



March 10, 2023

Re: Inuit Knowledge of the Davis Strait Polar Bear Subpopulation

To the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board, and Torngat Wildlife and Plants Co-Management Board,

On behalf of the *Davis Strait Polar Bear Interdisciplinary Working Group*, and in accordance with the goals set out by the *Nanuk Knowledge and Dialogue Project*, please find below official recommendations with respect to the coordination and sharing of Inuit Knowledge related to the Davis Strait Polar Bear Subpopulation in and adjacent to Nunavut, Nunavik, and Nunatsiavut.

Project

The *Nanuk Knowledge and Dialogue Project* is a multi-year project funded by Polar Knowledge Canada and initiated by your respective Executive Directors. There are three key pillars of this project:

- 1) To interpret survey results and develop plain language and culturally appropriate communication materials.
- 2) To review, analyze, and synthesize all documented Inuit knowledge related to the Davis Strait Polar Bear Sub-population.
- 3) To facilitate interdisciplinary dialogue, review innovative proposals, and to make policy recommendations to the co-management boards.

This current letter relates to the third pillar, specifically on making recommendations to the co-management boards in Nunavut, Nunavik, and Nunatsiavut. To do so, an independent *Interdisciplinary Working Group* has been organized to think about new and innovative ways of managing the Davis Strait Polar Bear Subpopulation. This working group includes 12 independent individuals from diverse backgrounds and experiences, including Inuit Knowledge, wildlife biology, social sciences, public health, law and co-management policy, and various other perspectives. Note that this working group is a separate group that is organized to think about and discuss polar bear management in new and innovative ways – recommendations made by this group are not to interfere with pre-existing timelines for other polar bear management decision making and processes.

Update on project

Our working group has come together six times over the past year, both in person and online. Throughout these meetings, we have leveraged a variety of co-creation and facilitation methods to harness the collective wisdom and diverse perspectives of our members. To date, our meetings have focused on hearing directly from relevant organizations and researchers about what they see as the current challenges to Davis Strait polar bear management, including: members of the Davis Strait 2017-18 Population Survey, presenting on the results of their recent study; members from the Polar Bear Administrative Committee and Polar Bear Technical Committee, sharing insight about their Davis Strait Assessment; the Nunatsiavut Government, Makkivik Corporation, and Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, each presenting their views on current bear management challenges; attorney Qajaq Robinson presenting a



legal case relating to Inuit Knowledge and the Southern Hudson Bay subpopulation; and members from the Polyna Consulting group, sharing information and their process in producing the [Davis Strait Inuit Knowledge Synthesis and Review](#) that was developed as part of this larger *Nanuk Knowledge and Dialogue Project*.

We have also spent time reflecting on the broad range of challenges outlined by experts within and outside of our working group, drawing connections between topics and categorizing key themes, and identifying a specific problem that our working group can prioritize. Ultimately, we've honed in on one key issue that our working group will prioritize moving forward: to **explore how collective Inuit Knowledge can be more accessible, influential, and implemented for sustainable Inuit harvesting of polar bears.**

Recommendations

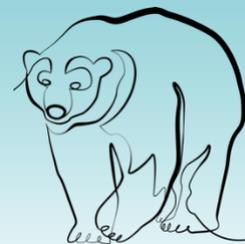
With the above focus in mind, our working group advises the use of creative methods that support the documentation and amplification of Inuit Knowledge about the Davis Strait population in accessible ways.

Our first recommendation is therefore to explore the use of documentary film and visual media for sharing Inuit voices across Nunavut, Nunavik, and Nunatsiavut. This approach will directly support Inuit-led stewardship strategies outlined in the recent [Nunavut Polar Bear Co-Management Plan](#), the [Polar Bear Management Plan for Québec, the Eeyou Marine Region and the Nunavik Marine Region](#), and the [Labrador Polar Bear Traditional Ecological Knowledge Report](#) by prioritizing the documentation and amplification of Inuit Knowledge to support polar bear stewardship, public understandings of Inuit-polar bear relationships, and long-term continuity of cultural knowledge for Inuit communities. Leveraging visual media will also directly contribute to educational and outreach objectives within each of the Inuit regions. Additionally, this approach has potential to become a major source of information related to polar bear conservation, Inuit-polar bear connections, and Inuit well-being for educators, researchers, governments, and public audiences around the world who may be less familiar with Inuit lived experiences and the critical social and well-being dimensions associated with nanuk.

More thorough details about this project, the visual recommendations, and the working group are regularly available through the Executive Directors of each of the boards. We are available to meet at your convenience to further discuss these suggestions, and we look forward to continuing engagement with you and your boards.

Kind Regards,

The Nanuk Knowledge and Dialogue Project Interdisciplinary Working Group



Signatures of the Nanuk Knowledge and Dialogue Project Interdisciplinary Working Group

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