



Investing in  
Traditional  
Knowledge  
Study  
A Polar Bear  
Good afternoon.  
My name is Frank Pokiak and I am the chair of the  
Wildlife Management Information gathering for  
An example of traditional knowledge information gathering for

I am also the vice-chair of the Wildlife Management

Frank Pokiak, Jennifer Smith, Christine Cleghorn, Jen Lam  
CAFF Arctic Biodiversity Congress  
wildlife management decision-making

## Inuvialuit Settlement Region(ISR)



## Why Do A TK Study?

➤ Jointly supported by WMAC(NWT) and WMAC (North Slope)

Needed direction from TK and Inuvialuit on

- Management objectives
- Understanding of how Inuvialuit see climate change affecting polar bears



Traditional Knowledge





## Verification Workshop

- Report back the information provided during the interviews
- Summarize what was said about polar bears by informants
- Give participants our understanding of what they said
- Asked participants to verify summaries and understandings
- Errors & omissions

### Interpretation by TK Experts







Respect for Polar Bears

# What We Learned: Polar Bears + Climate Change

- Physical condition stable over time
- Variation from season to season
- Ice and seal hunting conditions plus other factors
- Premature to conclude decline in polar bear abundance and condition in Beaufort Sea

In general, TK holders said that the physical condition of polar bears in the area has remained stable over time, a variation from one season to the next. Ice and seal hunting conditions are important for polar bears, but are not where polar bears live. This is why hunters do not see a direct link between polar bear abundance, distribution, and hunting conditions. This is an important part of the study, and it is hard to do it justice in this short presentation.

Our TK Holders told us clearly that it is premature to conclude that the abundance of bears in the Beaufort Sea is declining. The overall condition has permanently deteriorated, given the complex nature of polar bear interactions with sea ice. Polar bears in the Inuvialuit hunting areas have remained relatively stable during the living memory of study participants. However, they also noted with equal vigor that ice conditions have always been changing.

## Management Implications



