polar bears are very strong and can move and travel long distances across the ice and on land. They are highly skilled swimmers, using their powerful paddling forelimbs to move through the water. Polar bears can swim in open water for prolonged periods, often crossing distances exceeding 30 miles (48 km) in a single trip.

Polar bears generally live alone except when breeding. Pregnant females spend late October or November until late March or April in winter dens. Other polar bears do not usually den, and are active year-round. Polar bear dens are typically located on land in areas where snow accumulates, such as along the coastal bluffs and river banks surrounding Kaktovik. Dens may also be excavated in pressure ridges on sea ice.

Pregnant bears give birth to 1 to 3 tiny, helpless and almost hairless cubs in mid-winter. Mother and cubs are protected within a snow den that provides relative warmth and stable temperatures, where the mother nurses and cares for her young. Mother does not emerge from the den until March or early April. The family emerges near sea ice, where the cubs learn to hunt. Cubs stay with their mother for approximately 21/2 years.

A warming climate is causing the disappearance of arctic sea ice, leaving wide stretches of open water the bears must swim across when traveling between ice and land. It is common for bears to rest on land without moving for days after completing such long-distance swims. Stay away from such bears and let them rest undisturbed.

Polar Bear Numbers on Barter Island

- Polar bear counts from 2002 to 2014 are variable. They don’t show a clear trend at this time.
- Polar bears of all ages and both sexes use Barter Island. This area may be especially important for nutritionally stressed bears.
- Polar bears typically arrive at Barter Island in August and remain until October when the ocean freezes. Count dates were established in 2002 to estimate the number of bears using subsistence-harvested whale remains.
- Continued monitoring is needed and is on-going.

During fall, the highest density of polar bears along the north coast of Alaska and western Canada occur around Barter Island.

The number of polar bears on shore seems to be closely correlated to the distance of ice from shore. Reductions in sea ice could result in increasing land use by polar bears.

One reason polar bears are attracted to Barter Island is because of the subsistence whale carcasses here.

Another reason polar bears are attracted here may be because the density of ringed seals, one of their preferred foods, is higher here than elsewhere along the coast. The ice freezes here first in the fall, providing a good platform from which they can hunt for the seals.

Polar Bears visit Barter Island

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Part II: Safety—Reducing Conflicts Between Humans and Polar Bears

This section of the source book contains three documents providing general information useful to travelers and residents in northeast Alaska about how to minimize conflicts with polar bears. Whether you need to become aware of bear behaviors and learn how to respond to bears in the event of a close interaction (pages 11-12), are seeking trip planning advice (pages 13-14), or are curious about how people working in polar bear habitat minimize interactions and conflicts with polar bears (pages 15-17), this section summarizes best practices for safety.
Polar bear density in Alaska is highest during fall months when polar bears aggregate along the coastline. Due to changing ice conditions the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) anticipates that polar bear use of the coast will increase during open-water seasons (June through October). During this time many villagers engage in subsistence activities, and more people are engaging in polar bear viewing opportunities. Increasing numbers of visitors to Barrow and Kaktovik to view polar bears increase potential interactions between humans and polar bears. Polar bears are naturally curious and predatory which are factors that increase risk to humans.

The purpose of these guidelines is to minimize polar bear-human interactions and maximize the safety of both humans and polar bears, so each can continue to live safely in the Arctic environment.

**FEDERAL LAW REGARDING POLAR BEAR-HUMAN INTERACTIONS**
Polar bears are protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) which prohibits take of any marine mammal.

Take is defined under the MMPA as: “to harass, hunt, capture, or kill any marine mammal.” This includes feeding or attempting to feed a marine mammal in the wild.

Level A Harassment is: any act of pursuit, torment, or annoyance which has the potential to injure a polar bear.

Level B Harassment is defined as: any act of pursuit, torment, or annoyance which has the potential to disturb a polar bear by causing disruption of behavioral patterns, including, but not limited to, migration, breathing, nursing, breeding, feeding, or sheltering.

This means that any change in a polar bear’s natural behavior that is a result of your presence in proximity to the animal can be considered level B harassment, and is unlawful.

- Photographing polar bears in the wild is permissible if no take occurs. If such activity is for educational or commercial purposes and could result in Level B harassment (disturbance), a permit is required.

Polar bears are also listed as a “threatened” species under the Endangered Species Act. This designation does not alter the definitions or exceptions of take outlined above under the MMPA.

**GUIDELINES FOR LIVING IN POLAR BEAR COUNTRY**
Most polar bears avoid people and have historically inflicted few human injuries and fatalities. However, the combination of curious and occasional sudden aggressive behavior creates the potential for human injury. In addition, polar bears spending extended periods of time on land without an adequate food source may be nutritionally stressed animals and potentially more dangerous.

In general, polar bears will react to humans by avoiding them, exhibiting curious behavior, treating them as other bears, or attempting to prey on them. The closer that humans are to polar bears, the more dangerous the situation because of the increased likelihood that the polar bear(s) will feel threatened. This could result in an attack. Unprovoked predatory attacks on humans are rare but do occur. The following guidelines may help reduce the risk associated with living in polar bear country.

**Remain undetected**
The best way to avoid detection by a polar bear is to be alert and detect the animal before it detects you. Be particularly alert in areas where bears are likely to occur: near open water leads, at whale or other marine mammal carcass sites, along coastal and river bluffs, or in the vicinity of fresh tracks.

- Avoid traveling alone;
Avoid pursuing polar bears
Harassment or pursuit of polar bears is prohibited by law.

- Never attempt to herd, chase, or separate groups of polar bears;
- Using motorized vehicles, including boats, to view bears should be avoided if it results in unnatural behavior by bears.

Minimize attractants
Polar bears will investigate anything out of the ordinary as a possible food item. The presence of attractants is likely to increase the chances of having close bear-human interactions. If a bear learns to associate food with humans, it is likely to attempt obtaining food from humans in the future. A polar bear that receives a food reward is very likely to return.

- Do not let bears associate food with humans;
- Maintain a clean camp or residence; remove attractants such as food, garbage, animal carcasses, sewage, gray water, anti-freeze, or petroleum products;
- Store food or attractants in bear-resistant containers or locations;
- Avoid carrying food or items with strong odors when traveling in bear country.

Be Aware of Bear Behavior
Ensure that your actions do not cause a change in behavior of a polar bear. Since individual animal’s reactions will vary, carefully observe all animals and leave the vicinity if you see signs of disturbance. Polar bears that stop what they are doing to turn their head or sniff the air in your direction may have become aware of your presence. These animals may exhibit curious, threatened, or predatory behavior.

- Curious polar bears typically move slowly, stopping frequently to sniff the air, moving their heads around to catch a scent, or hold their heads high with ears forward.
- A threatened or agitated polar bear may huff, snap its jaws together, stare at you (or object of threat) and lower its head to below shoulder level, pressing its ears back and swaying from side to side. These are signals for immediate withdrawal. If ignored, the polar bear may charge. Threatened animals may also retreat, withdraw, or run away.
- Predatory behavior may involve a polar bear that is sneaking or crawling up on an object it considers prey. Another form of predatory behavior is a bear that is approaching in a straight line at a constant speed without exhibiting curious or threatened behavior. This behavior is indicative of a bear about to attack.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH A POLAR BEAR
If a polar bear detects and approaches you, get out of the way if you are in the bear’s path, or between a mother and her cubs. If the animal continues to approach and you are in a vehicle, leave the area. If no vehicle is available, slowly move to a safe shelter. If no safe shelter is available, do not run; stand your ground. Gather people together in a group and/or hold a jacket over your head to look bigger. If the bear continues to approach, shout or make noise to deter the bear.

If a polar bear attacks in a predatory manner and no safe shelter is available, defend yourself. If the attack is by a female defending her cubs, remove yourself as a threat to the cubs; fight back if the attack turns predatory.

The future of polar bears is uncertain due to the combination of climate change effects and human-caused mortality. We encourage everyone to seek non-lethal methods of avoiding bear-human conflicts. This may help ensure polar bears are here in the future.

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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1 800/344 WILD
http://www.fws.gov

For more information please contact:
Craig Perham or Susanne Miller
1 800/362 5148
Craig.Perham@fws.gov
Susanne.Miller@fws.gov

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Marine Mammals Management Office
1011 East Tudor Road
Anchorage, AK 99503

Visit the Marine Mammals home page:
http://alaska.fws.gov/polarbear

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Revised 6/2016
Traveling Safely Along the Northeast Alaska Coast:
Sharing the Land with Polar Bears while visiting Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

This information page helps recreational visitors think about ways to avoid interactions with polar bears while passing safely through the bears’ coastal habitats. Visitors to Arctic Refuge are generally aware of the risks associated with wildland pursuits, and commonly plan long, remote routes allowing them to test their mettle in extreme wilderness. Yet there are some difficulties no one should willingly face—such as interacting with a polar bear—no matter how energetic and resilient they are.

Because polar bears are protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act and Endangered Species Act, every recreational visitor has a responsibility to try to avoid encounters with polar bears. Travelers along the coast of northeast Alaska may now encounter polar bears any month of the year. If you are planning a visit to Arctic Refuge that includes travel along the coast away from structures, use the following practices to minimize your chances of disturbing polar bears; to increase the chances of your safe passage; and to prevent having to kill a polar bear in defense of life.

Be aware of the situation:
- Encountering polar bears is likely while traveling along the Refuge coast because polar bears are increasing their coastal use due to arctic warming and loss of sea ice. (For information about the life history of polar bears, their status, threats to the species, and their management, see http://go.usa.gov/39Z44.)
- Polar bears are protected from disturbance by the Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act. Minimizing your interactions with polar bears is key to avoiding their disturbance and to enjoying an adventure free of human-bear conflicts.
- Close proximity to bears may lead to the injury or death of people or bears. These outcomes are tragic for people and harmful to bear conservation goals.
- Proper conduct around bears requires sorting through inaccurate information and false notions about bears, and using practices recommended by human-bear conflict management specialists based on their observations of bear behavior. Responsible reactions to bears will vary across bear species, among different areas for the same species, among individual bears at the same location, and even at different times for the same individual bear.

Before you go:
- Learn about responsible trip preparation, practices recommended by human-bear conflict management specialists, and characteristics of bear behavior. An educational video about safety in polar bear country can be viewed on request in Fairbanks, Alaska. Contact Arctic Refuge (call 800-362-4546) if you’d like to arrange a time to view the video before you embark on your trip. For web-based safety guidelines and information about bear behaviors see http://go.usa.gov/39Z4k.
- Plan your route to avoid camping in coastal areas mid-July through October. Polar bears are increasing their use of the shoreline. It may no longer be possible to avoid polar bear encounters if you plan a coastal trip during these months.
- Increasing your distance from Barter Island when traveling the coast may reduce polar bear viewing activity. It is safest to view bears where bear viewing is an expected and managed practice, such as guided excursions from Kaktovik on Barter Island. For information about best practices for polar bear viewing near Barter Island, Alaska, see http://go.usa.gov/39Z45.

Polar bears should always be treated with respect and caution. They are large, powerful carnivores that can injure and kill people. Media images of people behaving inappropriately around bears can mislead visitors into thinking risky human actions are safe and have no detrimental impacts on bears. Such mistaken impressions can pose a risk to people and to bears.
Camping inland from the coast of Arctic Refuge - USFWS

Your likelihood of encountering bears. (For information about minimizing interactions with polar bears at Barter Island, see http://go.usa.gov/39ZDG.)

- If you must rely on coastal access or egress to accomplish your intended route, make arrangements to minimize the group’s time in coastal areas. Travel on the coast only when absolutely necessary.
- If you are committed to using coastal areas, plan a group size that minimizes surprises by allowing for 24 hour bear monitoring, and incorporate camp and travel practices that heighten the group’s situational awareness.
- Before your trip, develop and review a group safety plan, and make sure each participant knows how to respond if a bear approaches in a curious, nervous, threatening, or aggressive manner.
- Bring, and know how to properly operate and maintain, bear-resistant storage containers and other equipment, such as binoculars, noise makers, and bear pepper spray, that will help you avoid or end interactions. Use caution when relying on electric fences. They often fail when placed in the dry, unstable soils found along the coast.

While on land at or near the coast:

- Avoid attracting bears. Use bear-resistant storage containers for food and trash to prevent bears from becoming food-conditioned. Food conditioning is generally dangerous to both people and bears. The bear can become more aggressive in its search for food, and nearby people are more likely to find themselves in conflict with the bear.
- Avoid camping on bear travel routes such as beaches, barrier islands, or areas of decreased visibility like fresh water outlets or bluff-edges.
- Locate overnight camps inland. Based on known patterns of land use by polar bears, camping just a mile or two inland will dramatically decrease the chance your camp will be in the path of a polar bear. Be aware, however, that camping inland or along the coast can result in an encounter with a brown bear. Therefore, take bear awareness and conflict-avoidance precautions regardless of where you camp.
- Regularly discuss and rehearse among your group how to interpret and respond to polar bear behaviors, such as how to respond if you spot a bear one mile, 100 meters, or 10 meters away; how to respond if you spot a bear while you are traveling versus a bear coming into camp; and what to do if a bear repeatedly comes into camp.
- Stay within earshot of your group; talk, watch, and listen frequently; be aware of wind direction; and be prepared to respond if your group surprises a bear. Be aware of near-shore ice conditions and the presence of seals, beached carcasses, or other attractants that may influence bear movements.
- Consider assigning a dedicated observer to watch for bears if your group is active during low light conditions. Consider sleeping in shifts and posting a guard who will alert others to a nearby polar bear when your group rests. Cooler evening temperatures correlate with more active bear activity, and bears may be more apt to move into your area during night-time hours.

If you have an interaction with a polar bear:

When a person and bear are both aware of each other, how you react can either attract or deter a bear’s curiosity. Your group’s goal should be to prevent any interaction from escalating into an incident.

Depending on the circumstances, the interaction may require nothing more than your patient and calm attentiveness to the situation, allowing the bear to wander away from your area. Or, your group may simply change its travel path to increase the distance between you and the bear.

When interaction turns into incident:

An incident occurs when you need to take actions to respond to a bear’s behavior. Your group’s goal should be to protect human life while minimize the duration and negative consequences of the incident. Resolve the situation non-lethally if possible.

Consider the range of actions you could take. Start with the least aggressive options, such as using noise makers, grouping together, yelling or clapping, or deploying air horns. Bear pepper spray is effective—but only at close range and with favorable wind conditions. With wise use of deterrents, your group may be able to de-escalate the incident by keeping bears from making contact with your camp items, and by eventually increasing distance between you and the bear.

If defense of life becomes necessary:

It is legal for you to kill a polar bear in self-defense or to save the life of a person in immediate danger. However, polar bears are protected by laws to minimize their disturbance. If you kill a polar bear, you will be required to document the circumstances leading up to, and immediately surrounding, the death of the bear, including documentation of the preventive methods you used to de-escalate the conflict in advance of killing the bear.

You must report the defense of life killing of a polar bear to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) within 48 hours by calling 800-362-5148 and asking to speak to the Arctic Refuge Manager; calling 907-883-9409 to speak to a USFWS Marine Mammal Management and asking to speak to someone in the Polar Bear Program; or calling 907-883-9409 to speak to a USFWS law enforcement officer. If you must leave messages at any of these numbers, provide your name, contact information and location so you can be reached to provide additional information about the incident.

Did you know?

- The Endangered Species Act and Marine Mammal Protection Act allow Native coastal-dwelling peoples to harvest polar bears for subsistence, recognizing the cultural importance of this traditional use. The Marine Mammal Protection Act also designates Alaska Native co-management partners for polar bear conservation. Their involvement helps ensure a responsible harvest.
- The North Slope Inupiat and Canadian Inuvialuit peoples have a voluntary agreement to harvest polar bears in a responsible manner.
- If, while traveling the coast you encounter a dead polar bear, learn what you can do at http://go.usa.gov/39Z29.
- Federal law identifies wildlife viewing as a priority public use on Refuges if it does not disturb wildlife. Polar bear biologists and land managers work to accommodate public uses while supporting polar bear conservation.
- Authorized commercial photographers, and commercial service providers who offer guided polar bear viewing on waters surrounding Barter Island, are required to adhere to Refuge permit conditions. These conditions ensure polar bears are not disturbed, and require permit-holders to comply with recommended viewing practices.

(For information about minimizing interactions with polar bears at Barter Island, see http://go.usa.gov/39ZDG.)
Site-specific human-polar bear safety and interaction plans are an essential project component for those working in polar bear habitat. Goals of these plans are to 1) minimize the occurrence of human-polar bear interactions at a particular camp or work site; 2) minimize the chance that human activities interfere with the essential life functions of polar bears (e.g., breeding, feeding, denning); 3) minimize the severity of interactions should they occur; and 4) ensure the safety of humans and polar bears (*Ursus maritimus*).

**What legal statutes protect polar bears?**

In the United States, the polar bear is protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA). Additionally, due to threats to its sea ice habitat, on May 15, 2008 the Service listed the polar bear as threatened throughout its range under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The polar bear also receives protection under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wildlife Fauna and Flora (CITES) of 1973.

**When and where do polar bears occur most frequently on land in Alaska?**

In Alaska, polar bears occur on land and barrier islands most frequently during fall and winter when some abandon melting sea ice, search for food, (e.g., whale carcasses), or search for suitable den sites (pregnant females). Most polar bears occur along the coasts of the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas, but polar bears can occur infrequently along the Bering Sea south of Nome and on Saint Lawrence Island. Polar bears may remain along the coast or on barrier islands for several months until sea ice returns. From about October through April, snow drifts on bluffs and in drainages within approximately five miles from the Beaufort and Chukchi Sea coasts provide denning habitat for females and their offspring.

**What factors influence the likelihood and severity of human-polar bear interactions?**

A human-polar bear interaction, defined as an occurrence when a person and polar bear are mutually aware of each other, can occur at any time within polar bear habitat. Several factors such as project location, timing, and duration contribute to the likelihood of a human-polar bear interaction occurring. The likelihood is greatest for long-term activities occurring on the Beaufort and Chukchi Sea coasts or barrier islands during autumn. Other factors that may influence the likelihood of interactions are the breeding status, age, and health of a bear.

**Who needs a human-polar bear safety and interaction plan?**

We recommend those working within five miles of the Alaskan arctic coast from the Canadian border to Point Hope or one mile of the western coast from Point Hope to Nome develop a human-polar bear interaction plan; those working on the coast of St. Lawrence Island should also form a plan.

**Components of a Human-Polar Bear Safety and Interaction Plan**

The goal of a human-polar bear safety and interaction plan should be to first minimize the likelihood of
interactions occurring, then to minimize the severity of such interactions should they occur. Implementation of these plans, therefore, can help minimize the frequency and consequences of human-polar bear interactions.

Effective plans consider appropriate site/camp placement and design, best management practices for operations/activities, and polar bear interaction and deterrence procedures. Plans should be developed for each work or camp site and provide direction for safely performing on- and off-duty activities. Potential plan components are described below.

Site Design
- Have a designated safe area to gather if a bear approaches camp or work areas.
- If work and camp activities are co-located (e.g., on a pad) ensure living quarters are centrally located.
- Avoid creating corners and areas where bears may feel trapped or workers may become trapped by a bear.
- Design and orient pads to minimize snow drifts.
- Devise snow management and lighting strategies that ensure good visibility and facilitate early bear detection.
- Use electric or other fences that exclude bears from work and living areas, but recognize that fences are not fail-safe and awareness within or outside fences is necessary.
- Store food (camp pantry) in a protected area away from the living quarters.
- Locate incinerator outside of living area, and incinerate appropriate trash on site.

Best Management Practices

Attractants management
- Sewage/waste, garbage, food, deliberate feeding, animal carcasses, and oil/fuel/anti-freeze can attract polar bears.

To minimize attractants:
- Maintain a clean camp and/or worksite;
- Devise an attractants management strategy such that their storage, handling, and disposal minimizes access by bears (on-site incineration, use of bear-proof containers, dumpsters, etc.);
- Fly unnecessary attractants out on a regular basis (i.e., garbage, animal carcasses, excess anti-freeze or petroleum products); and/or
- Avoid carrying bear attractants (such as strongly scented snacks, fish, meat, or dog food) while away from camp; if you must carry attractants, store them in air-tight “bear-resistant” containers.

If a polar bear is encountered:
- Do not approach polar bears. Remain calm and avoid making sudden movements. Seek the shelter of a hard-sided enclosure such as a vehicle or building. Stay downwind if possible to avoid allowing the bear to smell you. Allow bears to continue what they were doing before you encountered them. Slowly leave the vicinity if you see signs that you’ve been detected. Generally, the closer you are to the animal, the more likely you are to change its behavior, and “safe” distances will vary with each bear and situation. If a polar bear detects you, observe its behavior. Polar bears that stop what they are doing to turn their head or sniff the air in your direction have likely become aware of your presence. These animals may exhibit various behaviors:
  - Curious polar bears typically move slowly, stopping frequently to sniff the air, moving their heads around to catch a scent, or holding their heads high with ears forward. They may also stand up.
  - A threatened or agitated polar bear may huff, snap its jaws together, stare at you (or the object of threat) and lower its head to below shoulder level, pressing its ears back and swaying from side to side. These are signals for you to begin immediate withdrawal by backing away from the bear without running. If this behavior is ignored, the polar bear may charge, especially if you are between a mother and its cubs. Threatened bears may also retreat.
- In rare instances you may encounter a predatory bear. It may sneak or crawl up on an object it considers prey. It may also approach in a straight line at constant speed without exhibiting curious or threatened behavior. This behavior suggests the bear is about to attack. Standing your ground, grouping together, shouting, and waving your hands may halt the bear’s approach.
- If a bear continues to approach after you have attempted to withdraw from the situation, stand your ground. Gather people together in a group and/or hold a jacket over your head to look bigger. Shout or make noise to discourage the approach. If a single polar bear attacks, defend yourself by using any deterrents available.
Increasing Awareness in Polar Bear Habitat

- Devise protocols for safely performing on- and off-duty activities in polar bear habitat.
- Polar bears typically rest during day and become more active during dusk, night, or dawn. Plan activities with this in mind.
- Avoid surprising a bear. For example, prior to landing/docking on barrier islands or other coastal areas, survey the area to ensure polar bears are not present. Be vigilant, especially on barrier islands, in river drainages, along bluffs, near whale or other marine mammal carcasses, or near fresh tracks.
- Develop a site-specific safety education/training program for all site/camp members with a guide to bear behavior (curious, predatory, defensive, etc.). Plan components can include:
  - A buddy system for activities away from buildings or outside of fences for on- and off-duty activities;
  - Guidelines/protocol or flow chart for a specific site/camp on “what to do if you encounter a bear” (individual responsibilities, buddy system, camp communication plan, audio warnings, safe meeting place, etc.); and
  - Polar bear safety drills.

Detection and deterrence

- Service guidelines for passive (e.g., rigid fencing, bear exclusion cages, bear-resistant waste containers) and preventative deterrence measures (e.g., use of acoustic devices and vehicles) are described in the Federal Register (See link in Other Resources section below) are appropriate for safely and non-lethally deterring polar bears, and can be performed by anyone without written authorization or supervision.
- While the passive and preventative measures mentioned above can be performed by anyone, use of other deterrence tools (e.g., projectiles from a firearm, pepper spray) require training to ensure effective use and safety of humans and polar bears. See Agency contact below.
- Incorporate polar bear detection into camp and work site design.
- Detection types/tools include human monitors or “bear guards,” physical barriers, trip wire systems, alarms, and/or motion detectors/cameras. Prepare to respond appropriately during human-polar bear interactions.
- Devise a communication plan for camps and other locations that alerts people when a polar bear is nearby. Communication plans should include a means of contacting outside help (e.g., a satellite phone), if needed.
- Because each individual animal's reactions will vary, leave the vicinity if you see signs of disturbance. Polar bears that stop what they are doing to turn their head or sniff the air in your direction may have become aware of your presence.
- Carry bear spray for an interaction that may turn into a conflict.
- From October through April special care is needed to avoid disturbance of denning bears. If activities are to take place during this time within five miles of the Beaufort or Chukchi Sea coasts, contact the Marine Mammals Management (MMM) Office to determine if any additional mitigation is required to avoid active den sites. Generally, no activities should take place within one mile of active dens.

Other Resources

- Videos and descriptions of electric fences at camp sites: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDBjDVycelc
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3txRsJ-15cI

Agency Contacts

Contacts for reporting incidents:
Office of Law Enforcement: 907-786-3311 or Marine Mammals Management: 907-786-3800 or 907-786-3810
Marine Mammals Management contact for information on polar bear harassment authorizations: 907-786-3479

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Part III: Polar Bear Viewing in Kaktovik

This section of the source book contains information for visitors and residents when viewing polar bears in Kaktovik. Whether you are a resident, researcher, commercial filmer, visitor, or employee, these guidelines will help you understand your legal requirements and your stewardship obligations while viewing polar bears.

Everyone has a personal responsibility to prevent conflicts with polar bears. Though polar bears appear tame, these animals are wild and their behavior can change quickly. Viewing, photographing, and filming unconfined polar bears are activities with associated risks. Some of the polar bears in this area may also have learned to associate humans with food, and therefore may be less likely to avoid interactions with people. In situations when bears approach people, human-polar bear interactions (when a person and a polar bear are mutually aware of each other) can escalate to conflicts (when a polar bear exhibits behavior causing a person to take extreme evasive action, the bear makes physical contact, exhibits predatory behavior, or is harmed by a person). Knowing how interactions escalate to conflicts will help you be prepared to view responsibly.

Part IIIa: Legal Basis for Viewing

Polar bear viewing includes any observations, filming or photography of the animals. It is legal to view, film, and photograph polar bears as long as the bears remain undisturbed by your presence. It is illegal to disturb them. If you encounter polar bears and your viewing activities do not result in a change to their natural behavior, the viewing activity is legal.

Whether your viewing is commercially-guided or independent, any change in a polar bear’s natural behavior as a result of your presence (including an attempt to attract a polar bear closer) is not legal and can be considered an illegal disturbance, also known as “take.” Under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), “take” is defined as “to harass, hunt, capture, or kill, or attempt to harass, hunt, capture or kill” any marine mammal, including polar bears. Harassment is divided into two categories:

1) Level A harassment, which is defined as “any act of pursuit, torment, or annoyance which has the potential to injure a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild.” Examples of human behavior that could cause injury to a polar bear are: separating mothers from their cubs; or allowing polar bears to make contact with a vehicle, boat, or all-terrain vehicle.

2) Level B harassment, which is defined as “any act of pursuit, torment, or annoyance which has the potential to disturb a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild by causing disruption of behavioral patterns, including, but not limited to, migration, breathing, nursing, breeding, feeding, or sheltering.” Examples of disturbance include causing a bear to stop feeding, resting, or swimming.

This means viewing is legal only when a bear’s behavior remains natural (no change in their behavior due to your presence). The MMPA provides for special authorizations allowing minor changes in a bear’s natural behavior. Special authorizations under the MMPA may be requested for commercial and educational photography (see page 21) and scientific research; and are established for subsistence harvest, authorized deterrence by Federal agents or their appointees for public safety, and for defense of human life. Viewing of polar bears, whether guided or on your own, is not eligible for such special authorizations from the MMPA.
Because polar bear viewing has associated risks, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) recommends that viewers follow best practices, and be accompanied by a knowledgeable guide using either a boat or vehicle as a viewing platform. Authorized guides provide knowledge, equipment, and oversight so that visitors receive a safe, legal, and professional experience. Viewing polar bears while you are on foot is not recommended.

Pages 23 and 24 outline recommended “best practices” for polar bear viewing. Pages 25 and 26 describe the work of the Kaktovik Youth Ambassadors, who share useful information with visitors about the community and about viewing polar bears. In addition, German and Japanese language versions of the “best practices” information sheet are available in the appendix at the end of this book (pages 49-56).

The following information outlines specific responsibilities for various types of viewers.

As a polar bear viewer, your choices before, during and after your viewing experience have a primary role in the welfare of polar bears. Before your trip, become aware of polar bear behaviors (see safety guidelines on pages 11-12). Be prepared to assess your effect on bears while you are viewing them. Make sure bears are not responding to your presence. Inform yourself about the risks of viewing on your own versus with a guide, and of viewing on land versus on water. Each option is accompanied by specific personal responsibilities (outlined below), and is regulated to different degrees. Your behavior could have consequences for bears and the community of Kaktovik.

If you are un-guided: You are taking on additional responsibilities when you choose to not use a guide. Without guide services, the risks are yours alone. In addition, you may unknowingly impose potential impacts to the community and to bears. You are not required to use a guide to view polar bears on Refuge lands or waters. However, encounters with polar bears can be dangerous, and using a guide for viewing polar bears can provide local knowledge which may benefit your experience and safety. Your responsibilities include:

- Before your trip, read this source book in its entirety, paying special attention to “best practices” for polar bear viewing (pages 23-24).
- Before your trip, know how to respond if a bear approaches you in a curious, nervous, threatening, or aggressive way, by reading the safety guidelines (pages 11-12).
- Before your trip, become familiar with community safety resources (see pages 6-7) and have a plan for what to do if an emergency arises.
- Make a personal pledge to act in ways that do not stress bears. For example, avoid noisy conversations and sudden movements during viewing, and do not restrict the movements of bears.
- Use extra caution if viewing during low light conditions (for example: have a dedicated observer watching for bears that may approach from all directions).
- Make sure you have the appropriate landowner permissions before you conduct your activities.

If you are seeking guide services ON WATER: Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and other federal authorities set regulations to insure viewing practices on water do not harm polar bears, are safe, and meet basic standards for professionalism. Refuge-authorized guide services have received the necessary permissions to operate and must renew them annually. The most current list is available at http://www.fws.gov/refuge/arctic/pbguide.html.

In addition to using authorized guides, you have the following responsibilities:

- Before your trip, read “best practices” for polar bear viewing (pages 23-24).
- Make a personal pledge to act in ways that do not stress bears. For example, avoid noisy conversations and sudden movements during viewing, and do not restrict the movements of bears.
- Before viewing, review your guide’s safety plan and equipment, and know what to do if an emergency arises (for example if there is a vehicle breakdown).
While viewing, listen to your boat operator and guide. They will ensure your activities will not disturb bears.

If you are randomly selected to evaluate your guide’s service, please fill out and return the evaluation form that will be mailed to you. Your responses will help insure that Refuge visitors receive high quality services and experiences. Guides offering high quality services and experiences can:

1) share a plan for what to do if an emergency arises.
2) demonstrate a commitment to avoiding close encounters with polar bears. This indicates their ethic for professionalism and sustainable wildlife watching, and their regard for residents, who must coexist with bears after your visit.
3) offer for inspection their authorization papers to operate on Refuge waters, including the special conditions they must meet to conduct viewing activities.
4) discuss with you how to respond if a bear approaches you in a curious, nervous, threatening, or aggressive way.
5) demonstrate a clear priority for remaining 30 yards or more from bears.

If you are seeking guide services ON LAND: Authorities (see page 5) have yet to determine business requirements for commercial operators who guide polar bear viewers/films/photographers on land. However, you still have the responsibility to follow “best practices” (pages 23-24) to remain in compliance with laws protecting polar bears. Guides committed to professionalism have incorporated these practices into their operations. Make a personal pledge to act in ways that do not stress bears (for example, avoid noisy conversations and sudden movements during viewing, and do not restrict the movements of bears), and pledge to use the services of land guides only if they follow “best practices.”

Part IIIb: Guidelines for Commercial Boat Operators on Waters Surrounding Kaktovik

Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is obligated by law to ensure authorized guides provide knowledge, equipment, and oversight so that their clients receive a safe, legal, and professional experience. The waters surrounding Kaktovik are within Arctic Refuge jurisdiction and special regulations apply. Read the information below and “Requirements for Motor Boat Businesses and their Boat Operators,” which explains the guidance specific to you on page 27.

- A Special Use Permit is required from Arctic Refuge. Applications must be submitted by April 15th each year.
- Your Refuge permit authorizes you to conduct commercial activity (boat operator/guide).
- Your permit authorizes only conduct that does not disturb bears. Any conduct inconsistent with “best practices” (pages 23-24) is grounds for permit revocation. Penalties imposed for permit violations or harassment of marine mammals may include fines up to $3,000 for each incident.
- Do not “nose up” (land) your boat on shore to view bears. It is illegal trespass unless prior approval has been obtained. Even with prior approval, the action is not recommended because it compromises a safe experience for your clients by reducing your reaction time if a bear approaches.
- You have a professional responsibility to demonstrate to clients your expertise with polar bear behavior, management, and conservation, by conveying knowledge from resources such as the Polar Bear Source Book for Kaktovik Area (this document). Additionally, you should also be able to demonstrate to your clients:
  1) your authorization papers are on board.
  2) a plan for what to do if an emergency arises.
3) skill in detecting subtle bear behaviors (for example: Prevent your presence from affecting a bear.)
4) a clear priority for remaining 30 yards or more from bears. Move away from bears, as necessary, to maintain a distance of 30 yards or greater at all times.
5) appropriate responses if a bear approaches you in a curious, nervous, threatening, or aggressive manner.
6) your commitment to “best practices,” such as ensuring you and your clients proceed slowly, minimizing lights/noises; never herd, follow, chase, displace, restrict movements, or separate groups; and never attract bears.
7) your skill as a boat operator to minimize the potential for disturbance. If approached by a bear, move the boat away to minimize interactions. If the bear persists, leave the area while avoiding abrupt movements or sounds, such as sudden use of the engine throttle. Do not encircle or pursue a bear, and do not trap a bear between boats.

If your business is serving a filmer/photographer, be sure to read the section below. You must understand your legal role when supporting crews possessing special MMPA authorizations (known as a “take” permit) from the USFWS Division of Management Authority (DMA). In such cases, you may be allowed some limited incidents of disturbance to polar bears as long as the disturbance is non-injurious (see specific conditions of the filmer’s/photographer’s DMA permit).

Boat guides serving commercial filmers/photographers in possession of DMA permits must:

- inspect carefully the “take” allowance identified in the DMA permit and operate within those permit conditions.
- dedicate exclusive use of the vessel to only the guide’s crew members, and the filmers/photographers identified within the DMA permit. This means no recreational passenger may be on a boat that carries filmers/photographers possessing a DMA permit.

Part IIIc: Guidelines for Filmers/Photographers on Lands and Waters in and around Kaktovik

Land managing entities and authorities (see page 5) determine guidelines for filming and photographing on land. Contact land owners for specific guidance about authorizations that apply to your filming/photographing activities. Regardless of where you operate, you have the responsibility to follow “best practices” (pages 23-24) to remain in compliance with federal laws protecting polar bears. Land-based filming/photography at the bone pile requires a USFWS Division of Management Authority (DMA) permit (see MMA information below) and U. S. Air Force authorization. Boat-based filmers and photographers using the services of Refuge-authorized guides, who prevent all instances of harassment (see page 18), do not need a federal DMA permit.

If you intend to conduct commercial filming or photography on Arctic Refuge lands or waters, contact the Refuge well in advance (at least 45 days) to discuss whether you need a Special Use Permit issued by the Refuge for commercial operations occurring within the Refuge boundary. Commercial filming/photographing crews have the following responsibilities when operating on Arctic Refuge:

- Before your trip, read “best practices” for polar bear viewing.
- Make a personal pledge to act in ways that do not stress bears. For example, avoid noisy conversations and sudden movements during viewing, and do not restrict the movements of bears.
- Choose guides who use “best practices” and therefore can:
  1) share a plan for what to do if an emergency arises.
2) demonstrate a commitment to avoiding close encounters with polar bears. This indicates their ethic for professionalism and sustainable wildlife watching, and their regard for residents, who must coexist with bears after your visit.

3) offer for inspection their authorization papers to operate on Refuge waters, including the special conditions allowing them to conduct viewing activities.

4) discuss with you how to respond if a bear approaches you in a curious, nervous, threatening, or aggressive way.

5) demonstrates a clear priority for remaining 30 yards or more from bears.

- Before viewing, review your guide’s safety plan and equipment, and know what to do if an emergency arises (for example if there is a vehicle breakdown).
- While viewing, stay within earshot of your guide.

Unless you have a USFWS “take” permit issued by the DMA, your actions must not disturb polar bears, and must follow “best practices” to remain in compliance with laws protecting polar bears. The MMPA allows special authorization permits from DMA for Level B harassment by commercial/educational filmers or photographers in some instances. This DMA “take” permit allows non-injurious, short term “take” (for example: a bear becomes vigilant or aware of your presence for a few seconds, and then resumes its activity). Contact DMA (page 47) to discuss whether your activities will require a permit from their office. You should allow a minimum of 90 days for DMA to process your permit application.

If you intend to conduct commercial filming or photography with a DMA “take” permit, your guide will work with you to operate within those permit conditions. You are still responsible to make a personal pledge to act in ways that minimize stress to bears.
Best Practices for Polar Bear Viewing

Though polar bears may appear tame, these animals are wild and their behavior can be unpredictable. Viewing polar bears has associated risks.

By law, polar bear viewing is dependent on avoiding disturbance to bears. You have an opportunity to view polar bears because people before you used responsible viewing practices. Polar bear viewing will only continue if you and other viewers are careful to keep polar bears and people safe. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recommends viewers be accompanied by a knowledgeable guide, using either a boat or a vehicle as a viewing platform.

Each polar bear’s tolerance to you depends on the bear itself, your location and your actions. Your responsibilities include following the guidelines below to ensure your viewing activities do not result in a change to a polar bear’s natural behavior.

Before you view:
- Review the Polar Bear Source Book (http://go.usa.gov/cQxbR).
- Know your safety plan so it is clear what to do if an emergency arises (for example a vehicle breakdown).
- Be aware of bear behaviors, and know appropriate responses if a bear approaches you in a curious, nervous, threatening, or aggressive manner (see page 2 of http://go.usa.gov/cQxWj).

When you view:
- Arrive and leave your viewing area using the same route, proceeding slowly, and using minimal lights and noise. Immediately stop your approach if a bear responds to your presence.
- Prevent your actions from affecting bears. Your actions should not cause a bear to stop what it is doing, move from its initial location, or change it’s direction of view. A bear shows advanced signs of stress when it huffs or snaps its jaws, or presses its ears back.
- Always stay within earshot of all other members of your group.
- Avoid noisy conversations and sudden movements.
- Use extra caution if viewing during low light conditions (one way, for example, is to have a dedicated observer watching for bears that may come from all directions).
- Remain in your vehicle or boat.

Make sure you:
- Do not herd, follow, chase, or displace bears.
- Do not attract bears with food, scents, sounds, etc.
- Do not allow physical contact between a bear and a vehicle or boat.
- Never separate a mother from her cubs.
- Never restrict the movements of swimming bears.
- Obey all local signs, barriers, guidelines, ordinances etc. regarding bear viewing practices.

Continued on the back.
Frequently asked questions

How close is “too close” to polar bears?

- Guides and viewers are expected to view bears in a manner that avoids disturbing them. Each bear’s reaction to humans is dependent on that bear’s individual tolerance and viewer’s actions. Regardless of the distance, each viewer and guide has personal responsibility to watch each bear’s behavior, and to retreat even when there are only subtle signs of stress (see front page for examples).

- Viewing polar bears safely and legally requires an in-depth understanding of bear behavior. This is why you should hire guides committed to professional standards for quality polar bear viewing.

Whose job is it to decide how we view bears: the guide’s or the viewer’s?

- It’s everyone’s job. Guides must only allow actions that protect you and the bears. Respect your guide’s decisions. However, it is also your responsibility as viewer to always act in ways that do not result in a change to a bear’s natural behavior, whether you are using a guide or not.

Why are some activities allowed that disturb bears, but bear viewing is so carefully monitored?

- The Endangered Species Act and Marine Mammal Protection Act make special allowances for subsistence hunting, scientific research, and human safety activities, as well as for some limited forms of commercial filming/photography. There are no special allowances for recreational polar bear viewing, which means that it can continue only if it is done in a way that does not disturb the polar bears.

Why are people allowed to hunt polar bears even though the bears are threatened?

- Polar bears were listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act because of sea ice habitat loss, not because of subsistence hunting.

- The Endangered Species Act and Marine Mammal Protection Act provide for subsistence opportunities that allow Native coastal-dwelling peoples to hunt polar bears, recognizing this traditional use and its cultural importance. The Marine Mammal Protection Act also designates a number of Alaska Native co-management partners for polar bear conservation. Their involvement helps ensure a responsible harvest.

- The North Slope Inupiat and Canadian Inuvialuit peoples have a voluntary agreement to limit the number of bears that are harvested, so their hunts won’t accelerate polar bear population decline.

Do commercial photographers need a special permit?

- It depends on your activity. For further information, see the Polar Bear Source Book (http://go.usa.gov/cQxbR).

What should I do if I see a bear in town?

- Move to safety and then call 911 to report the location of the bear.

The Arctic Refuge coast is unique because of its polar bear viewing opportunities and the role citizens play in polar bear conservation.

You have the chance to view polar bears because of the efforts of people before you to use safe viewing practices. Please do your part by following best practices when viewing polar bears.
Each fall since 2012, high school students from Kaktovik, Alaska have played a major role in polar bear conservation and visitor management within Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Kaktovik is a remote village along the coast of the Beaufort Sea within the Arctic Ocean, and is not accessible by road. Most residents lead a subsistence-based lifestyle, depending largely on the resources of surrounding lands and waters to feed their families.

The youth are accustomed to seeing polar bears wandering outside their homes. However, polar bears and residents haven’t always been living so close. While youth grew up with polar bears as neighbors, the older generations in Kaktovik remember bears staying farther out on the sea ice, and only occasionally coming to shore. Polar bears have increasingly been coming to shore all along the Beaufort Sea Coast due to factors including retreating sea ice.

But why have polar bears been congregating around Kaktovik? Late fall sea ice forms earlier around Kaktovik than other areas of the coast; seals can be found in higher density near Kaktovik, and remains from subsistence harvest consistently draw polar bears to the area.

Increasing numbers of bears around Kaktovik, coupled with increasing international awareness of the plight of the Beaufort Sea polar bears, has rapidly expanded the local polar bear tourism industry. People come from around the world to view the magnificent bears in the wild.

Since viewing polar bears in the wild is an inherently dangerous activity, and resources in remote areas like Kaktovik are limited, there are increasing concerns about public safety, community well-being, and wellfare of the polar bears.
In an early attempt to help resolve these concerns, a Tribal grant from the USFWS helped fund initial community-driven polar bear management efforts, including establishing the Kaktovik Youth Ambassador (KYA) program.

What do the KYAs do?

After each school day and over the weekend, these teens walk to the two hotels and greet polar bear viewing visitors. During the past three seasons, the youth reported meeting with over 500 international visitors. The youth give briefings, ensuring that visitors are respectful of their community life and of bears by explaining acceptable and safe behavior in bear country. The KYAs advise all visitors to obtain a local guide when they go out bear viewing.

The program has given these youth leaders firsthand experience addressing complex issues in community-based conservation. One KYA reports that “polar bear viewing is growing - it allows outsiders to gain awareness of our culture and lifestyle.” There are also downsides to the tourism industry, such as visitors competing with locals for resources, for example for flights in and out of Kaktovik. The KYAs contribute suggestions for improvement to visitor services, such as their suggestion to expand resources available in certain foreign languages.

Chelsea Brower, a KYA going into the fourth year of the program, says the experience has helped her come out of her shell. “I think it is important for youth my age to be involved so they know how to bring their voice forward, so people know that young people care about issues like polar bear well-being and community control over the tourism industry,” Brower says. Brower and the other KYAs have become role models to those around them, inspiring friends to educate themselves on local conservation issues and to take on leadership roles in the Arctic.

“\textit{The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.}”

For more information, visit www.fws.gov, or to learn more about Arctic National Wildlife Refuge programs visit www.fws.gov/refuge/arctic or connect with us through the refuge’s Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/arcticnationalwildliferedevelopment
Requirements for Motor Boat Businesses and Their Boat Operators

Arctic Refuge must regulate all commercial uses of Refuge lands and waters, including boat businesses around Barter Island. This helps ensure businesses protect fish, wildlife, and their habitats; use safe procedures; and obey federal laws.

If you take passengers for hire aboard a vessel, then you are participating in a motor boat business. Motor boat businesses must have a permit from Arctic Refuge, and their commercial motor boat operators must be listed on that permit. Refuge permit applications are due by April 15 each year. Refuge staff can help business owners complete the Refuge permit process. Contact Alfredo Soto (907-456-0303) or Jennifer Reed (907-455-1835) in Fairbanks.

Federal laws require that anyone taking passengers for hire aboard a vessel on inland or near-coastal waters must have at least a US Coast Guard-issued license for Operator of Uninspected Passenger Vessels (OUPV). The OUPV license allows each operator to take up to six passengers for hire, which gives the common name of a “six-pack license.”

Here are some items a Refuge permit application must include:

- A completed application form
- $100.00 administrative fee payment
- Business license issued by the State of Alaska
- US Coast Guard license (required for each of your business’s motor boat operators)

A Refuge permit will be issued for businesses when:

- Application review is complete (can take 45 days)
- Proof of business insurance is on file at Arctic Refuge
- US Coast Guard license for each of your business’s motor boat operators is in your permit file at the Refuge

How do motor boat operators get an OUPV (six-pack) license from the US Coast Guard?

1) Email Ilisagvik College Community and Workforce Development Training Manager at workforce@ilisagvik.edu to see how they can help. They may be able to:
   - provide partial tuition reimbursement
   - assist with travel
   - organize local classes (if there is sufficient enrollment)
   - get you one-on-one US Coast Guard and Transportation Security Administration application assistance

2) You should work with person assisting you with your application to:
   - complete the US Coast Guard classes
   - document your current qualifying Sea Service (minimum of 360 days required)
   - pass written, physical, and fitness exams
   - pass drug testing
   - obtain your TWIC Card from the Transportation Security Administration
   - submit to the US Coast Guard a complete packet requesting Merchant Mariner OUPV (six-pack) license, including five forms and TWIC Card

Complete licensing requirements for a Merchant Mariner OUPV credential/Six-pack License are outlined on the U.S. Coast Guard licensing website at http://www.uscg.mil/STCW/. See the “Forms” block to look over the five main required forms for the application.

Ilisagvik College provides workforce development support services to North Slope residents. For more information, visit their web site at http://www.ilisagvik.edu/?p=829.
Part IV: Polar Bear Management in the Kaktovik Area

This section of the Source Book contains information about the role of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), which has management responsibilities for polar bears wherever they exist within the United States. Management efforts are based on legal responsibilities and are guided by the results of scientific research. As mentioned in Part I (page 2), polar bears are protected under both the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The listing of polar bears as threatened under the ESA in 2008 does not alter the existing MMPA requirements. Both laws prohibit take of polar bears, with few exceptions.

USFWS staff are responsible for helping to manage polar bears for the benefit of all Americans. USFWS employees help the public understand the laws and participate in polar bear conservation. They also oversee the few exceptions to the MMPA that allow “take” (see page 18). USFWS staff working at Arctic Refuge help manage the lands, waters, and wildlife—including polar bears—within its boundaries, for the benefit of all Americans. Refuge employees help enhance wildlife dependent recreation opportunities, and access to quality visitor experiences on Refuges, while conserving the wildlife and their habitats. They also work closely with residents to address shared conservation issues, and visitor management concerns.

Human-polar bear issues in the Kaktovik area can only be addressed effectively when governing authorities with varied decision-making roles, come together for the benefit of polar bears and people. Numerous information sheets describe how USFWS staff and local residents are coordinating efforts to identify problems of shared concern and potential solutions so that polar bears and people can coexist.
BACKGROUND
Barter Island, Alaska is home to both the Native village of Kaktovik and large numbers of polar bears that aggregate there during fall months to rest and feed prior to freeze up. A relatively unique situation exists in that unused remains of bowhead whales taken by Alaska Native subsistence hunters are available to polar bears that come to shore. The remains are deposited in a “bone pile” located a few kilometers from the village, which is accessible by vehicle for bear viewing. The availability of bowhead whale remains to polar bears has ecological implications to a species that is being affected by climate change, as well as management implications due to the potential for increasing conflicts among polar bears and humans living in close proximity.

MONITORING STUDIES
In 2002, the Marine Mammals Management Office, with support from the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Minerals Management Service, Alaska Nanuq Commission, and village residents, began ground-based observations to monitor the number, age, sex, and activity patterns of polar bears in the Barter Island area. Results confirmed that relatively large numbers of polar bears of all age-sex classes (adults, sub-adults, family groups) occur at Barter Island during the fall open water period. Bears were relatively inactive during the day and fed mostly at night. Interestingly, a small number of brown bears also used the feeding site and provided a unique opportunity to record interactions between the two species, as well as with humans. This information is becoming increasingly important as a small bear-viewing industry develops at Barter Island.

MINIMIZING BEAR-HUMAN CONFLICTS
Active local involvement is a critical component in minimizing bear-human interactions. During the course of monitoring studies the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) worked together with the Native Village of Kaktovik, City of Kaktovik, North Slope Borough, Harold Kavlock School, and individual residents to share information about polar bears and their management, as well as to increase awareness and communication among residents and visitors regarding polar bear-human safety. This was accomplished by: 1) conducting an annual “Polar Bear Open House” during which both local polar bear observations from residents as well as monitoring study results were discussed; 2) participation at city and tribal council meetings to respond to community concerns; 3) airing of public service announcements when studies were underway; 4) conducting classroom visits at the local school; and, 5) working with a local artist, students, and residents to create polar bear safety posters, brochures, and signs.

Local residents historically have minimized bear-human conflicts by sending out verbal alerts (via phone or CB radio announcements) whenever a bear is in town, and for a number of years Kaktovik also received help from the North Slope Borough to conduct a polar bear patrol program; however funding has been insufficient in recent years to adequately maintain a program. In 2006, the Native Village of Kaktovik (NVK) received a tribal wildlife grant from FWS to develop a bear-human safety plan, in response to a growing concern for public safety. The proposed plan consists of three primary components: 1) establishment of patrols to deter bears from the village; 2) minimizing attractants in and around the village; and 3) development of educational materials. A local “polar bear committee” has been formed and is developing additional measures to minimize bear-human conflicts, as called for in the management plan.

CONSERVATION BENEFIT
Results from monitoring studies are being prepared for publication and used to assist in environmental planning, such as oil and gas related activities. In 2008 and 2009, village residents participated in biological monitoring. FWS hopes to continue involving local residents in biological monitoring in future years.

An important benefit that has resulted from this project is the cooperative work that is occurring between FWS and Kaktovik residents to reduce bear-human conflicts over the long term. Implementation of the bear-management plan in Kaktovik will serve as a good template for other communities seeking to avoid bear-human conflicts, and serve polar bear conservation well into the future.
(Above) A hungry sub-adult polar bear feeding on bowhead whale remains. (Left) Kaktovik school children getting involved in a polar bear safety poster coloring contest.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1 800/344 WILD
http://www.fws.gov

For more information please contact:
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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Marine Mammals Management Office
1011 East Tudor Road
Anchorage, AK 99503

Visit the Marine Mammals home page:
http://alaska.fws.gov/polarbear

December 2009
Along the barren, wind-scoured coast of Alaska’s icy Beaufort Sea, an unexpected mix of humanity and wildlife co-exists within a vast expanse of Arctic isolation. Barter Island, Alaska is home to Kaktovik, a small Inupiat Eskimo village of about 300 residents who maintain strong ancestral ties to the land. Like in farming communities, their lifestyle is seasonal and based on the harvest of Earth’s resources, such as fish, birds, berries, caribou, Dall sheep; and marine mammals such as seals and whales. Relatively speaking, modern commodities are sparse: the village itself has a school, fire station, airstrip, store, and two hotels for visitors; and the Fish and Wildlife Service does maintain a bunkhouse there. Barter Island is located within the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge which, despite its remote location, has captivated the interest of a variety of stakeholders including the Air Force, oil and gas industry, tourists, hunters, and biologists over the years.

The Service’s interest in Barter Island expanded when community residents and biologists noticed increasing use of the area by polar bears, particularly during the open water period, which occurs in late summer and fall when the Arctic Ocean’s ice cover moves away from the coast. In 2002, Marine Mammals Management Polar Bear Biologist Susanne Miller set out, with the field assistance of other Service biologists, to learn more about the polar bears congregating in this area. Miller initiated a study to document the number, age, sex, and behavior patterns of these animals.

The most obvious reason for the bears’ presence at Barter Island relates to the Inupiat subsistence lifestyle: polar bears feed on unused portions of whale carcasses that are deposited at a “bone pile” a few kilometers from the village during Kaktovik’s subsistence whale harvest season. Other factors that draw the bears to the area: the presence of seals (the polar bears’ major food) in marine waters near Kaktovik; and the absence of nearby Arctic Ocean sea ice (the polar bear’s normal hunting grounds) causing a landward shift in polar bear distributions.

Two additional factors have made Kaktovik a unique study site: 1) brown bears were also making use of the bone pile and interacting with polar bears; and 2) an increase in tourists and visitors was starting to contribute to a small polar bear viewing industry, raising concerns regarding potential bear-human conflicts. As a result, in 2004 the Fish and Wildlife Service’s Marine Mammals Management office began working more closely with Arctic Refuge staff to expand outreach and education efforts within the village. By 2005, monitoring efforts included documentation of polar bear interactions with other polar bears, brown bears and humans, so that biologists could understand social dynamics between the two bear species and to develop effective polar bear-human safety guidelines.

Results of Miller’s studies (from 2002 to 2008) have shown that an average of 25 bears were present around Barter Island on any given September day, and that all age-sex classes (adults, sub-adults, family groups of mothers with cubs) can co-exist quite peacefully, contradicting the notion that polar bears are always solitary. Bears were relatively inactive during the day, then arose and traveled together to feed with the onset of darkness. Despite their larger size, polar bears were often chased from the bone pile by their tundra counterparts (brown bears). While brown bear numbers were far fewer (approximately 4-5 bears each season), they frequently dominated the feeding site and often precluded its use by polar bears. The bone pile probably plays an important role to some nutritionally stressed polar bears, but Miller believes its contribution to the Beaufort Sea polar bear population as a whole is limited by the following factors:

1. less than 10% of the region’s polar bear population comes to shore to feed here, while the vast majority of polar bears still chose to remain on the pack ice;
2. the availability of this food source is finite, consisting only of remains from Kaktovik’s yearly legal harvest quota limit of three whales; and
3. the presence of brown bears may continue to deter polar bears from using the bone pile.

Continued on back.
Continued from front.

Although Miller’s original reason for coming to Barter Island was to conduct biological studies, it soon became apparent that Barter Island is also an important location for focusing Fish and Wildlife Service’s polar bear conservation initiatives. Simultaneous with the biological monitoring effort, Miller worked with Jennifer Reed, Arctic Refuge Visitor Services Coordinator, to expand Service work with the community to exchange information and address mutual concerns. This was accomplished by:

1. Each year conducting a “Polar Bear Open House” during which residents shared their bear observations and biologists explained results of their monitoring activities;

2. Participating in community and tribal council meetings to respond to community safety issues and concerns and serve as technical advisors for their grassroots management efforts;

3. Posting local public service announcements before studies were underway to explain the intent of that year’s research and monitoring efforts;

4. Conducting classroom visits at the local school to educate students about polar bear biology and polar bear safety practices;

5. Working with a local artist, students, and residents to create polar bear safety posters, brochures, and signs; and most recently,

6. Collaborating with a broad range of stakeholders to help establish professional, conservation-minded standards for recreational polar bear viewing etiquette.

These outreach efforts have resulted in a broad, strong, partnership network sharing the goal of addressing polar bear conservation- and management-related issues.

In a place as distant as Kaktovik, where the Fish and Wildlife Service does not maintain a year-round office in the village, active local involvement is a critical component to minimizing bear-human conflicts. As the grant winds to a close, the Committee will continue their work with village residents, Miller, and Reed to address emerging management issues, such as the need to ensure that increased tourism demands upon this small community do not result in the disturbance of polar bears.

These partnerships, and the resulting achievements of their efforts, provide a good model for other small, coastal Alaskan communities experiencing similar issues with polar bears.

In the mean time, the Fish and Wildlife Service is using the results of ongoing monitoring in its environmental planning, for such issues as oil and gas related activities and Arctic Refuge public use management. Miller has also turned over some of the biological monitoring to Kaktovik residents so that they can participate in co-management efforts concerning polar bears. Most importantly, Miller and Reed have established the basis for long-term cooperative working relationships with Kaktovik residents. These relationships will contribute to future polar bear conservation efforts, as these iconic animals of the Arctic continue to increase their activities on land.
A Traditional Value:
Respect Polar Bears

Elders tell us to respect all animals so they will continue to be available in the future.

Harassing polar bears reflects poorly on our culture and on the co-management efforts by the Alaska Nanuuq Commission on behalf of subsistence hunters.

Polar bears need coastal areas to travel, rest, and hunt. They are not that different than us.

**Do . . .**

Allow polar bears to do whatever they were doing before you showed up. Avoid attracting bears by keeping a clean camp.

**Don’t . . .**

Do not chase or disturb bears. If a bear is focused on you, you are too close.

Your observations are valuable!

Please report polar bear sightings to:
Alaska Nanuuq Commission, 1-855-877-5044 or your nearest U.S. Fish & Wildlife Office.
Traditional hunting by Inupiat residents.

More polar bears observed coming into the community.

In 2002, a team of U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) polar bear biologist set out to learn more about the polar bears congregating in the Barter Island area. Three factors are found to be attracting bears near the community: a bone pile of portions of unused whale carcasses left after Inupiat subsistence whale hunting; the presence of seals in the area; and the absence of nearby Arctic Ocean sea ice.

Around 2004, USFWS Marine Mammals Management and Arctic Refuge staff begin their collaboration to conduct outreach with residents of Kaktovik about human polar bear conflicts. Staff offer services/technical advice for addressing problems in the community related to wildlife, polar bear issues and other environmental issues.

By 2005, monitoring of polar bears is in place including documentation of polar bear interactions with other bears and with humans, which allows for a better understanding of what is needed to develop effective human-polar bear safety guidelines.

In 2004 and 2005 Arctic Refuge offers funds for the community to create information kiosks.

In 2006, Community Open Houses begin to be conducted annually, during which residents share their bear observations and biologists explain the results of their monitoring activities.

In response to community concerns for youth safety, Arctic Refuge staff and Kaktovik leaders organize a polar bear coloring contest to convey key safety messages to Kaktovik children.

A local artist is contracted by Arctic Refuge to create original artwork. Posters about polar bear safety are made using her line drawings. The end product demonstrates a growing collaboration.

Local efforts are made to improve safety. An ad hoc Kaktovik Polar Bear Committee constructs barriers to the whale bone pile which warned people not go any closer than the barrier.

Discussions start about listing polar bears as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

In 2007 USFWS conducts outreach about the potential listing of polar bears under the Endangered Species Act.

Arctic Refuge clarifies their jurisdiction of waters where polar bear viewing is taking place. The Refuge has a responsibility to manage commercial activities so that Refuge resources aren’t harmed, and works with the community to begin to establish an authorized viewing program.
USFWS awards a Tribal Wildlife Grant to the Native Village of Kaktovik to develop a community bear-human safety plan. The grant funds three years of work to meet the following goals:

- Establish authorized village patrols to deter bears from the village.
- Minimize attractants in and around the village.
- Develop educational materials.

In 2008 polar bears are announced as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. There is an increase of awareness of the plight of the polar bear, and more visitors begin coming to northern Alaska to view bears.

In 2009, Arctic Refuge staff coordinates funding for a polar bear viewing guide workshop. Local residents are provided training in laws protecting polar bears, Coast Guard licensing, safety best practices, small business development, and the permit authorization process.

2010s

In 2010, Arctic Refuge recognizes there are enough commercial polar bear viewing businesses, that an official guide permit authorization program is launched. The Refuge issues its first guide authorization for polar bear viewing.

In 2010 to 2012, Arctic Refuge staff works with local guides to be safe, legal and professional.

In 2011, Kaktovik Youth Ambassador program starts.

At least four operators have full coast guard credentials and are authorized by Arctic Refuge to operate.

2011-2013 The Refuge’s guide authorization program continues to evolve. A core group of local guides work with tour operators from around the world.

In 2013, Refuge staff responds to Kaktovik community’s request for enforcement of guide permit requirements to standardize the emerging tourism industry in the community.

In 2014, all operating guides meet legal requirements.

In 2015, Arctic Refuge is awarded a grant by National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to meet the following goals shared with the Kaktovik community:

- Expand capacity for community-based polar bear management.
- Increase the role of local Alaska Native youth in polar bear conservation, and fund the Kaktovik youth ambassador program.
- Expand communication of safety and conservation messages with local leaders to manage the emerging polar bear viewing tourism industry.
Polar bears are long-lived carnivores with relatively low rates of reproduction and natural mortality. They are the largest member of the bear family, with the exception of Alaska's Kodiak brown bears, which can equal polar bears in size. Male polar bears can be up to 11 feet long and typically weigh 600 to 1,200 pounds, but may weigh as much as 1,500 pounds. Females can be up to 8 feet long and typically weigh between 400 and 600 pounds. Polar bears have a longer, narrower head and smaller ears than other bears. Their white coat helps them blend in with the snow-covered environment, which is a useful hunting adaptation.

Status
On May 15, 2008 (Federal Register, vol. 73, p. 28212), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) listed polar bears as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) because of observed and forecasted evidence that circumpolar warming is melting sea ice, the polar bears' primary habitat. Critical habitat was designated on December 7, 2010 (Federal Register, vol. 75, p. 76086).

Habitat and Habits
Polar bears' primary habitat is sea ice, which they depend on as a platform for hunting ice seals (their primary prey), seasonal and long-distance movements, travel to terrestrial maternal denning areas, resting, and mating. Polar bears are not evenly distributed throughout the Arctic, nor do they comprise a single nomadic population, but rather occur in 19 relatively discrete subpopulations throughout the ice-covered marine waters of the northern hemisphere. The U.S. contains portions of two subpopulations: the Chukchi Sea (CS) and the Southern Beaufort Sea (SBS) subpopulation, shared with Russia and Canada, respectively. Although a precise population estimate does not currently exist for polar bears in Alaska, the SBS population is estimated to be approximately 1,526 bears; the size of the CS population is unknown. Globally, the total polar bear population is estimated to be 20,000 to 25,000.

Threats
The main threat to polar bears is the loss of their sea ice habitat due to circumpolar warming. Recorded declines in sea ice have been correlated with declines in polar bear body condition, survival rates, and population size in portions of their range. The extent and duration of sea ice is projected to continue to decline into the foreseeable future. Polar bear populations also are susceptible to other human-caused disturbances, such as offshore development, habitat alteration and human-caused mortality.

Management and Protection
In the U.S., polar bears are a federally protected species under the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (MMPA) and the ESA. The MMPA prohibits hunting of polar bears by non-Natives, although Alaska Natives are allowed to harvest some polar bears for subsistence and handicraft purposes. The Service is the Federal agency responsible for managing polar bears in the U.S.

An international conservation agreement for polar bears signed in 1976 by the U.S., Russia, Norway, Canada, and Denmark (Greenland) calls for cooperative management of polar bears. Another treaty, the Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Russian Federation on the Conservation and Management of the Alaska-Chukotka Polar Bear Population (U.S.-Russia Agreement), covers the shared CS population of bears. Notably, the treaty calls for the active involvement of Native people and their organizations in polar bear management programs. It also enhances long-term cooperative efforts such as conservation of
ecosystems and important habitats, sustainable harvest allocations, collection of biological information, and increased consultation and cooperation with State, local, and private interests.

A number of protective measures have been taken to reduce human activities along the coast in polar bear denning areas, as the animals are most sensitive to outside disturbances while denning. For example, oil and gas activities have been modified to avoid these areas. The Service also provides expertise to industries on how to minimize conflicts with bears while conducting their operations.

The Service’s overall conservation goal is to adaptively manage Alaska’s polar bears in the face of projected climate change impacts so they remain a healthy, resilient component of the CS and SBS ecosystems. In 2010, we initiated a collaborative planning process with our conservation partners to develop a Conservation and Management Plan (Plan) for polar bears, as mandated by the ESA and MMPA. The Plan will include prioritized research and monitoring actions to address key uncertainties and build upon existing baseline data. For example, although we predict that polar bear populations will suffer at a global level from loss of sea ice, the specific response of polar bears at the subpopulation level is less clear.

We are also crafting collaborative management actions to effectively address identified threats, including a strong outreach component to build on our existing partnerships with international and domestic government agencies, Alaska Native organizations, industry, and non-government organizations. We continue to implement conservation actions to support our biological objective. Those actions include engaging with international partners in Russia and Canada to manage shared populations; working with the Alaska Native community to implement sustainable harvest management strategies; and coordinating with industry to minimize take associated with oil and gas operations in Alaska. For example, the Service has recently:

- Worked with State and local entities, oil and gas companies, non-profit organizations, and others to reduce human-bear conflicts by providing polar bear safety and deterrence training, developing community-based guidelines for bear viewing/tourism, and creating standardized curriculums for both polar bear deterrence and den detection survey methods.

- Helped negotiate a first-ever harvest quota in the CS of 58 polar bears per year to be shared between Natives in Alaska and Russia under the U.S.-Russia Agreement.

- Worked with the Alaska Nanuuq Commission to develop a draft shared harvest management plan that balances Alaska Native subsistence needs with polar bear conservation in the CS region.

- Worked with the North Slope Borough and Canadian Inupiat/Inuvialuit commissioners to recommend a reduction in the SBS harvest quota from 80 to 70 bears in recognition that the SBS population may be declining due to reductions in the quantity and quality of sea ice habitat.

We recognize that addressing the primary threat of climate change offers the most hope for ensuring polar bears remain a healthy part of the Arctic ecosystem. Through continued cooperative management with our partners, we hope that these great marine mammals, and the unique Arctic environment on which they depend, can be protected for generations to come.

For more information contact:
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November 2014
Ongoing Polar Bear Research in Alaska

Starting in the early 1980s. In 2001, a 5 year intensive capture-recapture study began with the objective of estimating the size and vital rates of this population.

From the intensive capture-recapture study, USGS estimated that there are 1500 polar bears in the SB population. This is less than the estimate of 1800 polar bears that was derived in the 1980s and 1990s. Because of uncertainty in both estimates, we can't be sure that the size of the SB population has declined in the past 20 years. However, recent studies have shown that SB polar bears are being strongly affected by declines in the sea ice. In years with long open-water seasons, polar bear survival and breeding rates are low, which causes deaths to outpace births, and leads to reductions in population size. One explanation is that, in years with long open-water seasons, polar bears spend less time hunting seals on sea ice over the biologically productive waters of the continental shelf. This limits the amount of fat they can store, leading to nutritional stress and possibly starvation. Indeed, some sex and age classes of bears appear to grow more slowly and be thinner in years with long open-water seasons.

MORE TO LEARN ABOUT POLAR BEARS IN THE SOUTHERN BEAUFORT SEA

Although research and traditional knowledge have taught us a lot about polar bears in the SB, this population is facing new challenges and there's a lot we do not know. For example, what are the mechanisms by which climate change is affecting polar bears? While nutritional limitations appear to be affecting some segments of the population such as young, growing males, others, such as adult females, appear to have remained in good condition. Are drowning events, contaminants, or disease further impacting this population? Will changes in the sea ice cause polar bears to leave their old ranges and move into new areas? Will offshore oil development impact the ability of polar bears to cope with climate change? These types of questions, in addition to long-term monitoring of the health, condition, and vital rates of bears in this population, are being addressed through ongoing capture efforts.

For more information and connections to publications generated from long-term studies in the Southern Beaufort Sea, go to: http://alaska.usgs.gov/science/biology/polar_bears/

A NEW STUDY IN THE SOUTHERN BEAUFORT SEA IN 2008

To better understand the response of polar bears to climatic warming, a new research study funded, in part, by the National Science Foundation, is being conducted by the University of Wyoming, the USGS, and FWS. The goal is to compare the activity, movements, body condition, and physiology of polar bears that spend the fall open-water season on land, versus polar bears that follow the sea ice as it retreats north into the polar basin. In 2008, polar bears were captured in the Prudhoe Bay area at the beginning and end of the open-water season to determine how their condition and physiology changed during this time, including whether or not they gained weight, accumulated body fat, or fasted. Similarly, in 2009, polar bears were captured on land but also out on the Beaufort Sea pack ice at the beginning and end of the open-water season. This will help us understand how polar bears will cope with the longer open-water seasons that are predicted to occur in coming years, and should help managers anticipate challenges associated with bears spending more time on land.

FALL AERIAL SURVEYS IN THE SOUTHERN BEAUFORT SEA

Since 2000, the FWS has conducted aerial surveys along the SB coastline and barrier islands between Barrow and the Canadian border. The purpose of the surveys is to document the distribution and number of bears on shore during the fall open water period. Analysis of data collected in 2000-2005 determined that on average, less than 4% of the SB population came on shore during the fall, and of those that did come to shore, 65% did so at Barter Island where they have access to subsistence-
harvested bowhead whale carcasses. The number of bears observed on shore and the amount of time they spent there was higher during years when the ice retreated furthest from shore. The FWS continued aerial surveys in 2007-2009 with extra surveys flown in August of 2008 and 2009 to accommodate sightings by oil and gas industry workers, which indicate that bears may be coming to shore earlier than in previous years. Future aerial surveys, in combination with the new fall capture program outlined above, will allow us to monitor polar bear responses to future changes in fall sea ice conditions.

NEW RESEARCH ON POLAR BEARS IN THE CHUKCHI SEA

In 2000, the U.S. and Russia signed a bilateral treaty to cooperatively manage polar bears in the Chukchi Sea. This treaty establishes a Joint Commission of federal and Native representatives from the U.S. and Russia who will make decisions involving polar bears in the Chukchi Sea. To ensure that the Joint Commission will have the best available science on which to base management decisions, FWS and USGS initiated a study in 2008 to begin gathering biological and demographic information on polar bears in the Chukchi Sea.

Currently, very little is known about the status and health of polar bears in the Chukchi Sea, including reproductive rates, survival, or population size. The first step of this study is to identify

the best methodology for estimating population, status and trends of polar bears in the region, and to gain an initial understanding of the health and sex/age structure of the population. The long-term goals are to estimate population status and trend using the methods identified, and to understand how polar bears are distributed in the region and how they use sea ice habitat. This information will be evaluated in the context of rapidly changing sea ice conditions and other changes that may be occurring in the ecosystem.

In March-May of 2008 and 2009, polar bears were captured out on the sea ice between Point Hope and Kotzebue in the Alaskan Chukchi Sea. A total of 74 polar bears were captured and standard information such as body weight and body length/skull size were recorded. In addition, samples of blood, hair, and fat biopsies were obtained from captured bears. Twenty-one adult females were fitted with satellite radiocollars that provide their locations every 3 days for up to 2 years. These collars are fitted with new software that tracks the daily amount of time bears spend in the water. This information will be important in assessing any impacts that changing sea ice conditions may have on polar bear behavior and their risk of drowning.

Data collected during this initial capture effort will be added to data collected during subsequent capture efforts planned for 2010-2012 to establish current baseline information for the population. In addition, efforts are being made to expand capture efforts in Russia to gain a more comprehensive assessment of the status of polar bears in the Chukchi Sea.

George Durner, USGS Research Zoologist, examines a 1,240-pound adult male captured 65 miles off the Chukchi Sea coast in April 2008.

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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1 800/344 WILD
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December 2009

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Visit the Marine Mammals home page:
http://alaska.fws.gov/polarbear
What to Do if You Find a Dead Polar Bear

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) is the federal agency responsible for monitoring polar bear populations in the United States. As part of this effort, FWS biologists are working to obtain information on the condition and health of these animals. Recovering the carcass of a polar bear that has died recently of natural causes provides an important opportunity to aid in monitoring the health of polar bear populations. For example, a small tooth extracted from a polar bear skull allows scientists to estimate the animal’s age, while marrow from a leg bone can be used to assess body condition and health.

We need your help. If you find a polar bear carcass or partial remains, please contact the FWS Marine Mammals Management Office in Anchorage at 1-800-362-5148. You will be asked to provide the following information about the animal, and, if possible, take photographs and collect the skull and femur (biggest front leg bone):

- Location where the carcass was found (GPS location, if possible)
- Estimated length, girth (circumference), and weight
- Sex and age class (cub of the year, yearling, sub-adult or adult)
- Body condition (see diagram on back)
- Presence of ear tags, collar, or other identifying features
- Possible cause of death (for example: open wounds, scars, broken bones)
- Estimated time of death (less than or more than 24 hours - see below)

It is especially valuable to biologists to quickly obtain samples from animals that are frozen or have died within 24 hours. If you find a polar bear that is frozen or has died within 24 hours, please call the FWS Marine Mammals Management office immediately. The FWS will arrange for samples to be shipped to Anchorage. The carcass is less than 24 hours old if:

- Carcass is intact and not scavenged
- Eyes are present and not wrinkled or shrunked
- No foul odor or dark brown/black fluid leaks from carcass
- Fur does not pull free in clumps when grasped
- No maggots or fly eggs are on or under the body

Thank you for your assistance. Your help in collecting this information is very much appreciated.

Scientists investigate a polar bear mother killed at her den site by an adult male polar bear.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1 800/344 WILD
http://www.fws.gov
December 2009

For more information please contact:
Craig Perham or Susanne Miller
1 800/362 5148
Craig_Perham@fws.gov
Susanne_Miller@fws.gov

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Marine Mammals Management Office
1011 East Tudor Road
Anchorage, AK 99503

Visit the Marine Mammals home page:
http://alaska.fws.gov/polarbear
**Polar Bear Score Card: A Standardized Fatness Index**

The score card illustrates the fatness index of polar bears, categorized as follows:

- **Skinny** (1): Skins and bones prominent, little or no body fat, ribs and spine visible under the skin, back line and ribs not covered by a layer of fat.
- **Thin** (2): Back line and ribs visible, back line and ribs covered by a thin layer of fat attached to the skin.
- **Average** (3): Back line and ribs not visible, back line and ribs covered by fat, skin on lower rump is smooth and not ribbed, fat layer over the lower rump, skin of neck is smooth, body fat present.
- **FAT** (4): Body fat present but difficult to feel through the skin, skin of neck is smooth, body fat present, skin of neck ribbed.
- **Very Fat** (5): Body fat present, ribbed skin present, body fat present, skin ribbed.

**Condition:** This is a subjective determination of bear's body condition based on an assessment of body fat.
Alaskan Natives may harvest polar bears for subsistence purposes as outlined under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) monitors harvest through local taggers in 15 communities hired through the Marking, Tagging, and Reporting program (MTRP). Taggers gather important information from hunters about polar bears harvested around their community, including the date, location of harvest, and the sex/age and condition of the bear. While taggers assist in obtaining information from hunters, it is the hunter’s responsibility to get the skull and hide of harvested bears tagged within 30 days of harvest.

Taggers are supplied with kits that include tools for taking measurements, and a small pre-molar tooth to age the bear, and certificates that include a variety of important information about the harvested bears. Unfortunately, reporting rates are low with the required harvest information being provided for less than 50% of the polar bears harvested in Alaska. The FWS is currently working to improve compliance of harvest reporting and the completeness of information received for harvested bears.

**ASSESSMENT OF HARVEST DATA**
The FWS serves as a conduit for harvest information. We analyze and summarize data provided by taggers and hunters on harvested polar bears and provide this information to co-management partners to assist them in making management decisions. In addition, we work with the U.S. Geological Survey to obtain information on the population dynamics of Southern Beaufort and Chukchi/Bering Seas polar bears through research programs. Data collected from harvest and research are used to:

- ensure that polar bears are available for harvest in the future;
- provide information to co-management partners (i.e. Alaska Nanuq Commission, Inupiat-Inuvialuit Game Commission, U.S.-Russia Joint Commission) that allows them to evaluate harvest relative to their management agreements and objectives;
- provide information that allows evaluation of the status, trends, and health of polar bear populations.

**HARVEST MANAGEMENT OF THE CHUKCHI/BERING SEAS POLAR BEAR POPULATION**
On December 9, 2006, Congress signed into law the implementing legislation for the Agreement between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on the Conservation and Management of the Alaska-Chukotka Polar Bear Population, originally signed by the U.S. and Russia in 2000. The primary purpose of the Bilateral Agreement is to ensure long-term conservation of this population using the best biological information available. Now that implementing legislation is in place, a Joint Commission, consisting of a government and native representative from each country, has been established. The Joint Commission will be responsible for the design, coordination, and evaluation of management and research activities. One benefit of the Bilateral Agreement allows both the U.S. and Russia to formally address polar bear harvest issues, including the establishment of hunting quotas with involvement from Native users. High harvest levels, in combination with increasing environmental change in the region, make enactment of the Bilateral Agreement a high priority for polar bear conservation.

To address information needs of the Joint Commission, an ad hoc meeting of technical specialists from the U.S. and Russia occurred in Anchorage in 2007 to discuss future management, research, and conservation needs for the Chukchi/Bering Seas polar bear population. We determined that the primary challenge to establishing a sustainable harvest level as called for by the Bilateral Agreement is the lack of population information (status and trends). The Joint Commission met in Moscow, Russia in September 2009, and established a scientific working group to advise their activities, as called for under the Bilateral Agreement.
HARVEST MANAGEMENT OF THE SOUTHERN BEAUFORT SEA POLAR BEAR POPULATION

Since 1988, polar bears in the Southern Beaufort Sea have been managed under the Inupiat-Inuvialuit Agreement (between Alaskan North Slope residents and the Inuvialuit Game Council in Canada). This voluntary agreement establishes a harvest quota and calls for management based on sustainable yield. Additionally, the I-I Agreement prohibits hunting using aircraft or large motorized vehicles, and calls for the protection of females with cubs and denning bears.

Recent studies suggest that the Southern Beaufort Sea population may have recently declined and will continue to decline due to reduced sea ice availability. In light of this information, along with a new population estimate of 1500 bears, the current harvest level of 80 bears (40 for Alaska and 40 for Canada) set under the Inupiat-Inuvialuit Agreement appears to be unsustainable. The FWS has recommended a voluntary reduction in harvest for this population. Any potential changes to harvest levels are currently being considered by members of the Inupiat-Inuvialuit Agreement.

HARVEST PATTERNS IN ALASKA

Harvest levels in Alaska have remained stable over the past 20 years in the Southern Beaufort Sea but have declined in the Chukchi/Bering Seas (Figure 1). However, while the Alaskan Chukchi Sea harvest has declined, a considerable, un-quantified illegal harvest of bears from the Chukchi/Bering Seas population is believed to be occurring in Russia. As a result, there is currently concern that harvest levels for both of Alaska’s polar bear populations may be unsustainable. Six communities (Barrow, Point Hope, Savoonga, Gambell, Diomede, and Wainwright) harvest 80% of all polar bears harvested in Alaska. Polar bears are harvested in every month except June. Hunters in western Alaska, from Point Lay to St. Lawrence Island, typically harvest bears after December since bears moving southward with advancing pack ice are not available in this area until later in the season. Since 1980, significantly more bears have been harvested in the fall (October - December) in the Southern Beaufort Sea than in the Chukchi/Bering Seas.

ENSURING SUSTAINABLE HARVEST THROUGH CO-MANAGEMENT AGREEMENTS

The FWS continues to work through our existing co-management agreements with Alaska Natives to address future actions that affect polar bears and polar bear hunting. This includes working with the Alaska Naranuq Commission (state-wide), the North Slope Borough and Inuvialuit Game Council (Beaufort Sea region) and the Joint Commission formed with Russia under the Bilateral Agreement (Chukchi/Bering Seas region).

If populations decrease as a result of changing ice conditions, it may mean that fewer bears will be available for hunting, and that bears may be in poorer condition. To ensure that bear populations are managed to allow for long-term harvest, it is more important than ever to have adequate reporting of harvest, collection of harvest data, and collection of biological samples (e.g.: premolar tooth) from harvested bears.

For more information please contact: Thomas_Evans@fws.gov

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1 800/344 WILD
http://www.fws.gov

December 2009

For more information please contact:
Thomas_Evans@fws.gov

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Marine Mammals Management Office
1011 East Tudor Road
Anchorage, AK 99503

Visit the Marine Mammals home page:
http://alaska.fws.gov/polarbear
Killing a Polar Bear in Defense of Human Life

What’s Legal?

Legal Requirements

- Defense of life kills are only allowed in self-defense or to save the life of a person in immediate danger. All defense-of-life kills of polar bears, regardless of where they occur in Alaska, must be reported to the US Fish and Wildlife Service within 48 hours.
- The shooter may be required to transfer the entire carcass (including hide and skull) to a law enforcement officer or designated local representative. The shooter is responsible for the carcass once the bear is killed. Don't abandon the carcass.
- The shooter may not keep any parts of the animal, unless authorized by the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Here’s the Situation

Polar bears throughout Alaska are struggling because of sea ice loss. The Marine Mammal Protection Act and other laws protect polar bears. These laws allow:

1) killing polar bears only for defense of human life; or
2) subsistence hunting only by coastal-dwelling Alaska Natives.

Local leaders agree polar bears need to be conserved for future generations. Co-management agreements between Alaska Natives and federal agencies are in place to limit the number of polar bears that are killed.

What you can do to Reduce Defense-of-life Kills

- Handle meat and store trash so bears can’t get it.
- Be alert outside to avoid close encounters with bears.
- Know bear behaviors and life-patterns so you can assess whether a bear is a threat to human life.
- Don’t attract, approach, harass, or provoke polar bears.

Bears are curious and will investigate almost anything to see if it’s food. Managing attractants around your home and work site will reduce the potential for defense-of-life kills.

For more information, to report a polar bear kill, or to contribute samples, please contact one of the following:

- your local Tagger (contact Brad Benter at 907-786-3980 or Forest Hannan at 907-786-3551 to find a Tagger in your community)
- USFWS Marine Mammals Management Office in Anchorage: 907-786-3800 (or 800-362-5148)
- USFWS Office of Law Enforcement: 907-786-3311 (Anchorage) or 907-456-2385 (Fairbanks) or 907-443-2479 (Nome)
- North Slope Borough Department of Wildlife Management: 907-852-0350 (Barrow), or your community’s Borough Coordinator
- Alaska Nanuq Commission: 907-443-5044 (Nome), or your local Commission representative

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service works with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.
Hunting Polar Bears of the Southern Beaufort Sea Population

What’s Legal?

Legal Requirements
- Hunting is only allowed by coastal-dwelling residents that are one quarter or more Alaska Native.
- The harvest cannot be wasteful: At least the hide and skull must be salvaged.
- The hunter must have both the hide and skull tagged within 30 days.
- Raw (not handicrafted), inedible parts such as hides or claws can be given or sold only by Alaska Natives to Alaska Natives.
- If inedible parts are significantly altered into a handicraft, they may be sold to anyone.
- Edible portions (for example: meat) may be given or sold in an Alaska Native village by the hunter to anyone for consumption.

Here’s the Situation
Polar bears throughout Alaska are struggling because of sea ice loss. The Marine Mammal Protection Act and other laws protect polar bears. These laws allow:

1) subsistence hunting only by coastal-dwelling Alaska Natives; or
2) killing polar bears only for defense of human life.

These laws prohibit sport hunting and most forms of harassment.

Local leaders agree polar bears need help. The Inupiat of the North Slope Borough, and the Inuvialuit of Canada, developed a voluntary local user (co-management) agreement in 1988 known as the Inupiat-Inuvialuit Polar Bear Agreement. The Agreement sets an annual harvest limit to help ensure polar bears remain for future generations. Currently the total harvest limit is 35 bears, of which no more than one third can be female. The harvest limit applies to the Beaufort Sea population of polar bears and the residents of Kaktovik, Nuiqsut, Barrow, Atqasuk, and Wainwright who hunt predominantly from this population of bears. This Agreement affects their hunting practices.

Polar bears of the Bering/Chukchi seas population are managed under an international polar bear treaty with Russia, known as the US-Russia Bilateral Agreement. Residents of villages south of and including Point Lay hunt from this population of bears.

What you can do
Hunters can uphold local polar bear co-management agreements by:
- knowing the harvest limit in your region.
- reporting your harvest immediately.
- safeguarding polar bear reproduction by not killing denning bears or females with cubs.
- contributing body part samples for polar bear health studies.

For more information, to report a polar bear kill, or to contribute samples, please contact one of the following:

- your local Tagger (contact Brad Benter at 907-786-3090 or Forest Hannan at 907-786-3551 to find a Tagger in your community)
- USFWS Marine Mammals Management Office in Anchorage: 907-786-9800 (or 800-362-5148)
- USFWS Office of Law Enforcement: 907-786-3311 (Anchorage) or 907-456-2335 (Fairbanks) or 907-443-2479 (Nome)
- North Slope Borough Department of Wildlife Management: 907-852-0350 (Barrow), or your community’s Borough Coordinator
- Alaska Nanuq Commission: 907-443-5044 (Nome), or your local Commission representative

All subsistence-harvested polar bear MUST BE TAGGED within 30 days.
Part V: Contacts for Additional Information on Laws, Regulations and Resources

City of Kaktovik
City Administrator
P. O. Box 27
2051 Barter Avenue #27
Kaktovik, AK 99747
907-640-6313

Kaktovik Inupiat Corporation
President
P. O. Box 73
4089 Hula Hula Avenue
Kaktovik, AK 99747
907-640-6120

Native Village of Kaktovik
Tribal Administrator
P. O. Box 130
834 8th Street
Kaktovik, AK 99747
907-640-2042

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Arctic National Wildlife Refuge
Visitor Services Coordinator
101 12th Avenue, Room 236
Fairbanks, AK 99701
800-362-4546

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Division of Management Authority
4401 W. Fairfax Drive, Room 212
Arlington, Virginia 22203
800-358-2104

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Marine Mammals Management
Polar Bear Biologist
1011 E. Tudor Road MS 341
Anchorage, AK 99503
800-362-5148
Appendix:

Translations of some information sheets into German and Japanese. (2013)
Richtlinien zur Beobachtung von Eisbären in Kaktovik

Eisbären zu beobachten und zu fotografieren ist erlaubt.
Eisbären zu stören ist nicht erlaubt.
Eisbären zu stören ist sowohl gefährlich als auch unklug.

- Beobachten Sie die Bären nur während des Tages. Halten Sie sich in einer Gruppe auf und bleiben Sie entweder in einem Boot oder Fahrzeug.
- Respektieren Sie den persönlichen Freiraum der Bären; vermeiden Sie es, den Tieren zu nahe zu kommen.
- Näher Sie sich den Tieren langsamer mit möglichst wenig Geräusch, Licht oder Bewegung.
- Bleiben Sie stehen, wenn ein Bär Sie bemerkt. Lassen Sie ihn mit der Beschäftigung fortfahren, die er vor Ihrer Ankunft ausübte, bevor Sie weitergehen.
- Treiben Sie Bären nicht zusammen; verfolgen oder jagen Sie sie nicht.
- Versuchen Sie nicht, Bären zu füttern oder sie anderweitig anzulocken.
- Vermeiden Sie es, zwischen eine Bäremutter und ihre Jungen zu geraten.
- Gewähren Sie schwimmenden Bären „die Vorfahrt“.
- Erlauben Sie Bären keinen Kontakt mit Ihnen selbst oder mit Ihrem Boot oder Fahrzeug.

Respektieren Sie die Bären. Ihr verantwortungsvolles Verhalten wird dazu beitragen, dass auch in Zukunft Eisbären und Wale beobachtet werden können. Danke für Ihre Mithilfe!

Richtlinien für die Besucher der Gemeinde Kaktovik

- Bitte seien Sie achtsam beim Besuch unserer Dorfgemeinde. Wir heissen sicherheitsbewusste und respektvolle Besucher zum Beobachten der Eisbären und der Walfang Aktivitäten willkommen.
- Beachten Sie die errichteten Barrieren, um sichere Bären-Beobachtung zu gewährleisten.
- Um die traditionelle Art der Nahrungsbeschaffung zu gewährleisten, gestattet das Gesetz den Gemeindemitgliedern, Grönlandwale zu jagen. Bitte respektieren Sie diese traditionellen Aktivitäten, indem Sie während des Schlachtens nicht im Wege stehen.
- Fotografieren Sie nur aus der Entfernung.
- Wir empfehlen Ihnen, mit einem professionellen Führer zur Bären-Beobachtung zu gehen. Dadurch wird sicheres Verhalten gemäss des Bärenschutzgesetzes gewährleistet.

Respektieren Sie unsere Dorfgemeinde. Ihr verantwortungsvolles Verhalten wird dazu beitragen, dass Beobachten von Eisbären und Walen auch in Zukunft durchgeführt werden kann. Vielen Dank für Ihre Mithilfe!
Eisbären haben seinen wichtigen Platz in der kulturellen Tradition der einheimischen Bevölkerung Alaskas. Sie schätzen die bemerkenswerte Kraft, das Jagdgeflecht und die List der Bären.

Einwohner und Besucher haben eine einmalige Gelegenheit, Eisbären in Kaktovik zu beobachten. Diese Bären sind ein Teil der Southern Beaufort Sea Gruppe, geschätzte Anzahl: 1.000 Tiere. Diese Gruppe bewohnt ein Areal, das sich mehr als 800 Meilen entlang der Nordküste Alaskas und Kanadas erstreckt. Das Eis ist die bevorzugte Heimat der Eisbären, aber da es im Sommer und Herbst abnimmt, kommen die Bären an die Küste, um sich auszuruhen und zu fressen; sie warten auf die Rückkehr des Eises. Später im Jahr graben sich auch manche eine Geburtshöhle, um darin Junge zu bekommen.


Eisbären haben sich besonders ihrer arktischen Umgebung angepasst. Sie sind weiss zur Tarnung, haben ein waterabweisendes Fell und dichtes Unterhaar, schwarzes Haut, um Wärme zu absorbieren, kleine „Saugnäpfe“ an ihren Fusssohlen zum Laufen auf glattem Eis; ihre Zähne sind für’s Fleisch-Fressen und nicht für eine Fleisch-Pflanzen Diät spezialisiert; und bei einem reichlichen Nahrungsangebot entwickeln die Bären sich vermehrt an Land aufzuhalten. Der Rückgang des Meereises könnte zur Folge haben, dass die Eisbären sich vermehrt an Land aufhalten.
カクトビック地域へお越しの皆様へのお願い

カクトビック地域へお越しの皆様へのお願いは、地域住民への配慮を忘れず（白クマ）観察や捕鯨の見学をされますようにお願いします。写真撮影は離れた場所からお願いします。安全の確保のための囲いや目印がある場合はそれらに従って観察してください。

カクトビック地域で捕鯨を許可しています。この伝統を尊重し、クジラの解体作業は妨げないように気をつけて観察してください。北極グマの観察は研修や実習を受けたガイドを伴ってください。それによって、法律に従って安全な観察をすることができます。

海洋生物を素材とした工芸品の購入は許されていますが、海洋生物保護法により、海洋生物を販売することはできません。消費者を対象にした工芸品以外の海洋生物製品を保有、運搬、販売することは違法です。また、地方自治体の条例により、捕鯨の見学や観察の機会は限定されているため、ご了承ください。

この地域を尊重し、適切な行動を取っていただくことにより、今後も北極グマ観察の機会を継続することができます。ご協力ありがとうございます。

カクトビック地域へお越しの皆様へのお願い

カクトビック地域へお越しの際は地域住民への配慮を忘れず（白クマ）観察や捕鯨の見学をされますようにお願いします。写真撮影は離れた場所からお願いします。安全の確保のための囲いや目印がある場合はそれらに従って観察してください。

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この地域を尊重し、適切な行動を取っていただくことにより、今後も北極グマの観察や捕鯨の見学の機会を継続することができます。ご協力ありがとうございます。
北極グマはアラスカ先住民の伝統文化にとても重要な位置を占めています。北極グマの捕獲、獲物に息づく狩りの能力はアラスカ先住民が認識してきました。

カクトビックでは、住民や訪問者が北極グマを観察する珍しい体験ができます。ここでは、北極グマの活動を見ることができます。

北極グマは北極の環境に適応して暮らしてきた。北極グマの白さはカモフラージュになります。外側には防水効果のある粗い毛、内側には保温のための繊細な毛があり、その内側には込めた毛があり、そして熱を吸収する厚い皮膚があります。足の裏には吸盤のようなものが、滑りやすい氷の上でも滑りにくくなります。その安全性、特に冬の冷え込み時には大量の脂肪を体に蓄えて、食べ物が不足しても、蓄えた脂肪を使うことができます。北極グマは主にワモンアザラシを食べますが、他にもアゴヒゲアザラシ、セイウチ、シロイルカなども食べ、海岸に打ち上げられた生き物の死骸を探してまわったりします。

海に氷が残らない時期に海岸線近くに多く集まる時や繁殖期、子育て中を除き、北極グマはたいてい単独で生活します。妊娠中の母グマは10月末か11月ごろから4月までを冬の巣穴で過ごします。他のクマは巣穴に住むことはほとんどありません。巣穴に住む子グマは成長にたいへん重要な場所です。冬に巣穴を出すことは母子を巣穴から追い出し、子グマの死につながります。ですから、冬に北極グマの巣穴に近づくことは避けるべきです。

近年の気候の暖やかさによって氷海がとけてきたため北極グマは氷と陸の間を長時間泳いで渡らなければならない。長時間泳いだ後で、クマが何日も動かずに陸上で休むことはめずらしくありません。そのようなクマを見かけた場合、近づかないで静かに休ませておいてください。
So beobachtet man Eisbären am besten

Obwohl Eisbären manchmal zahm erscheinen, so sind es doch wilde Tiere und ihr Verhalten kann sich schnell ändern. Eisbären in der Natur zu beobachten kann daher ein gefährliches Unternehmen sein.

Das Gesetz schreibt vor, dass Eisbären nur dann beobachtet werden dürfen, wenn die Tiere nicht gestört werden. Sie haben die Möglichkeit dazu, weil vor Ihnen Menschen verantwortungsvolle und sichere Beobachtungen durchgeführt haben. Eisbären zu beobachten kann auch in Zukunft nur möglich sein, wenn Sie und andere Beobachter sich darum bemühen, dass Bären und Menschen ungefährdet sind.

Jeder Bär reagiert verschieden auf eine Begegnung mit Menschen. Das hängt vom Bären selbst, von den Umständen und anderen Faktoren ab. So kann z.B. ein Bär Beobachter in 100 Fuss (ca 35 m) Entfernung tolerieren, während ein anderer fortgeht, wenn man sich ihm in einer Entfernung von 500 Fuss (ca 180 m) nähert. Bären reagieren auch eher auf ein Fahrzeug oder Boot, dass sich ihnen geräuschvoll und schnell nähert, als auf eines mit weniger Licht und Lärm.

Was Sie tun können . . .

Befolgen Sie diese Richtlinien, um Eisbären so wenig wie möglich zu stören:

Bevor Sie zur Bären-Beobachtung aufbrechen:

- Studieren Sie die „Bärenführer-Broschüre“ gemeinsam mit Ihrem Führer
- Machen Sie sich mit dem Sicherheitsplan Ihres Führers vertraut, für den Fall, dass einmal eine Notlage eintritt (z.B. eine Fahrzeugpanne)
- Lernen Sie richtiges Verhalten, falls ein Bär sich Ihnen entweder neugierig, nervös, drohend oder aggressiv nähert
- Machen Sie sich mit Alarmsignalen der Bären vertraut (wie in der „Polar Bär Viewing Information“ Broschüre beschrieben) und vermeiden Sie jegliches Verhalten, das die Bären beunruhigen kann

Während der Bär-Beobachtung:

- Nähern Sie sich dem Beobachtungsort langsam, mit so wenig Licht und Geräuschen wie möglich, und verlassen Sie den Ort wieder auf demselben Weg, den Sie gekommen sind
- Bleiben Sie stets in Hörweite Ihres Führers
- Vermeiden Sie lautes Reden und plötzliche Bewegungen während der Beobachtung
- Besondere Vorsicht ist geboten bei schlechtem Licht (Hier empfiehlt es sich, einen aufmerksamen Beobachtungsstopp zu haben, der in alle Richtungen nach Bären Ausschau hält)
- Bleiben Sie in Ihrem Fahrzeug oder Boot, es sei denn, Ihr Führer informiert Sie anderweitig

Zu Ihrer Sicherheit:

- Treiben Sie Bären niemals zusammen, verfolgen, jagen oder vertreiben Sie sie nie
- Locken Sie niemals Bären mit Nahrung, Gerüchen oder Geräuschen an
- Lassen Sie nicht zu, dass ein Bär mit einem Fahrzeug oder Boot körperlich in Berührung kommt
- Trennen Sie niemals eine Bärenmutter von ihren Jungen
- Behinderen Sie niemals schwimmende Bären
- Befolgen Sie alle Richtlinien und Gebote, die örtlichen Barrieren oder „Verkehrszeichen“ hinsichtlich der Eisbär-Beobachtungen

Buchen Sie ein autorisiertes Unternehmen, wenn Sie Eisbären vom Wasser aus beobachten wollen.


Was tut das Arctic Refuge?

Das Refuge ist verpflichtet, die kommerziellen Aktivitäten auf dem Wasser und in den Refuge Gebieten an Land um Kaktovik herum zu beaufsichtigen, um das Habitat wilder Tiere zu schützen und die Möglichkeiten zur traditionellen Nahrungsbeschaffung für die lokale Bevölkerung zu wahren.

Arctic Refuge und seine Partner stellen sowohl technische Hilfe als auch Trainingsmöglichkeiten für Geschäfte und Bootunternehmer zur Verfügung. Für weitere Informationen kontaktieren Sie bitte Jennifer Reed bei Arctic Refuge: Tel. (907) 455-1835, oder unter jennifer_reed@fws.gov.
Ofmals gestellte Fragen

Wie nah ist „zu nah“ am Eisbären?

- Wenn ein Bär auf Ihre Anwesenheit reagiert, müssen Sie sofort stehenbleiben. Zeigt er sich weiterhin gestört und beunruhigt, müssen Sie umdrehen und sich zurückziehen.
- Um Eisbären legal und sicher zu beobachten, muss man ein gründliches Wissen über das Verhalten der Tiere haben. Deshalb sollten Sie die Dienste eines Führers nutzen, der einem professionellen Standard für hochqualitatives Eisbär-Beobachten verpflichtet ist.

Wer entscheidet, wie wir Bären beobachten: der Führer oder der Beobachter?

- Ihr Führer ist verantwortlich für alles, das sowohl Ihrer Sicherheit als auch der Bären dient. Respektieren Sie, was der Führer entscheidet. Als Beobachter tragen jedoch auch Sie die Verantwortung für respektvolles und legales Verhalten gegenüber den Bären, egal ob Sie mit einem Führer oder selbstständig unterwegs sind.

Warum sind manche Aktivitäten, die die Bären stören, erlaubt, das Beobachten der Bären jedoch so sorgfältig überwacht?


Warum dürfen Eisbären gejagt werden, obwohl sie vom Aussterben bedroht sind?

- Es besteht ein freiwilliges Abkommen mit den einheimischen North Slope Inupiat and den Kanadischen Inuvialuit, um eine verantwortungsvolle Jagd zu gewährleisten.

Benötigen Berufsfotografen eine Sondergenehmigung?


Was muss ich tun, wenn ich einen Eisbären im Ort sehe?

- Bringen Sie sich in Sicherheit und wählen Sie dann 911, um den genauen Standort des Bären mitzuteilen.

Die Küste des Arctic Refuge ist einzigartig wegen seiner Möglichkeiten zum Beobachten von Eisbären, und wegen der Rolle, die die einheimische Bevölkerung bei dem Artenschutz der Bären spielt.

Sie verdanken die Möglichkeit zum Beobachten von Eisbären Menschen, die vor Ihnen hier waren und einen Sicherheitsstandard setzten. Bitte tragen auch Sie hierzu bei, wenn Sie die Eisbären beobachten.
北極圏国立野生生物保護区

北極グマ(白クマ)観察の注意点

北極グマ(白クマ)は、一見おとなしそうに見えても野生動物であり、行動を突然変えることがあります。ですから、野生の北極グマ観察は常に危険を伴います。

クマの観察はクマを刺激したり脅かしたりすることを避けるという前提に基づき、法律で認められています。現在みなさんに観察の機会が続けて与えられているのは、これまでの観察者が安全確保にふさわしい責任ある行動をとってきたからです。皆さん自身や他の観察者がクマや人の安全を最優先した行動をとってこそ、貴重な野生の北極グマ観察の機会を今後も続けていくことができます。

それぞれのクマが人に対してどのように反応するかは、クマの性格、観察時の色々な状況などにより大きく違ってきます。たとえば、人が30メートルまで近づいてもあまり気にとめないクマもいれば、150メートル以上近づくと逃げてしまうクマもいます。また、同じクマでも、大きな音を出して早くスピードで近づいて来る車やボートには敏感に反応する反面、音や光を最小限におさえてゆっくりと近づけばそれほど気にとめない傾向があります。

下記に北極グマ(白クマ)観察の際の注意点を挙げています。

これらの注意点を守ることで、北極グマに与える影響を最小限にとどめることができます。

観察の前に:

- ガイドと一緒に、Polar Bear Viewing Information（北極グマ観察について説明した小冊子）をお読みください。
- 非常時（たとえば、観察中に車が故障した場合など）にどうすればよいか、ガイドの定める安全確保のための計画をよく確認してください。
- クマがそわそわし出したり、あなたに興味を示したり、攻撃的、威圧的に近づいて来た場合などに、どのように対応すべきかを事前に知っておいてください。
- 野生動物は身に危険を感じると色々な兆候を見せます。（Polar Bear Viewing Informationに記してあります。）そういった兆候を知っておき、クマを刺激するような行動を避けるようにしましょう。

観察する時に:

- 観察場所には光や音を最小限におさえながら、行きも帰りも同じ経路を使って、ゆっくりと近づけてください。
- あなたの声が常にガイドに聞こえる範囲内にとどまって観察しましょう。
- 観察中は大声で話したり急に動いたりすると避けましょう。
- 薄暗い時間にクマを観察する場合は特に注意が必要です。（Polar Bear Viewing Informationに記してあります。）そういった兆候を知っておき、クマを刺激するような行動を避けるようにしましょう。

厳守すること:

- クマを追いかけたり、一カ所に追い込めたり、別の場所に追いやりやったり、クマにつきまとうりしないでください。
- 食べ物、においなどで、クマの興味を引こうとしないでください。
- クマを車やボートに接触させないでください。
- 絶対に母クマと子クマを離れさせてはいけません。
- 冰と氷でクマの邪魔をしないでください。
- 地域にあるクマ観察に関するすべての標識、図案、決まり事などに必ず従ってください。

北極圏国立野生生物保護区認定の業者のリストはhttp://arctic.fws.gov/pbguide.htmをご覧下さい。

内で操業するための許可証の控えを保管しています。許可証を取得し維持するために、これらの公認業者は色々な努力をしてきました。許可証はアメリカ海上保安庁発行の免許を持つボート操縦者の名前も記されています。乗客が問い合わせた時には、公認の操業者はその許可証を乗客に見せることになっています。

北極圏国立野生生物保護区認定の業者のリストはhttp://arctic.fws.gov/pbguide.htmをご覧下さい。
よくある質問

北極グマ（白クマ）にどのくらい近づいてもいいですか。

- 法律ではクマ観察の距離は特に定められていません。しかしながら、ガイドと観察者はタグを刺激したり、傷つけたりすることなく観察するよう求められています。クマの行動は個々のクマの許容性や観察者の行動によって大きく左右されます。
- あなたの行動がクマの行動に影響を与えた場合は直ちに接近するのをやめてください。接近をやめてもクマがまだ落ち着かない態度を見せた場合はクマから遠ざかりなけりません。
- クマを法律にしたがって安全に観察するためには、クマの行動や生態を深く理解する必要があります。ですから、専門的な知識や経験があり、信頼できるガイドを雇うことはとても大切です。

どのようにクマを観察するかを決めるのは誰の判断であるべきですか。ガイドですか、それとも観察者ですか。

- 観察者とクマの安全を確保するために適切な行動を採るのはガイドの責任です。ガイドの判断を尊重し、それに従ってください。しかし、法に従ってクマを尊重することは、ガイドの有無に関わらず、観察者自身の責任でもあります。

北極グマにとって必ずしも好ましくない影響を及ぼすいくつかの活動は許されているのに、なぜ北極グマの観察はとても注意深く管理されているのですか。

- The Endangered Species Act（絶滅のおそれのある野生動植物の種の保存に関する法律）及び Marine Mammal Protection Act（海洋哺乳類保護法）は特別な例として、先住民の伝統的生存狩猟活動、科学的調査、人命保護などが目的で、これに従ってクマに影響を与える活動であってもそれらを許可しています。これらの活動に従事する者に対して、管理者たちはクマへの影響をできる限り抑え、その活動を報告することにより義務づけられています。
- 勧告のための北極グマ観察は上記の法律で例外を認められた活動ではありません。ですから、観察活動がクマに好ましくない影響を与えない方法で行われるという前提がなければ続けることはできません。そのため、観察活動を注意深く管理しなければなりません。

営利目的で北極グマの写真を撮るには特別な許可が必要ですか。

- ほとんどの場合、営利目的の写真撮影をするためには特別な許可が必要です。詳しくは Polar Bear Viewing Information（北極グマ観察について説明した小冊子）をご参照ください。撮影の行われる場所や状況によって条件が異なる場合があります。

もし北極グマを町の中で見かけたら、どうしなければいけませんか。

- 安全な場所に移動した後、直ちに911に電話し、クマを見た場所を報告して下さい。

北極圏国立野生生物保護区の海岸地域は北極グマ観察の機会とクマの保護のために市民が果たす役割の重要性という点において、とても特別な地域です。

これまでの観察者が北極グマを尊重し適切な行動を取ってきたからこそ、現在も北極グマの観察の機会が与えられているのです。今後もこのような観察の機会を続けることができるように、観察のための注意点を守って安全なクマの観察をされますように、ご協力をお願いします。

アメリカ合衆国国立野生保護区制度
アメリカの自然を守るために

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