

PROGRESS REPORT

2015-2017 BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL ACTIONS, CIRCUMPOLAR ACTION PLAN: CONSERVATION STRATEGY FOR THE POLAR BEAR



March 26, 2018

Version 5

Progress Reports

2-year Action #17	2
2-year Action #18	5
Action #3	6
Action #7	8
Action #12	12
Action #13	19
Action #19	21
Action #22	22
Action #27	25
Action #29	26
Action #33	28
Action #34	30
Action #35	31
Action #53	33
Action #55/59	35
Action #60	37
Action #61	38
Action #63	39

2-year Action #17
2015-2017 Bilateral and Multilateral Actions,
Circumpolar Action Plan:
Conservation Strategy for the Polar Bear



Title	Operations, Protocols, and Procedures of the Range States
Timeline	2015-2017
Description of Activity from 2017 Implementation Table	Explore and develop options for making the operations of the Range States more standardized and/or formal. A working group will be created to develop options for consideration by the Range States in 2017. Options should include a full range from formally adopting rules of procedure and protocols to consideration of a Secretariat, and associated costs and funding options to implement the Circumpolar Action Plan (CAP)
Baseline status	Recommendations not developed
Planned Outputs	Establish an Operations, Protocols and Procedures Working Group (OPP WG) and present recommendations at the 2018 Range States Biennial Meeting of the Parties (MoP)
Modifications	None
Progress Report Date	November 24, 2017

Progress Report on Activity

An Operations, Protocols and Procedures Working Group (OPP WG) was created with representation from each of the Range States. The OPP WG worked through e-mail and conference calls to develop a paper which was distributed to the Heads of Delegation (HoD) and discussed at their January 24, 2017, conference call. That paper discussed the following:

1. Formalization of Protocols on the Role of Invited Experts, Observers and the Media
2. Development of a List of Approved Observers
3. Adoption of Terms of Reference for the Range States and Rules of Procedures for Range States Operations
4. Options for securing scientific advice
5. Mechanisms for obtaining Traditional Ecological Knowledge
6. Challenges associated with carrying out the work of the Range States and options for securing capacity for logistical and administrative support

During their January 24, 2017, phone call, the HoD considered the range of options presented by the OPP WG. The HoD tasked the OPP WG with continuing to explore: (1) possible models and associated costs; (2) possible agreements or ways to formalize the Range States; and (3) possible ways to secure funds to support the suggested approaches.

In response to the request from the HoD, the OPP WG prepared a phase 2 report, dated June 26, 2017. During the August 8, 2017, HoD call, the phase 2 report was discussed along with a paper submitted by the United States entitled Future Range States' Direction. The HoD acknowledged the connection between the work of the OPP WG and the Future Direction paper in that the Range States need to reach agreement on their scope of work moving forward and then determine the necessary capacity, structure and processes to successfully complete that work.

The HoD charged the OPP WG with investigating and reporting on the following prior to the September 12th HoD phone call:

1. Ask the Russian Federation if, in order for them to fully participate with the Range States, they need some formalization of the Range States agreement;
2. Explore options for sharing capacity with Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) and Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), with preference for CAFF due to fact that only Norway is a member of CMS;
 - a. Is a partnership with the Range States possible?
 - b. Are there opportunities for financial arrangements with those entities that would facilitate pooling of funds from the Range States?
3. Add a section on timelines/implementation to consider the amount of lead time each Range State would need in order to seek and obtain funds to contribute to support a Secretariat;
4. Propose approaches for shared cost formulas;
5. Include the cost of website maintenance into the overall Secretariat agreement;
6. Consider adding development of Range States press releases (what would it look like, how would it be developed and approved, role of the Communications WG and a future Secretariat); and
7. Propose to the HoD alternatives for how to best work with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature/Species Survival Commission (IUCN/SSC) Polar Bear Specialist Group (PBSG), including consideration of a more formalized procedure for requesting scientific advice.¹

The HoD stated they intend to review the progress of the OPP WG at their September 12, 2017 phone call with a goal of making a decision regarding a Secretariat at the October 10, 2017 phone call so that implementation details could be developed in preparation for the 2018 Biennial MoP.

¹ The OPP WG will expand the discussion with the PBSG to discuss ways forward, including the option of a Memorandum of Understanding, Terms of Reference, and alternatives for hosting a Program Officer.

At their January 24, 2017 conference call, the HoD also tasked the OPP WG with drafting rules of procedure for Range States Operations and to make a draft available no later than 60 days before the 2018 Biennial MoP. Given the proposed timing of the MoP, the draft should be presented to the Heads of Delegation for discussion no later than their November phone call. The OPP WG will focus on this during the months of September and October.

The OPP WG was tasked with further exploring the concept of a Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) Advisory Committee for consideration by the HoD addressing the possible role, membership, and duration. The OPP WG wanted to ensure any recommendation it made regarding TEK was informed by the TEK Working Group. In January 2017, the HoD charged the TEK WG with compiling different TEK approaches, best management practices and guidelines used by different entities. The HoD indicated they would then review that inventory and determine if they were specific enough for polar bears or whether they should be accompanied or complimented by a document more polar bear-specific. Once the TEK WG has completed this task, the OPP WG can review the inventory and discuss what recommendation it wishes to make to the HoD regarding a possible TEK Advisory Committee.

Next Steps

As noted above, the work of the OPP WG is continuing in response to requests from the HoD. The OPP WG continues to explore options for securing administrative and logistical support for the work of the Range States. The OPP WG has proposed that the Parties share the duties of facilitating the policy work of the Range States on a rotational Chairmanship basis. This could then be complimented by collaboration within an existing entity, such as the CAFF, to provide administrative and logistical support. Also as noted above, the OPP WG will present draft rules of procedure to the HoD for consideration as an agenda item for the 2018 Biennial MoP.

2-year Action #18
2015-2017 Bilateral and Multilateral Actions,
Circumpolar Action Plan:
Conservation Strategy for the Polar Bear



Title	Determine priority research needs considering the monitoring framework, national mandates and funding options
Timeline	2015-2017
Description of Activity from 2017 Implementation Table	International Union for the Conservation of Nature/Species Survival Commission (IUCN/SSC) Polar Bear Specialist Group (PBSG) to consider all the science-related actions in the Circumpolar Action Plan (CAP) and to prioritize them into two and ten year actions with a report back to the Range States for their consideration. The report will include possible funding sources and applications will have been made, where appropriate.
Baseline status	Actions not prioritized
Planned Outputs	Prioritized list of all science-related actions necessary to fulfill the items of most immediate importance identified in the CAP during 2016. Research and monitoring plan for consideration by the Range States at the 2018 Meeting of the Parties
Modifications	None
Progress Report Date	November 24, 2017

Progress Report on Activity

PBSG provided comments on CAP actions to the CAP Implementation Team (CAP IT) in 2016; however, the list of CAP actions has not yet been prioritized. The Operations, Policies, and Procedures (OPP) Working Group (WG) is currently working to formalize procedures for requesting input from PBSG.

Next Steps

Over the next two-year implementation cycle, the CAP IT will engage directly with PBSG to develop a list of prioritized research needs to address the actions in the CAP. In addition to prioritization at the Range State level, prioritization of research at the national level will be encouraged by the Range States.

To fully implement this action, more formalized procedures for Range States requests for input from PBSG will be developed. The OPP WG is currently working to develop these procedures.

Action #3
2015-2017 Bilateral and Multilateral Actions,
Circumpolar Action Plan:
Conservation Strategy for the Polar Bear



Action	Define and Identify Essential Polar Bear Habitat and Document Change over Time
Timeline	2015-2025
Description of Activity from 2017 Implementation Table	Range States will determine the status of the identification of essential habitat for polar bear in the 19 subpopulations. Additionally, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature/Species Survival Commission (IUCN/SSC) Polar Bear Specialist Group (PBSG) will: 1. Develop a suite of broad sea-ice metrics that characterize essential polar bear habitat, examine changes over time based on past observations, and project changes into the future. 2. A peer-reviewed paper describing results. 3. An outline for future work and a suggested work plan that would include identification of essential terrestrial habitat.
Baseline status	PBSG regularly updates sea ice metric for subpopulations, but assessment does not consider other essential polar bear habitat features. Work has been conducted at national levels, but has not been coordinated internationally (between Range States jurisdictions).
Planned Outputs	Status report that would lay the groundwork for the Range States to take climate change effects into account in polar bear management.
Modifications	None.
Progress Report Date	November 24, 2017

Progress Report on Activity

A peer-reviewed paper on sea-ice metrics has been published:

Stern, H.L., and K. L. Laidre. 2016. Sea-ice indicators of polar bear habitat. The Cryosphere 10, 2027-2041, doi:10.5194/tc-10-2027-2016

This metric has been used in the IUCN global conservation assessment under the Red List (Wiig et al. 2015 Red List document, Regehr et al. 2016) and as part of the PBSG Status Table. The metric has also been used in analyses related to individual subpopulations, specifically Kane Basin, Baffin Bay, and East Greenland (see SWG 2016 and Laidre et al. 2015).

Other relevant materials published to support the ongoing accomplishment of this action item are following:

Laidre, K. L., E. W. Born, P. Heagerty, Ø. Wiig, R. Dietz, H. Stern, J. Aars, M. Andersen. 2015. Shifts in habitat use by female polar bears (*Ursus maritimus*) in East Greenland. *Polar Biology* 38: 879-893. doi: 10.1007/s00300-015-1648-5

Regehr, E.V., K. L. Laidre, H. R. Akçakaya, S. Amstrup, T. Atwood, N. Lunn, M. Obbard, H. Stern, G. Thiemann, & Ø. Wiig. 2016. Conservation status of polar bears (*Ursus maritimus*) in relation to projected sea-ice declines. *Biology Letters*. 12: 20160556. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1098/rsbl.2016.0556>

SWG [Scientific Working Group to the Canada-Greenland Joint Commission on Polar Bear]. 2016. Re-Assessment of the Baffin Bay and Kane Basin Polar Bear Subpopulations: Final Report to the Canada-Greenland Joint Commission on Polar Bear. 31 July 2016: x + 636 pp.

Next Steps

Possible with funding:

- The current status table metric can be refined to a higher resolution analysis across the Arctic on a grid-cell by grid-cell basis. This would be an improvement over the current broad scale subpopulation-based analysis. This would provide a finer scale assessment of polar bear habitat change over the satellite record and can be used to address multiple other action items (e.g., #2). It can also be used to look at breakpoints.
- In addition, there could be an updated circumpolar resource selection model (RSF) (following on work similar to Durner et al. 2009, Laidre et al. 2015 and others) but using updated satellite telemetry data from multiple subpopulations.
 - (This would take about one year of a research scientist's time and requires telemetry data from several nations for collaboration).
- Detailed maps could be generated showing how critical habitat will be distributed through Arctic areas at different time steps and under different sea ice conditions.
- Essential terrestrial habitat could also be determined by looking at denning sites or use of land habitat from telemetry as part of the circumpolar RSF (e.g., identify areas of frequent land use, similar to Rode et al. 2015).

Funding needed to progress on these issues: \$120,000 USD for sea ice portion only, \$200,000 USD to do RSF.

Action #7

2015-2017 Bilateral and Multilateral Actions, Circumpolar Action Plan: Conservation Strategy for the Polar Bear



Action	Summarize and develop strategies for responding to bears stranded on shore near communities and human developments and consider the consequences including those for human safety and bear health.
Title	Strategies for dealing with large numbers of bears stranded on shore near communities and human developments
Timeline	2015-2019
Description of Activity from 2017 Implementation Table	A report will be prepared which summarizes the existing information on strategies for addressing large numbers of bears stranded on shore near communities and human developments, and the risks to human safety. The report will, if possible, identify the geographic areas where the likelihood of such events is higher.
Baseline status	Information exists but has not been analyzed as part of international report
Planned Outputs	Each Range State will share documents they have developed (Best Management Practices [BMPs] and sponsored research) that directly pertain to action #7, including how to handle orphaned cubs. These will be posted on the Range States website.
Modifications	The title and description of this action were modified to better match the exact language from the Circumpolar Action Plan (CAP) document “2 YearImplementationTable_FINAL.pdf”. Further, based on discussions within the Conflict Working Group (CWG), the phrase “nutritionally-stressed” was dropped from the title and description to better reflect the need to manage large concentrations of bears on shore, regardless of their nutritional status. The original timeline for this action was 2015-2017; however, the CWG was not able to fully complete the task in that timeframe. Therefore, this action will be completed during the 2017-2019 timeframe. The CWG and the CAP Implementation Team (CAP IT) both agreed that this action is best handled at the individual Range State level, with BMPs being shared on what each Range State has found works best for them. As a result, the CWG will not write a strategy that would apply to all the Range States because this action is not a collective Range States action. Individual Range States will benefit by sharing BMPs amongst jurisdictions.
Progress Report Date	December 14, 2017

Progress Report on Activity

Because the CWG and CAP IT have both agreed that this action is best addressed at the individual RS level, progress here is reported by country:

Not Country Specific:

1. 2017. Wilder, J. M., D. Vongraven, T. Atwood, B. Hansen, A. Jessen, A. Kochnev, G. York, R. Vallender, D. Hedman, and M. Gibbons. Polar bear attacks on humans: Implications of a changing climate. Wildl. Soc. Bull. doi:10.1002/wsb.783
2. 2016. Review of human-polar bear conflict reduction measures. Thesis report by Marianne Doelman.

Canada:

1. 2017. Summary of tools for reducing human-bear conflict in Canada based upon input from Canadian jurisdictions. Unpublished report.
2. 2016. N. W. Pilfold, D. Hedman, I. Stirling, A. E. Derocher, N. J. Lunn, and E. Richardson. Mass loss rates of fasting polar bears. *Physiol Biochem Zool.* 2016 Sep-Oct;89(5):377-88.
3. 2013. Derocher, A. E., J. Aars, S. C. Amstrup, A. Cutting, N. J. Lunn, P. K. Molnár, M. E. Obbard, I. Stirling, G. W. Thiemann, and D. Vongraven. Rapid ecosystem change and polar bear conservation. *Conservation Letters* 6:368-375.
4. 2010. Towns, L., A. E. Derocher, I. Stirling, N. J. Lunn, and D. Hedman. Spatial and temporal patterns of problem bears in Churchill, Manitoba. *Polar Biology* 32:1529-1537.

Greenland: no report.

Norway:

1. 2016. The Governor of Svalbard. Response plan for handling of potential problem bears near settlements in Svalbard.

Russia: no report.

United States:

1. 2017. Atwood, T.C., C. Duncan, K. Patyk, P. Nol, J. Rhyan. M. McCollum, M. McKinney, A. Ramey, O.H. Kwok, S. Hennager, and J.P. Dubey. Environmental and behavioral changes influence exposure of an Arctic apex predator to pathogens and contaminants. *Scientific Reports* 7, doi:10.1038/s41598-017-13496-9.
2. 2017. Neuman-Lee, L., P.A. Terletzky, T.C. Atwood, E.M. Gese, G.D. Smith, S. Greenfield, J. Pettit, and S.S. French. Demographic and temporal variations in immunity and

- condition of polar bears (*Ursus maritimus*) from the southern Beaufort Sea. *Journal of Experimental Zoology Part A: Ecological Genetics and Physiology* 327:333-346.
3. 2017. McKinney, Melissa A., T. C. Atwood, S. J. Iverson, and E. Peacock. Temporal complexity of southern Beaufort Sea polar bear diets during a period of increasing land use. *Ecosphere* 8(1):e01633. 10.1002/ecs2.1633.
 4. 2017. Atwood, T. C., K. Simac, S. W. Breck, G. York, and J. Wilder. Human–Polar Bear Interactions in a Changing Arctic: Existing and Emerging Concerns. Book chapter in *Marine Mammal Welfare*.
 5. 2017. Wilson, R., E. Regehr, M. St. Martin, T. Atwood, E. Peacock, S. Miller, and G. Divoky. Relative Influences of Climate Change and Human Activity on the Onshore Distribution of Polar Bears. *Biological Conservation* 214: 288-294.
 6. 2017. USFWS. Some Examples of Planning, Actions Taken, and Outreach Tools. *Marine Mammals Management*, unpublished literature, Anchorage, Alaska.
 7. 2017. USFWS. Tools and Methods for Reducing Human-Polar Bear Conflicts in Coastal Alaska Communities. Unpublished report, *Marine Mammals Management*, Anchorage, Alaska.
 8. 2017. USFWS. Emergency Response for Polar Bears: Decision Matrix. *Marine Mammals Management*, unpublished literature, Anchorage, Alaska.
 9. 2016. Atwood, T. C., E. Peacock, M. A. McKinney, K. Lillie, R. Wilson, D. C. Douglas, S. Miller, and P. Terletzky. Rapid environmental change drives increased land use by an Arctic marine predator. *PLoS ONE* 11:e0155932
 10. 2015. Miller, S., J. Wilder, and R. R. Wilson. Polar bear–grizzly bear interactions during the autumn open-water period in Alaska. *Journal of Mammalogy* 96:1317-1325.
 11. 2015. Rode, K. D., R. R. Wilson, E. V. Regehr, M. St. Martin, D. C. Douglas, and J. Olson. Increased Land Use by Chukchi Sea Polar Bears in Relation to Changing Sea Ice Conditions. *Plos One* 10:e0142213.
 12. 2015. USFWS. Coping with Polar Bears Along Alaska’s Beaufort Sea Coast. Unpublished report, *Marine Mammals Management*, Anchorage, Alaska.
 13. 2015. USFWS. Oil Spill Response Plan for Polar Bears in Alaska. *Marine Mammals Management*, Anchorage, Alaska.
https://www.fws.gov/alaska/fisheries/contaminants/pdf/Polar%20Bear%20WRP%20final%20v8_Public%20website.pdf
 14. 2011. USFWS. Polar bear diversionary FEEDING workshop report.
 15. 2009. McKinney, Melissa A., T E. Peacock, and R. J. Letcher. 2009. Sea Ice-associated Diet Change Increases the Levels of Chlorinated and Brominated Contaminants in Polar Bears. *Environ. Sci. Technol.* 43:4334–4339.

16. The following are in prep:

- a. Fry, T., T.C. Atwood, C. Duncan, K. Patyk and T. Goldberg. Monitoring the health status of polar bears using hematology and serum biochemistry.
- b. Rode, K.D., R.R. Wilson, M. St. Martin, and E.V. Regehr. Cumulative effects of disease, contaminants and diet on polar bear body condition in the Chukchi Sea.

Next Steps

The CWG will continue to compile information and BMPs relevant to this action and will post them in a designated section of the Range States website for public access by those charged with managing polar bears stranded on shore.

The CWG is helping to develop the agenda for the 5th Human-bear Conflict Workshop that will be held in Tennessee in March 2018. One topic that will be addressed at that workshop is a facilitated discussion on developing strategies to address the increasing numbers of bears on coastlines in close proximity to human activities. Two aspects to the issue that will be addressed are: 1) More bears onshore for longer periods and in more regions regardless of their body condition and, 2) Episodic events where poor ice conditions/prey failure leads to large numbers of bears in poor to very poor condition on land.

Action #12

2015-2017 Bilateral and Multilateral Actions, Circumpolar Action Plan: Conservation Strategy for the Polar Bear



Title	Polar Bear Range States' Trade Working Group Recommendations
Timeline	Ongoing
Description of Activity from 2017 Implementation Table	Implement the six recommendations adopted by the Range States based on completion of the Trade Working Group (TWG) project <i>International Cooperation for Better Enforcement, Reporting and Data for Polar Bears</i> to fulfill the statements set forth in the <i>Declaration of the Responsible Ministers of the Polar Bear Range States</i> to counter threat of poaching and illegal trade and to strengthen international cooperation to improve the clarity of legal trade data.
Baseline status	TWG recommendations approved at 2015 meeting. Work on consistent implementation has not started yet.
Planned Outputs	1. Use the agreed Terms and Units used by the Range States in their Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Annual Reports circulated to the CITES Parties for their use in their CITES annual reports. 2. Use of the agreed Method to Estimate the Number of Polar Bears in International Trade for Range States when analyzing the CITES trade data. 3. Use of the agreed Administrative Procedures to Verify CITES Export Permits for CITES Management Authorities. 4. Develop a Polar Bear Range States Wildlife Enforcement Network (WEN) for information sharing between the Range States. 5. Implementation of agreed tagging procedures for harvested bears and bears taken in defense of life and property. 6. Canada will post an online report of Canadian CITES Export Permits Issued for Bears Harvested in Canada annually.
Modifications	None
Progress Report Date	November 24, 2017

Progress Report on Activity

Outputs: No responses were received from Greenland or the Russian Federation. The responses from Canada, Norway, and the United States are below. Also, it is noted which actions are completed or ongoing (in progress still).

Number	Planned Output Description	Output Progress	Output Status
1	Use the agreed Terms and Units used by the Range States in their CITES Annual Reports circulated to the CITES Parties for their use in their CITES annual reports.	<u>Canada</u> Canada uses the agreed Terms and Units for polar bear in their CITES annual reports, and as described in CITES Notification 2016/032, including the Annex (https://cites.org/sites/default/files/notif/E-Notif-2016-032.pdf). While it is not possible to have a single set of terms for all polar bear imports, exports, and re-exports due to differing requirements of national legislation, the Range States recommend that CITES Parties use terms and units in their CITES annual reports for the polar bear parts in trade as they are used by each Range State. <u>Norway</u> Generally Norway adheres to the last version of the Guidelines for the preparation and submission of CITES annual reports (re-issued January 2017). This version will be used as basis for Norway's reporting on the year 2016. "See for reference – the Report from the Range States Trade Working Group Project: Completed Tasks (part Ai) with full list of appropriate terms". On terms for scientific samples Norway uses the CITES term specimen (SPE) and always indicate in the description section what kind of sample it is (blood, milk, teeth, hair). Trade in claws is very rare, while claws attached to the rug or skin is only described as 'complete rug'. Norway notes the term bone (BON) for uncarved bones and carving (CAR) for carved bones. Trade in such specimens is rare to and from Norway. <u>United States</u> The United States, to the best extent possible, uses the agreed terms and units for polar bear in its Annual Reports.	All five polar bear Range States are current with their CITES Annual Reports submission. Completed.

Number	Planned Output Description	Output Progress	Output Status
2	Use of the agreed Method to Estimate the Number of Polar Bears in International Trade for Range States when analyzing the CITES trade data.	<u>Canada</u> Canada's CITES Scientific Authority uses the agreed method to estimate the number of polar bears in international trade, to evaluate conservation impact. The method for analyzing the CITES trade data is described in CITES Notification 2016/032 (https://cites.org/sites/default/files/notif/E-Notif-2016-032.pdf). <u>Norway</u> Norway concurs that the origin of parts of polar bears as in international trade is not necessarily harvested the same year as of export. For analysis of trade volume focus should be on harvest of whole bears and not on samples or parts of a bear. In its reporting Norway has focus on avoiding double reporting (e.g., skin and skull being two specimens). Such permits will, therefore, be adjusted to calculate the actual number individuals traded, while still mentioning what products are traded (in the description section). <u>United States</u> CITES Parties informed of agreed methodology to estimate the number of polar bears in international trade. CITES Notification 2016/032. No recent trade analyses have been done by the United States.	Agreed upon methodology exists and all CITES Parties were informed. Completed.
3	Use of the agreed Administrative Procedures to Verify CITES Export Permits for CITES Management Authorities.	<u>Canada</u> Canada uses and supports other countries' use of the agreed Administrative Procedures for verification of CITES export permits, by following the agreed administrative procedures, including ensuring that Canada's contact information on the CITES website is up to date, and ensuring Management Authorities respond to requests for information within the prescribed time limits, as described in CITES Notification 2016/032 (https://cites.org/sites/default/files/notif/E-Notif-2016-032.pdf). <u>Norway</u> CITES Management Authority of Norway regularly updates contact	Agreed upon administrative procedures for verification were developed and CITES Parties were informed in CITES Notification 2016/032. Completed.

Number	Planned Output Description	Output Progress	Output Status
3, cont'd		information on 'National CITES Authorities' as found on the CITES web pages. This includes police/criminal investigation contact details related to environmental issues. Regarding verification of Polar Bear export permits, the Norwegian CITES MA usually will be able to respond within a week.	
4	Develop a Polar Bear Range States WEN for information sharing between the Range States.	Canada Canada has taken action to create a Working Group to advance towards a comprehensive WEN for information sharing. To date, Working Group members from Canada, the United States, Greenland and Norway have been identified. The group will continue work on this item in the months until the 2018 Range States Biennial Meeting of the Parties (MoP). Through the work of this group, Canada has the intention to share information about the recently-developed “3-pronged approach” for improved tracking bears in trade. Further update received from Sheldon Jordan, Director General Wildlife Enforcement Directorate, Environment and Climate Change Canada. Canada organized a half day breakout session of Arctic countries at the upcoming INTERPOL Wildlife Crime Working Group meeting, October 9-13, 2017 in Singapore. Canada, USA and Sweden will be there; still awaiting confirmation from the others. Canada also organized a side enforcement meeting of Polar Bear Range States and other Arctic countries on the margins of the CITES Standing Committee Meeting (SC69) in late November 2017. Our one meeting and one call to date seem to indicate that there are commonalities in trade (legal and not) of Arctic species, mainly going south (various countries) and to China. There is little intra-Arctic trade or compliance issues with the exception of Canada - USA. Ensuring compliance	Progress made, but implementation of recommendation is still on-going.

Number	Planned Output Description	Output Progress	Output Status
4, cont'd		and traceability will be key to ensuring harvest is sustainable – of any species. The working Group members feel that organizing meetings on the margins of other, connected events, is the most efficient way to start to share initial data and explore the possibility of forming a Polar Bear Range states or larger Circumpolar WEN. <u>Norway</u> Norway reported that the national wildlife authorities (NEA) act as their national WEN contact.	
5	Implementation of agreed tagging procedures for harvested bears and bears taken in defense of life and property.	<u>Canada</u> Canada and other Range States have shared information on their tagging procedures with each other, and this action item is complete. The tagging system in Canada allows for reliable tracing of the exported specimens back to individual harvested bears, and ensures that export of every bear is based on legal and non-detrimental harvest. A detailed description of the tagging procedures used by Canada was provided to other range states in the TWG Final Report. <u>Norway</u> The Norwegian CITES permitting authority generally wants to see a correlation between specimens and permits, e.g., via tagging or other marking and through better description of specimens on the permits. Tagging will be mainly for products such as whole skins. Norway supports the notion of tag remaining on the specimens from harvest and to the final destination if possible. A new national CITES regulation is now proposed (autumn 2017) and awaits final Government endorsement. This new regulation makes it mandatory for skins of polar bears to be tagged upon import or to be tagged soon after.	Action appears to be completed by Canada and the United States. For Norway, new regulations are pending. Partially completed.

Number	Planned Output Description	Output Progress	Output Status
5, cont'd		The tagging requirement is also applicable to polar bear skins inside the country. Locking tags are deemed to be the cheapest method and can be more easily checked. Copies of CITES permits stating tag number (including permits issued by other Parties) or a new NEA issued certificate will also be mandatory. Records of tagged specimens will be kept by NEA. <u>United States</u> A detailed description of the United States tagging procedures was provided in the TWG Final Report. United States domestic law only allows coastal dwelling Alaska Natives to harvest polar bears for subsistence or handicraft purposes. Once harvested Alaska Natives must report and register the hide and skull of the bear with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) or its representative within 30 days, at which time a uniquely numbered tamper-resistant tag is placed on both the hide and skull and that tag must remain with the hide through the tanning process. At time of tagging the Service collects a pre-molar from the harvested animal but no hair is currently collected. Additionally, the Service does not allow the commercial sale or export of raw or tanned hides or mounts of polar bears. Any polar bear taken in defense of human life or illegally harvested must either be transferred to the Service or in the case of an illegal harvest is seized by the Service. Such specimens are tagged by the Service and remain the property of the Service. United States domestic law does not allow a polar bear to be taken (killed) in defense of property.	
6	Canada will post an online report of Canadian CITES Export Permits Issued for Bears Harvested in Canada annually.	<u>Canada</u> Canada annually publishes a summary of wildlife trade in our WAPPRIITA (Canada's Wildlife Trade Act) annual report. The most recent WAPPRIITA annual report can be found here: http://www.ec.gc.ca/cites/default.asp?lang=En&n=85694F95-1. The WAPPRIITA annual report for 2016 will contain a summary of information on polar bear exports, and is expected for publication in late 2017. Canada continues to work to make data available in an accurate timely and	Action still in progress by Canada and under consideration. In progress.

Number	Planned Output Description	Output Progress	Output Status
6, cont'd		transparent way that respects legal and privacy concerns, in order to facilitate cooperation and ensure transparency and use of polar bear trade data in an efficient way. Canada also provides an annual trade data report to the CITES Secretariat. The latest published (2015) CITES polar bear trade data can be found here: http://trade.cites.org/. The recommended methods for analyzing these data are outlined in Recommendation #2 of the Circumpolar Action Plan (CAP) Implementation Plan and can also be found in CITES Notification 2016/032 (https://cites.org/sites/default/files/notif/E-Notif-2016-032.pdf). Norway Norway reported to monitor trade the focus should be on whole skins and exempt scientific samples or smaller items. There is no regular harvest of polar bear in Norway and a database containing requested information has therefore not been established. The off-take of polar bear in Norway averages one a year and are animals causing danger. These specimens are usually traded on the domestic market.	

Action #13

2015-2017 Bilateral and Multilateral Actions, Circumpolar Action Plan: Conservation Strategy for the Polar Bear



Action	Assess the adequacy of existing oil and contaminant spill emergency response plans to protect essential polar bear habitat, and prevent polar bears from being exposed to oil
Title	Documenting and assessment of existing Best Management Practices (BMPs)
Timeline	2015-2017
Description of Activity from 2017 Implementation Table	Each Range State will compile existing national literature. Russia will amalgamate all of the information into a circumpolar summary.
Baseline status	Information exists but has not been analyzed at the circumpolar level.
Planned Outputs	Circumpolar assessment report based upon the current state of knowledge.
Modifications	Information on this activity from some Range States was received later than planned, thus, the timeline for circumpolar summary preparation also was modified.
Progress Report Date	December 6, 2017

Progress Report on Activity

Oil and gas activities in the Arctic are considered in the Circumpolar Action Plan (CAP) as one of the key threats to polar bear.

For the purposes of conducting an integrated assessment the All-Russian Research Institute for Nature Protection developed a template for information gathering that the polar bear Range States were asked to complete. The structure of the assessment report was developed and agreed upon by the Range States. The following related questions were included in the assessment report:

1. The resource base of oil and natural gas in the water area of the Arctic seas, which are under jurisdiction of the Range States.
2. Prospects of oil and gas production in the Range States.
3. Short overview of a present-day level of development of oil and gas complex (the largest projects, available or planned production and transport infrastructure).

4. Description of license area, permission to which were issued before December 31, 2015 (map and a short description, the names of companies which have obtained licenses).
5. Classification of license area from the point of view of prospects of development of oil and gas resources (probability of resources extraction: high, average, low – for the short-term (10 years) and mid-term (20-30 years) horizon).
6. External factors defining development of oil and gas fields in the water area of the Arctic seas which are under jurisdiction of the Range States (environmental and other restrictions).
7. Allocation of the areas potentially dangerous in case of emergency oil spill.
8. Readiness of the companies which have obtained licenses to carry out a set of measures for elimination of emergency oil spills.
9. Coordination and mutual aid in case of emergency oil spill.

As of November 2017, all Range States have provided their national reviews. At present, Russia is amalgamating the information into a single circumpolar summary.

Next Steps

Each Range State has been asked to compile existing national literature on relevant issues, including official documents related to oil and contaminant spill emergency response plans and examples of BMPs for oil and contaminant spill emergency response to protect essential polar bear habitat. Compilation of a list of these publications and existing documents is a planned output of this action.

Action will be completed before biennial meeting.

Action #19

2015-2017 Bilateral and Multilateral Actions, Circumpolar Action Plan: Conservation Strategy for the Polar Bear



Action	Establish working relationships with tourism organizations
Timeline	2015-2017
Description of Activity from 2017 Implementation Table	Each Range State will identify key tourism operators and engage in discussions with them about their current practices to minimize the impacts of their activities on polar bears and the risk to humans of tourism in areas where polar bears are present.
Baseline status	Existing information about the tourism sector has not been analyzed.
Planned Outputs	Range States will develop a baseline of information about tourism operators, while building a working relationship with them, in their respective countries and begin discussions at the Range State level to help inform Best Management Practices (BMPs).
Modifications	Content and timeline of action has been modified. Action 19 and action 20 of the Circumpolar Action Plan (CAP), both concerning tourism, will be integrated into one process at the circumpolar level, with the 2-year period of 2018-2020 as a timeframe. The actions are seen as potentially more efficient when viewed together, not separately.
Progress Report Date	November 24, 2017

Progress Report on Activity

Norway has conducted a successful pilot of the process described in Actions 19 and 20 in 2016, where the governor of Svalbard invited all tourism organization and operators on Svalbard, including the Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators (AECO), to a series of workshops. The current practices of operators in tourism activities near polar bears or in polar bear habitat were presented, the needs for careful planning and conduct in order to minimize the potential impacts on polar bears were discussed, and the participants produced an agreed, shared set of rules of conduct, or a BMP, that would be used in Svalbard. Norway has not yet started the process to expand this action to a circumpolar level, or to share these experiences among the Range States.

Next Steps

There is a plan to take this work to a multilateral level in the coming months, and to describe this work as a planned action, combining Actions 19 and 20 in the CAP, for the 2-year period 2018-2020.

Action #22

2015-2017 Bilateral and Multilateral Actions, Circumpolar Action Plan: Conservation Strategy for the Polar Bear



Action	Reduce the risk of injury and mortality to humans and bears as a result of their interactions by: a. continuing to support the work of the Range State Conflict Working Group (CWG); b. implementing and making available to all Range States the Polar Bear-Human Information Management System (PBHIMS); c. developing and implementing appropriate data-sharing agreements among the Range States and making the data available to Range State management authorities; d. entering all available data on human-bear interactions into the PBHIMS database on an ongoing basis; and, e. developing Best Management Practices (BMPs) on tools and techniques for use in preventing and mitigating human–bear conflicts
Title	Continuation of the CWG
Timeline	2015-2017
Description of Activity from 2017 Implementation Table	Continue to support the work of the Range States CWG
Baseline status	Terms of Reference (ToR), data sharing agreement and requirements document not completed. PBHIMS not fully populated.
Planned Outputs	To have completed ToR, data-sharing agreement and a requirements document. Continued population of the PBHIMS and publication of peer-reviewed papers.
Modifications	The title and description of this action were modified to better match the exact language from the CAP document “2 YearImplementationTable_FINAL.pdf”.
Progress Report Date	November 24, 2017

Progress Report on Activity

Progress:

- a. Continuing to support the work of the Range States CWG.

Description: Providing the human and financial resources necessary for the CWG to complete assigned tasks. Ideally, a financial mechanism will be established to support working group activities including priority research, pilot projects, face-to-face meetings, and data management.

No financial mechanism has been established, although the Range States Operations, Policies, and Procedures (OPP) Working Group (WG) is working with the Range States Heads of Delegation (HoD) to address this point. A decision is expected prior to the 2018 Range States Biennial Meeting of the Parties (MoP).

Support was provided by the Range States for a face-to-face meeting of the CWG in March 2015 in Copenhagen.

In 2017 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determined that it could no longer provide the sole financial support for providing technical support for the PBHIMS database. The CWG has discussed other options to pursue, but no solutions have been developed. The SMART database used by World Wildlife Fund (WWF) for other species may provide a proven solution that could be modified to accommodate polar bears.

b. Implementing and making available to all Range States the PBHIMS database.

Complete. The CWG has modified the PBHIMS database to meet their data management needs, and it is available to all Range States for use. ToR and a requirements document have been completed.

c. Developing and implementing appropriate data-sharing agreements among the Range States and making the data available to Range State management authorities.

Description: Determine goal of agreement, approval by CWG, Approval by HoD, National consultations

Finished, with caveat: The CWG has developed a draft data-sharing agreement. However, the CWG does not think a true data sharing agreement is practical at the international level. Rather, data sharing agreements will be developed between interested parties on a project and analysis specific basis. The draft data-sharing agreement developed by the CWG can provide a template for that along with data sharing within jurisdictions.

d. Entering all available data on human-bear interactions into the PBHIMS database on an ongoing basis.

Description: Historic conflict records are entered and a plan is in place to update PBHIMS annually with data from each Range State

Ongoing. Norway and U.S. data is completely entered. Within Canada, Nunavut and Manitoba have committed to entering their data and have made significant progress.

e. Developing BMPs on tools and techniques for use in preventing and mitigating human–bear conflicts.

Description: Produce a best practices detection, deterrence, and conflict prevention manual using material from around the Arctic such as the Parks Canada/Government of Nunavut and U.S. deterrence manuals that were already produced. Include recommended suite of data to be collected whenever bears are killed in conflict (e.g. age, sex, body condition, and probable cause of the attack). Continue to update as new material becomes available.

Ongoing. See response to action #7. Rather than produce a manual, the Range States will share BMPs, manuals and other materials on the Range States website to inform management of conflicts Arctic-wide. Still need to review materials from the 2014 Wildlife-Human Attack Response Training (WHART) workshop held in Whitehorse to help identify data to collect when bears are killed during conflicts.

Peer-reviewed Publications:

1. 2017. Wilder, J. M., D. Vongraven, T. Atwood, B. Hansen, A. Jessen, A. Kochnev, G. York, R. Vallender, D. Hedman, and M. Gibbons. Polar bear attacks on humans: Implications of a changing climate. *Wildl. Soc. Bull.* doi:10.1002/wsb.783
2. *In prep.* Wilder et al. Efficacy of bear spray versus polar bears.
3. *In prep.* Smith et al. Effects of canister age, temperature, and wind on the efficacy of bear spray.

Next Steps

The CWG plans to hold a face to face meeting in early 2018 adjacent to the Biennial MoP in Alaska to develop its next two-year workplan and take care of other business.

Action #27

2015-2017 Bilateral and Multilateral Actions, Circumpolar Action Plan: Conservation Strategy for the Polar Bear



Action	Inter-jurisdictional Collaboration in Support of Consistent Research Methods and Data Sets for Polar Bears
Timeline	2015-2025
Description of Activity from 2017 Implementation Table	Researchers from the Range States will endeavor to develop and apply, where appropriate, common research techniques and data reporting. This will be achieved, for example, through the International Union for the Conservation of Nature/Species Survival Commission (IUCN/SSC) Polar Bear Specialist Group (PBSG), exchange among research personnel of the Range States, and other forums.
Baseline status	No systematic approach to sharing research plans exists between jurisdictions.
Planned Outputs	Technical/scientific publications and procedural manuals.
Modifications	None.
Progress Report Date	November 24, 2017

Progress Report on Activity

The PBSG currently collaborates inter-jurisdictionally to the best extent possible.

Next Steps

This action is ongoing, will be carried into next 2-year cycle, and will require further refinement through discussions with the Circumpolar Action Plan Implementation Team and PBSG.

Additionally, this action will be best implemented when applied to specific research questions, such as action #30: *Obtain information, where possible, on vital rates for all 19 subpopulations of polar bears. Improve methods to evaluate ecological indicators (e.g., reproduction) as proxies for robust estimates of vital rates.*

To fully implement this action, more formalized procedures for Range States' communications with the PBSG will be required. The Operations, Policies, and Procedures Working Group is currently working to develop these procedures.

Action #29

2015-2017 Bilateral and Multilateral Actions, Circumpolar Action Plan: Conservation Strategy for the Polar Bear



Action	Determination of population size estimates as per the Inventory Schedule
Timeline	2015-2025
Description of Activity from 2017 Implementation Table	Subject to priorities, each Range State will conduct population assessments as per the Circumpolar Action Plan (CAP) Inventory Schedule (Appendix V)
Baseline status	Inventory schedule begins 2015; population estimates reflect ongoing national efforts.
Planned Outputs	Population assessments.
Modifications	None.
Progress Report Date	January 24, 2018

Progress Report on Activity

Each Range State conducts population monitoring to support management and conservation actions as part of their national conservation plan or bilateral agreements, subject to national priorities. Each Range State conducts these assessments as per the Inventory Schedule in Appendix V of the CAP; however, the specific order of monitoring projects may change due to operational or logistical constraints or priorities. Appendix V was updated to reflect population assessment activities conducted from 2015 to 2017 and activities planned from 2018 to 2030 (see table, below). Population trend rows included in the original CAP Appendix V were removed because recent trend information was not available at the time of this report. If trend information becomes available before the next 2-year reporting period, the table will be updated accordingly. The table was also revised to include hyperlinks to each subpopulation's information page on the International Union for the Conservation of Nature/Species Survival Commission (IUCN/SSC) Polar Bear Specialist Group (PBSG) website.

To ensure population monitoring projects are completed, the PBSG has suggested that the Range States adequately fund the implementation of their individual national plans.

Next Steps

This action is on-going and will remain an on-going and recurring action for the full 10-year action plan period (i.e., until 2025). The Appendix V Inventory Schedule will be revised during each 2-year reporting period.

January 2018 Update

Appendix V: Circumpolar Polar Bear Subpopulation Inventory Planning Schedule, Circumpolar Action Plan (CAP)

Subpopulation:*	Arctic Basin**	Baffin Bay	Barents Sea	Chukchi Sea	Davis Strait	East Greenland	Foxe Basin	Gulf of Boothia	Kane Basin	Kara Sea	Lancaster Sound	Laptev Sea	M'Clintock Channel	Northern Beaufort Sea	Norwegian Bay	Southern Beaufort Sea	Southern Hudson Bay	Viscount Melville Sound	Western Hudson Bay
Jurisdictional sharing:	All	Canada, Greenland	Norway, Russia	Russia, US	Canada, Greenland	Greenland	Canada	Canada	Canada, Greenland	Russia	Canada	Russia	Canada	Canada	Canada	Canada, US	Canada	Canada	Canada
Last survey carried out:	N/A	2011-2013			2005-2007	N/A	2008-2010	1998-2000	2012-2014		1994-1997		1998-2000	2003-2006	1994-1997	2001-2006	2016	2012-2014	2016
2015			A (Norwegian portion of range)	O-MR & B		MR & B		B					MR/B			O-MR & B			O-MR
2016				O-MR & B		MR & B		MR/B					B		MR/B	O-MR & B	A		O-MR & A
2017				O-MR	B	MR & B	A & B	MR & B							MR/B	A			O-MR
2018				O-MR & B	B	MR & B									MR/B	O-MR & B			O-MR
2019				O-MR & B		MR & B					B			MTBD	MR/B	MTBD			O-MR
2020						MR & B					B			MTBD	MR/B	MTBD			O-MR
2021		B				A	A & B		B		B			MTBD	MR/B	MTBD			O-MR
2022		B							B							O-MR & B	MR		O-MR & A
2023																O-MR & B			O-MR
2024																O-MR & B			O-MR
2025																O-MR & B			O-MR
2026																O-MR & B			O-MR
2027																O-MR & B			O-MR
2028		MR/B														O-MR & B			O-MR
2029							A									O-MR & B			O-MR
2030																O-MR & B			O-MR

LEGEND & NOTES:

A	Aerial survey
B	Biopsy darting (genetic mark-recapture)
MR	Traditional mark-recapture
MR/B	Traditional mark-recapture or biopsy darting (TBD)
MR & B	Combination of traditional mark-recapture and biopsy darting
MTBD	Survey method has not yet been determined
O-MR/B	Ongoing surveys (O -) conducted at lower intensity (and potentially in only a portion of the subpopulation) than pulsed surveys, but on an annual basis. For methods used, see other legend codes
(prelim)	Preliminary assessment/pilot study
	Planned activities; Annual MR by Canada near Churchill, Manitoba
	Planned activities; Annual MR & B by US in Alaska only
	Activity completed
	Activity partially completed
	Activity rescheduled
	Activity not completed

Note: Not all surveys will result in new population estimates. For example, the ongoing MR work in Western Hudson Bay will not yield a population estimate each year as this work is research-focused, rather than a monitoring activity.

* Each heading is hyperlinked to the individual subpopulation's information page on the International Union for the Conservation of Nature/Species Survival Commission (IUCN/SSC) Polar Bear Specialist Group (PBSG) website, <http://pbsg.npolar.no/en/index.html>.

** The Range States recognize that it may be useful to survey the Arctic Basin subpopulation at some point in the near future, however, neither the timing nor method has yet been determined.

The above represents planned activities as of January 2018. Monitoring activities are subject to change as additional needs and/or resources are identified.

Action #33

2015-2017 Bilateral and Multilateral Actions, Circumpolar Action Plan: Conservation Strategy for the Polar Bear



Action	Annual Population Assessments for each of the Polar Bear Subpopulations
Timeline	2015-2025
Description of Activity from 2017 Implementation Table	Population assessments of all 19 subpopulations will be conducted on an annual basis for each of the subpopulations. If there is no new information the assessment for an individual subpopulation may remain unchanged from the previous year. The assessment reports will be made generally available in a timely manner.
Baseline status	Population status table updated by International Union for the Conservation of Nature/Species Survival Commission (IUCN/SSC) Polar Bear Specialist Group (PBSG).
Planned Outputs	Annual reports.
Modifications	None.
Progress Report Date	December 4, 2017

Progress Report on Activity

Range States conduct population estimates as part of their national conservation plan or bilateral agreements. The PBSG assesses these efforts and, in conjunction with other research efforts, produce status assessments for polar bear populations.

The PBSG updated their “Summary of polar bear population status” table in March 2017 and is available on their website at: <http://pbsg.npolar.no/en/status/status-table.html>.

Additionally, under their domestic processes and in accordance with the management structure in place in Canada, the Polar Bear Technical Committee (PBTC) updated their “Status Table” in February 2017. The PBTC makes assessments based upon both science and Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK).

Next Steps

The PBSG updates their status table annually and it is anticipated that an update will be provided in 2018.

The PBTC will next meet in February 2018 in order to once again assess the status of the 13 subpopulations in Canada based upon the best available scientific information and TEK.

This action is on-going and will remain on-going and recurring for the full 10-year action plan period (i.e., until 2025).

Action #34

2015-2017 Bilateral and Multilateral Actions, Circumpolar Action Plan: Conservation Strategy for the Polar Bear



Action	Obtaining Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) for each Subpopulation
Timeline	2015-2025
Description of Activity from 2017 Implementation Table	Subject to priorities each Range State will compile TEK for each subpopulation as per the Circumpolar Action Plan (CAP) Acquisition Schedule (Appendix VI).
Baseline status	Inventory schedule begins 2015; TEK studies reflect ongoing national efforts
Planned Outputs	Circumpolar status report on what has been collected is presented at the 2018 Range States Biennial Meeting of the Parties (MoP).
Modifications	None.
Progress Report Date	November 24, 2017

Progress Report on Activity

The TEK Working Group (WG) will present an updated CAP Acquisition Schedule (Appendix VI) with resources for the 2015-2017 reporting period at the 2018 Biennial MoP.

Next Steps

The TEK WG will identify planned TEK studies for the 2018-2020 reporting period, and continue to update the CAP Acquisition Schedule (Appendix VI) as new TEK studies are planned and developed.

Action #35

2015-2017 Bilateral and Multilateral Actions, Circumpolar Action Plan: Conservation Strategy for the Polar Bear



Action	Establishment of a Range State definition of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and guidelines for the use of TEK in management decisions
Timeline	2015-2017
Description of Activity from 2017 Implementation Table	A TEK Working Group (Canada, Greenland, United States and Russia) will be formed and will work to establish an agreed-upon definition of TEK. The TEK Working Group (WG) will then work to establish guidelines for the Range States for including TEK in management decisions. The TEK WG will consider legal requirements in each Range States and the language of the Agreement on the Conservation of Polar Bears.
Baseline status	Information exists but has not been standardized or compiled by the Range States
Planned Outputs	Development of an agreed upon definition of TEK to be used by the Range States and a list of recommendations for standards for collecting and reporting on TEK which will be used in management decisions
Modifications	After discussions, the TEK WG decided that it would be very hard to develop a list of recommendations for standards for collecting and reporting on TEK for management decisions. Therefore the group, with approval from the Heads of Delegation (HoD), modified the action to 'compiling a compendium of existing guidelines for the use of TEK in decision making' which can be used as reference material by the Range States and those who are interested. This compendium will evolve as more TEK information becomes available and will aim to have a section dedicated to the use of TEK in Wildlife Management specifically, as more information becomes available.
Progress Report Date	November 24, 2017

Progress Report on Activity

The definition of TEK was approved by the HoD in 2016. The compendium of existing guidelines for the use of TEK in decision making has been developed and will be shared at the 2018 Range States Meeting of the Parties.

Next Steps

Action is pending HoD approval, but biennially the compendium should be updated and, therefore, we suggest an ongoing action be added: Update the compendium of guidelines for the use of TEK in decision making on a biennial basis.

Action #53

2015-2017 Bilateral and Multilateral Actions, Circumpolar Action Plan: Conservation Strategy for the Polar Bear



Action	Maintenance of Website Established for 2015 Range State Meeting and Establishment of a permanent Range State website
Timeline	2015-2025/2015-2017
Description of Activity from 2017 Implementation Table	A Range States Communications Working Group (Comms WG) will be created to develop a website and long-term funding plan for the related costs. The existing website for the 2015 Range States Biennial Meeting of the Parties (MoP) will be maintained until a permanent solution is in place. The permanent website will be in place on December 1, 2017.
Baseline status	Not developed.
Planned Outputs	Range States website.
Modifications	None.
Progress Report Date	November 24, 2017

Progress Report on Activity

Under an existing agreement between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF), the U.S. provided funding (\$5,000 USD) to the CAFF for the development of a Range States website.

The Range States website is set to be live by December 1, 2017 in advance of the 2018 Biennial MoP.

Planned output is a website with a very basic structure (see below for menu items) and a few key elements.

- About Us – History of the Range States and the 1973 Agreement on the Conservation of Polar Bears and access to key documents
- Polar Bear Management – Information about national and bilateral actions/agreements for management
- Circumpolar Action Plan – Information about the Plan and access to key documents
- Polar Bear Biology – General information on polar bear biology
- Working Groups – Brief descriptions of the working groups and key documents
- Resources – A resource page will be available to the public.

Additionally, a password-protected page will be available for Range State partners to share documents.

Next Steps

The Comms WG will continue to develop and populate the Range States website as an ongoing action during the next two year work period. Changes to the website will be facilitated through a Range States Website Editorial Board, which was approved on November 14, 2017, by the Heads of Delegation and consists of members from each Range State as well as individuals from the Comms WG.

Website hosting and maintenance is expected to cost approximately \$2,500 USD per year. Future funding of the website will be the responsibility of the Range States host country for each 2-year cycle; Norway will assume the role of host country in February 2018 after the Biennial MoP in the U.S.

Action #55/59

2015-2017 Bilateral and Multilateral Actions, Circumpolar Action Plan: Conservation Strategy for the Polar Bear



Action	Communications Plan & Communications Strategy for Promoting Polar Bear Conservation during a changing climate
Title	Communications Plan and Communications strategy for Climate Change
Timeline	2015-2025/2015-2017
Description of Activity from 2017 Implementation Table	Action 55: The Range States Communications Working Group (Comms WG) will develop a communications plan for the Circumpolar Action Plan (CAP). Action 59: The Comms WG will create a report which strategically identifies appropriate messages regarding climate change threats to polar bear bears and the means to communicate these messages to the global audience.
Baseline Status	Not developed.
Planned Outputs	Action 55: A communications plan will be presented at the 2018 Range States Biennial Meeting of the Parties (MoP). Action 59: A circumpolar document describing a communications strategy to bring global focus on climate change threats to polar bears will be tabled at the 2018 Biennial MoP.
Modifications	Actions 55 and 59 were partially combined in an effort to have a communications plan which outlined, in one place, how the Range States would communicate about climate change and what steps would be taken for targeted outreach. As such, the communications plan has a column which identifies the climate change and the targeted outreach component of each communications activity. A separate document on suggested approaches for climate change communication will be developed as one of the communications plan actions, also serving to implement action 59. This document is currently under development by Norway. Work on this is expected to continue beyond the Meeting of the Parties in February 2018. Furthermore, efforts are underway to secure communications resources such as images and movies with explicit messages on climate change for potential use in communications with climate change content and shall continue as part of the implementation of the climate component of a range of actions in the communications plan. These efforts are intended to provide resources that will be accessible to and benefit all the joint communications and outreach work of the Range States.
Progress Report Date	December 6, 2017

Progress Report on Activity

Action 55: A draft communications plan was approved by the Range States Heads of Delegation (HoD) in late March 2017. The Comms WG was asked to make minor adjustments and recognize that this will be a living document which will change as activities are added and completed.

Action 59: The component of this action that has been rolled into the communications plan is completed and was approved with the communications plan by the HoD in late March 2017. The document with guidelines for communication on climate change is currently being drafted by Norway. Furthermore, an initiative has been taken by Norway to secure cooperation with a Norwegian nature film director in order to secure access to movie clips and potentially short educational movies on polar bears and the Arctic and climate change, which is intended to be accessible as a resource in Range States communications on climate change. Work on this component is expected to continue into the first half of 2018 as part of the implementation of the climate component of a range of actions in the communications plan.

Next Steps

In the next 2-year action plan the communications plan will continue to be developed, updated and edited as new communication activities are planned and others are completed. Work on developing communications actions on climate change and securing communications resources for these efforts, as well as following through on the climate change components of the communications plan will continue throughout the coming two-year period, as well as the entire timespan of the CAP.

Action #60

2015-2017 Bilateral and Multilateral Actions, Circumpolar Action Plan: Conservation Strategy for the Polar Bear



Action	Biennial reviews based on Table 4 of the Circumpolar Action Plan (CAP)
Timeline	2015-2025
Description of Activity from 2017 Implementation Table	The CAP Implementation Team (IT) will develop a biennial report which will include national updates as well as a progress report on actions related to the Plan. The reports will be posted on the website shortly before each Range States Biennial Meeting of the Parties (MoP).
Baseline status	Reporting begins 2018.
Planned Outputs	Biennial report on all 2-year actions.
Modifications	Assessment of CAP progress will be an important part of each Biennial MoP; therefore; the biennial reports will be made available on the Range States website prior to each Biennial MoP, not after.
Progress Report Date	November 24, 2017

Progress Report on Activity

The CAP IT distributed reporting templates to 2-year action item points-of-contact in March 2017 and began tracking the progress of action items and reports.

The CAP IT also began developing the 2-year action plan for the 2018-2019 period.

Next Steps

Final 2-year action item reports and action item progress will be available on the Range States website on December 1, 2017.

The CAP IT will prepare a 2-year action plan for 2018-2019 for approval by the Heads of Delegation at the 2018 Biennial MoP.

Action #61

2015-2017 Bilateral and Multilateral Actions, Circumpolar Action Plan: Conservation Strategy for the Polar Bear



Action	Establish baselines for measurement of action plan performance
Timeline	2015-2017
Description of Activity from 2017 Implementation Table	The Circumpolar Action Plan (CAP) Implementation Team (IT) will develop baseline values for all the agreed indicators of the performance measurement system of the plan. It is important to note that this concerns baseline values of the indicators of success of the CAP, not scientific baseline values pertaining to specific research or monitoring activities in the plan. These baseline values will document the current situation for the targets or activities that the different actions in the plan address and serve as the starting point for measuring progress.
Baseline status	Baseline values not developed.
Planned Outputs	All countries will provide an assessment of baseline values for relevant action points. A complete set will be presented as an update to the implementation and performance measurement framework of the plan in 2017.
Modifications	None.
Progress Report Date	November 24, 2017

Progress Report on Activity

Formulations of baseline values for all actions in the 10-year Action Table (CAP Annex III) were determined at the CAP IT workshop held in Reykjavik, Iceland, in February 2017, with representatives from all Range States participating. For most of the actions, baselines consist of qualitative descriptions of the state of the tasks or the topics that are described in each individual action. As such, it was noted that input from the International Union for the Conservation of Nature/Species Survival Commission (IUCN/SSC) Polar Bear Specialist Group (PBSG) would be useful to flesh out the details of the baseline values for some of the actions on monitoring and research. This input has not yet been requested.

Next Steps

Input from the PBSG on baseline values on some of the research and monitoring actions will be requested in time for the set of baseline values to be presented at the 2018 Range States Biennial Meeting of the Parties. Progress in the first 2-year period will be measured in comparison with the baseline values.

Action #63

2015-2017 Bilateral and Multilateral Actions, Circumpolar Action Plan: Conservation Strategy for the Polar Bear



Action	Explore methods for improving the design of improving polar bear population studies
Timeline	2015-2019
Description of Activity from 2017 Implementation Table	International Union for the Conservation of Nature/Species Survival Commission (IUCN/SSC) Polar Bear Specialist Group (PBSG) to develop recommendations for improving the design of population studies/assessments in order to increase the efficiency of how resources are utilized.
Baseline status	Recommendations not developed.
Planned Outputs	Progress report at the 2018 Range States Biennial Meeting of the Parties (MoP). Peer-reviewed publication in 2019.
Modifications	Work has progressed slower than the Range States initially estimated; therefore, the timeline has been modified above.
Progress Report Date	November 24, 2017

Progress Report on Activity

Work is underway on the project to improve the design of polar bear population studies. Two years of funding were obtained for a postdoctoral researcher (Dr. Nathan Hostetter) to lead this project. Dr. Hostetter is employed by the U.S. Geological Survey (adviser Dr. Sarah Converse) in collaboration with the University of Washington (adviser Dr. Eric Regehr) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. As part of this project, a working group of international polar bear scientists has been formed to identify the key challenges and questions associated with the design of population studies. This will ensure that results are applicable to population studies across multiple jurisdictions.

Next Steps

Dr. Hostetter is currently developing a simulation-based approach to evaluate different study designs for the estimation of abundance, survival, and reproductive parameters. Initial results are anticipated in 2018.