

# Polar Bears in Canada

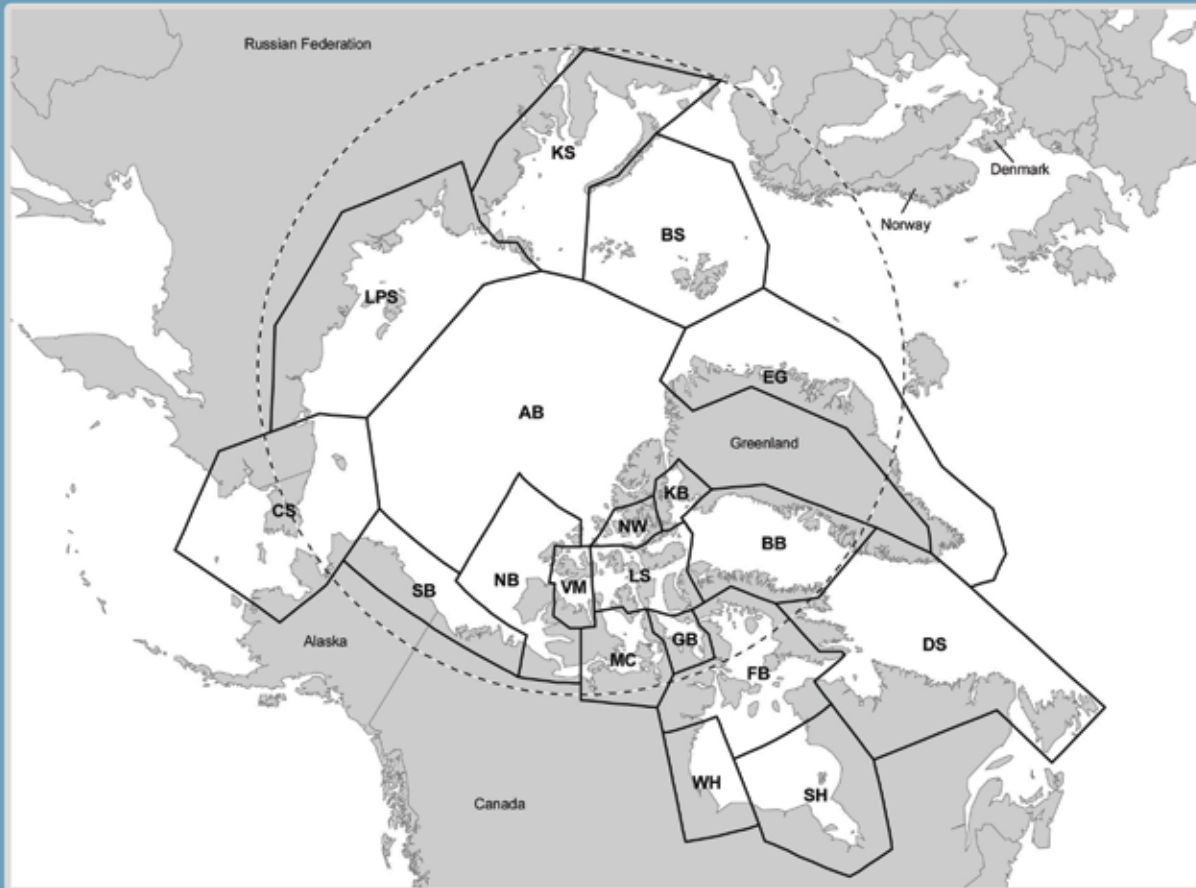
- Canada's Arctic is home to about 15,500 polar bears, approximately 2/3 of the world's population.
- Canada is a proven world leader in the management, research, monitoring, and conservation of polar bears.
- Management of Canada's polar bears is based on 13 management units. Three are shared with Greenland and one is shared with the United States (Alaska).



Photo by ©Corel Corporation

- Since the 1973 International Agreement on the Conservation of Polar Bears, Canada has successfully managed polar bears. During this forty year period, the population of polar bears has increased.
- Polar bears are long-lived wide-ranging carnivores with seals as their primary food source.
- Canada's management system is robust and designed to respond to the full suite of threats to polar bear.
- Canada is especially vigilant regarding the conservation of polar bear in light of all potential threats to the species, including climate change.

- Canada has established and is committed to numerous international and multilateral agreements to ensure sustainable management, harvest, monitoring and conservation of polar bears.
- Canada is involved in extensive research to understand effects of climate change on polar bears, results of which are integrated in monitoring, status assessment, and harvest levels.



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# Inuit Culture

- Canada's Inuit are a distinct, self-governing, indigenous people with a wildlife-harvesting culture that has adapted to living in Arctic landscapes and ecosystems for thousands of years.
- Wildlife harvesting and use is critical to the survival of Inuit culture and is fundamental to Inuit social and economic well being.
- Connections with the earth and its resources are key to cultural, mental and physical wellbeing.



Photo by Eric Loring

- These connections are maintained through traditional activities such as harvesting arctic char, seals, caribou, and polar bear.



- Inuit communities play an important role in wildlife co-management in Canada.
- Under the 1973 International Agreement on the Conservation of Polar Bear, subsistence harvest of polar bear is an exclusive right of Aboriginal peoples.
- The income generated from the sale of non-food products and guided sport hunts is important for the economic well being of many communities.



Photo by Eric Loring



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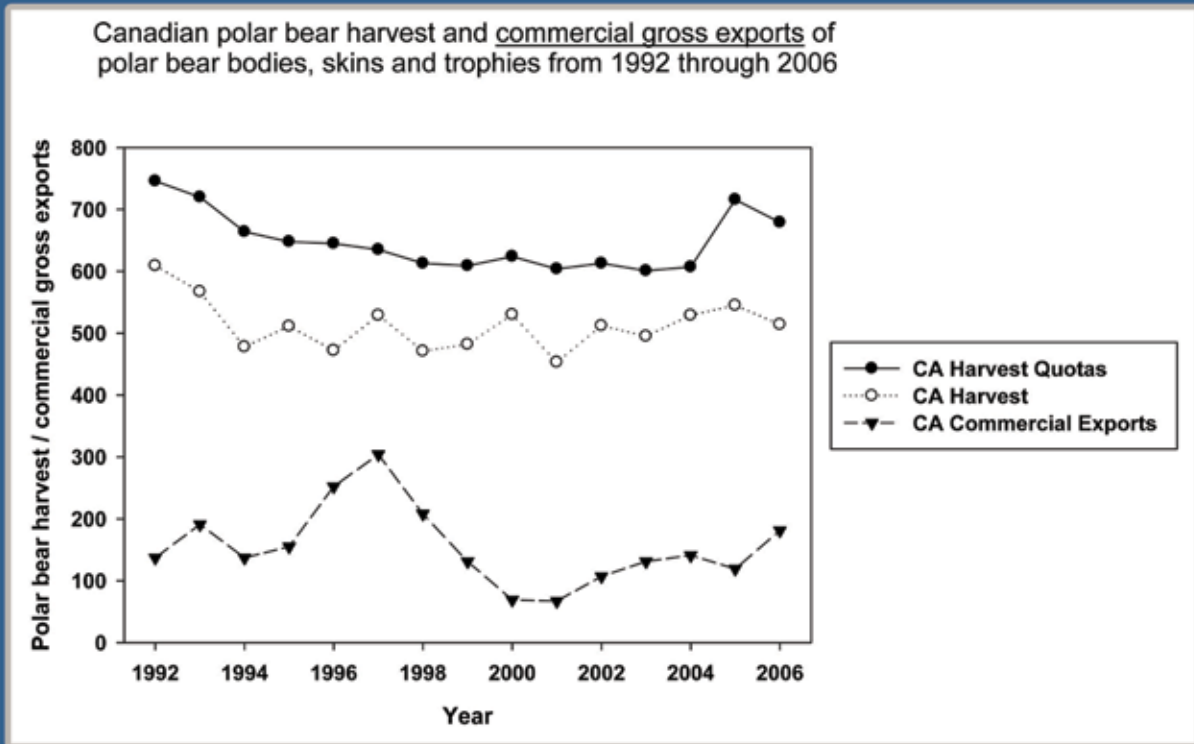


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# Management and Trade

- International trade is not a threat to polar bear. 2% of the Canadian polar bear population enters international trade (300 bears annually).
- Northern Aboriginal people in Canada have the right to manage and harvest the wildlife within their territories.
- A system of sustainable harvest management implemented through agreements and quotas involving local people and governments has been in place in Canada since the 1970s.
- Harvest quotas are based on principles of conservation and Aboriginal subsistence, and are not market-driven.
- The actual harvest level is often less than the established quotas.
- Quotas are allocated exclusively to Aboriginal peoples who may choose to fill part of their quota by offering a guided sport hunt to non-Aboriginal peoples using traditional methods of hunting. This is not additional to the subsistence harvest but part of that quota.
- Quotas include all known human-caused mortalities: subsistence harvest, sport hunting, known illegal kills, and kills in defense of life and property.

- Aboriginal harvests of polar bears in Canada are sustainable with an overall harvest level of 3.5% of the Canadian polar bear population. Products of international trade come from this sustainable harvest of polar bears.
- International commercial trade from Canada has remained at consistent and sustainable levels and is not a threat to polar bear populations.



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