



Dr. Susan J. Crockford  
[sjcrock@shaw.ca](mailto:sjcrock@shaw.ca)

Dear Dr. Crockford:

Thank you for your inquiry of December 5, 2014 regarding the polar bear subpopulation maps that are available on the Environment Canada website. The maps you referenced are compiled using population assessments by both the Canadian Polar Bear Technical Committee (PBTC) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature/Species Survival Commission Polar Bear Specialist Group (PBSG). These two bodies are responsible for assessing available information to ascertain the current status of polar bear subpopulation across the circumpolar Arctic.

The PBTC information provides assessments for the Canadian subpopulations, while the PBSG provides information for the international subpopulations. Each group aims to assess the status of subpopulations on an annual basis, or as new information becomes available. Both groups develop accompanying documents that define the terms used on the maps. In Canada, once the PBTC has generated a new status table, it is reviewed by the Polar Bear Administrative Committee and then becomes a public document. For your information, the 2014 PBTC status table is attached along with a list of terms and their definitions. The maps are created annually by Environment Canada officials in order to provide an overview of the status of polar bears across the circumpolar Arctic. Specifically, the maps provide a visual depiction of the “recent trend” based on the PBTC and PBSG assessments, which is one cell in a larger status assessment table.

For your information, the PBTC was established in 1970 and is comprised of federal, provincial/territorial scientists and other experts, including Inuit representatives and Traditional Knowledge holders. The group meets annually to discuss Canadian polar bear subpopulation status trends and share research



results. When completing their annual assessment of the Canadian subpopulations, the PBTC takes into consideration the best available scientific and traditional ecological knowledge. There, expert assessments are compiled into a table that is then forwarded to the Polar Bear Administrative Committee (PBAC).

The Polar Bear Administrative Committee, or PBAC, was established in 1969 and is a subcommittee of the Canadian Wildlife Director's Committee focused specifically on polar bear management in Canada. The group meets once annually, and by teleconference as required. The PBAC is comprised of Directors responsible for wildlife management in their jurisdictions, representatives of Wildlife Management Boards and Inuit Organizations. Collectively, this group coordinates all aspects of management and plays a key role in national coordination and cooperation within and between jurisdictions.

The PBSG is part of the International Union for Conservation of Nature, Species Survival Commission sanctioned groups. Environment Canada uses their population status assessments for the non-Canadian subpopulations in the maps we create. The PBSG also acts as the scientific advisory body to the polar bear Range States, under the 1973 Agreement on the Conservation of Polar Bears.

Regarding your request for information pertaining to the boundary change for the Southern and Northern Beaufort Sea subpopulations, that was not a process that Environment Canada was involved in, but I would encourage you to direct your question to the Government of Yukon ([environment.yukon@gov.yk.ca](mailto:environment.yukon@gov.yk.ca)), the Government of the Northwest Territories [(867) 873-7645] and the Wildlife Management Advisory Councils of the North Slope ([wmacns@web.ca](mailto:wmacns@web.ca)) and Northwest Territories ([wmacnwt@jointsec.nt.ca](mailto:wmacnwt@jointsec.nt.ca)) given their role as management authorities for this region of the country.

Sincerely,



*for* Sue Milburn Hopwood  
Director General  
Canadian Wildlife Service