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X The US proposal to transfer polar bear from CITES Appendix II to Appendix I is supported by science

The source of the US proposal's projection of "marked decline" in polar bear populations is a prototype study based on one expert's opinion. That expert stated in 2012 that Polar Bears International, the organization he represents, does not support the US proposal as an up listing is not warranted at this time.

X Polar bears are on the brink of extinction

"The polar bear's population has not undergone a marked decline in the recent past, nor is there any evidence that the current size of the polar bear population represents a marked decline from a (hypothesized) historical baseline." (IUCN/TRAFFIC, 2012)

X Polar bears are threatened with extinction due to a projected decline in habitat

"Whilst the guidelines provide for population declines to be projected by extrapolation to infer likely future values, in this instance such a projection is heavily dependent on estimations of future sea ice coverage, which vary widely." (CITES Secretariat, 2013)

X Canada's international trade in polar bear is a threat to polar bear populations

Canada is home to 65% of the world's polar bear population and only 2% of that population (300 animals) enters the market each year. Harvest quotas are based on principles of conservation and are entirely allocated to Inuit. For many subpopulations, the actual harvest is less than the quota.

The Lies

The market for polar bear hides is growing, encouraging hunters to harvest more bears

It is inaccurate to make a link between the hide market and harvest of bears. Canadian harvest quotas are not based on international demand. If polar bears are up listed to Appendix I, the same number of bears will be allowed to be harvested in Canada.

X A vote in favour of the US proposal will end the polar bear hunt.

The polar bear hunt is a legal Aboriginal hunt in Canada. Quotas are determined jointly by government and Inuit. The hunt will continue regardless of the decision on up listing. However, up listing will remove one of the few economic opportunities available to support Inuit subsistence hunters and their families.

X Canada is allowing wealthy hunters to deplete the polar bear population.

All polar bears harvested in Canada are part of a sustainable and controlled Aboriginal harvest. Hunting tags allocated to sports hunters come from Aboriginal quotas and the economic benefits of these hunts helps hunters put food on the table and support the conservation of the species.



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Polar Bear in Canada

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The Facts

- The current management system and CITES provisions in Canada ensure that there is no risk of a negative impact on polar bears from international trade.
- Canada, in cooperation and partnership with Inuit, is a world leader in polar bear management, research, monitoring and conservation.
- Canada is involved in extensive research to understand the effects of climate change on polar bears. That research, in turn, influences monitoring, status assessments and harvest levels.
- Inuit communities play an important role in polar bear co-management in Canada and are active in ensuring that the polar bear harvest is sustainable and the species is conserved for future generations.
- Canada's polar bear harvest is highly regulated and controlled and is guided by the principles of conservation.
- Polar bear harvesting is fundamental to Inuit social, cultural and economic well-being. Inuit cultural values and practices include full and sustainable use and the responsible and respectful treatment of all wildlife — including polar bears.

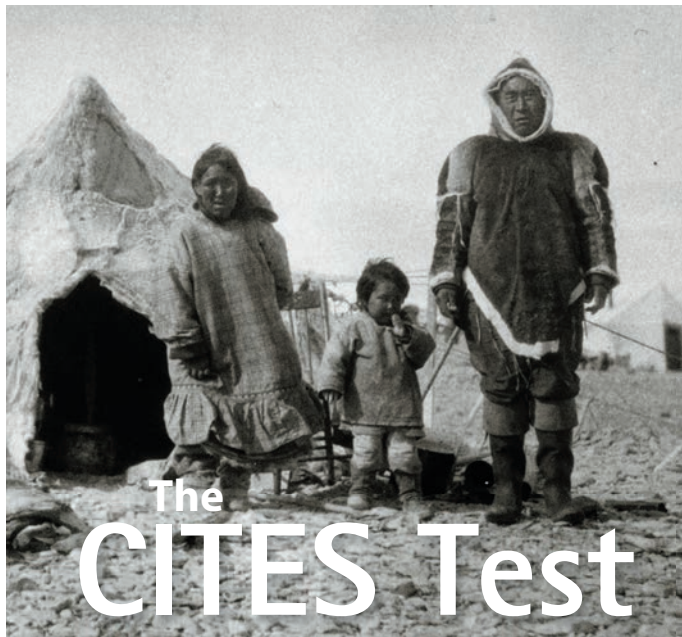


- The income generated from the sale of non-food products, such as hides, and the services provided through Inuit-guided hunts is important to the economic well-being of Inuit communities.
- Canadian quotas are based on principles of sustainability and for the long term conservation of the species. Market demand is not a consideration in the setting of quotas in Canada.



Within the Canadian Arctic, polar bear hunting quotas and tags are allocated exclusively to Inuit communities.

- Canadian polar bear quotas include all known human-caused mortalities, subsistence harvest, guided hunts, and kills in defence of life and property.
- A CITES up listing of polar bear is not justified by current scientific data and would produce no conservation benefit.



The CITES Test

✓ **Is the polar bear internationally traded?**

✗ **Is the global population of the species small?**
It is at a high level of 20,000 to 25,000

✗ **Does the species have a small and limited habitat range?** Polar bear habitat spans several million square kilometers of land, sea, and ice across the circumpolar Arctic, which includes Russia, Alaska, Canada, Greenland and Norway.

✗ **Is there evidence of a marked decline in the size of the global population?** Over the past 40 years, the global population has not significantly declined, and recent surveys in some Canadian management units have shown increased populations.

✗ **Are polar bears threatened by trade?** Inuit trade approximately 300 polar bears per year. Globally, this represents 1.5% of the population. This percentage is small and well within sustainable numbers.

✗ **Is the Inuit harvest of polar bears a threat to the species?** The total Canadian Inuit harvest is often less than that allowed by established quotas and includes subsistence, sport and human defence kills. This is a relatively small hunt and well within sustainable numbers.

✗ **Is polar bear harvesting and trade vulnerable to market pressures and prices?** Canada's joint polar bear management system determines an annual sustainable quota based on principles of conservation, not on market prices or market demand.



The Impact

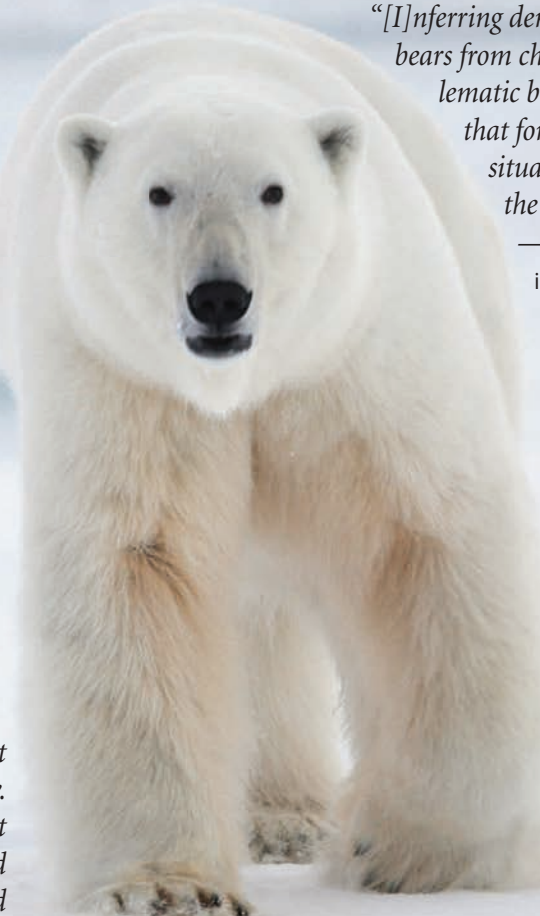
The Verdict

"The primary threat to polar bears is the retreat of sea-ice habitat, driven by global climate change. Trade does not appear to be a significant threat to the species." — IUCN/TRAFFIC, December 2012

"The polar bear does not currently meet the criteria for inclusion in Appendix I. Even the most precautionary projections indicate that these criteria will not be met in any proximate time-frame that would justify an Appendix I listing at this time." — WWF International, February 2013

"Based on the available information at the time of writing, the Secretariat recommends that this proposal be rejected." — CITES Secretariat, February 2013

"The harvest of polar bears contributes important income to households and to cultural continuity. The benefits of trade in wildlife recognizes that implementation of CITES-listing decisions should take into account potential impacts on the livelihood of the poor." — CITES Resolution Conf. 8.3, CoP13, 2004



"[I]nferring demographic implications for polar bears from changes in extent of summer sea ice is problematic because total or near total melting of sea ice that forces bears onshore in summer is the normal situation faced by approximately 50–60% of the polar bear population in Canada."

— Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada, 2008

"In summary, at this time there seems no reason to up list polar bears under CITES, and lots of reasons not to."

— Dr. Steven Amstrup,
Polar Bears International, August 2012

"[T]he principal threat to the polar bear is the impact of climate change, not international trade. Under these circumstances we are not convinced that the polar bear qualifies for inclusion in CITES Appendix I. Furthermore, we do not see how the implementation of Appendix I would help improve the conservation status of the species in the wild."

— PEW Environment Group, December 2012



- Up listing polar bear to CITES Appendix I is a **direct hit** to Inuit subsistence-based livelihoods that depend upon economic access to sustainable polar bear trade.
- The 1983 European seal boycott demonstrates the **devastating effects of a trade ban** on Inuit livelihoods, virtually obliterating the key monetary support that the ancillary sale of sealskins provided to self-sufficient Inuit subsistence hunters. Post boycott, it would take the equivalent of more than an entire community's pre-boycott seal harvest to meet the subsistence costs of a single household. (Wenzel 1991)
- Up listing will further **threaten** Inuit food security. Impacts on local economies, self-reliance, and food security will impact the cultural, social, and spiritual well-being of Inuit.
- A trade decision that ignores a successful, effective and world class polar bear co-management regime will **undermine** partnerships essential to polar bear conservation.
- A ban will **penalize** Inuit and place an international black mark on an otherwise legal, sustainable, environmentally sound, and conservation-based activity.
- A ban decision based on **rhetoric, politics, and misleading information**, and not on the facts, will negatively impact CITES and polar bear conservation.
- While a ban will impact Inuit **livelihoods**, it will do nothing to address climate change and the need for countries to reduce their fossil fuel emissions.
- An imposed ban that is **unjustified and arbitrary** will create adverse tensions in relations that are key to international cooperation and polar bear conservation.
- The harvest, management, and sustainable use of polar bear in Canada are a shared endeavor between Inuit and Canada. An international ban would **set back** hard-won achievements which exemplify the recognition and implementation of Indigenous cultural, socioeconomic and livelihood rights.



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