Resolutions relevant for Greenland from the 15th meeting of the PBSG in Copenhagen, Denmark 2009[1]

- Effects of global warming on polar bears (Res#1-2009)
- Recommendations for renewed cooperative research in Baffin Bay (Res#2-2009)
- On minimizing human-polar bear interactions (Res#5-2009)
- International study to understand the effects of climate change on pollution levels and the effects of pollution in polar bears (Res#7-2009)
- Recommendations for the collection of scientific samples from harvested polar bears (Res#8-2009)

Res#1-2009: Effects of global warming on polar bears

The IUCN Polar Bear Specialist Group

Recognizing that sea ice is essential to the continued survival of polar bears, and

Recognizing the 2007 conclusion of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC): ”Climate change in polar regions is expected to be among the largest and most rapid of any regions on the Earth, and will cause major physical, ecological, sociological, and economic impacts especially in the Arctic.” and,

Recognizing that the IPCC has concluded with “very high confidence” that human produced green house gases are playing a significant forcing role in global warming, and;

Recognizing that, as a result of warming, the maximum ice cover of the Arctic Ocean has declined significantly over the past 30 years both spatially and temporally, and;

Recognizing that documented changes in the pattern and timing of breakup and fluctuations in the seasonal distribution of sea ice significantly influence the condition, survival, and reproductive success of polar bears and their prey, and;

Recognizing the mandate to manage polar bears and the ecosystem of which they are a part (Article II);

Recommends that:

1. Urgent global actions be taken to significantly reduce atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations, and that
2. Polar bear range state governments and designated authorities agree to consider the current and likely future impacts of global warming in all management and planning affecting polar bears and their key habitats.

[1] All resolutions available on the PBSG website: http://pbsg.npolar.no/en/meetings/resolutions/15.html#res01

Res#2-2009: Recommendations for renewed cooperative research in Baffin Bay

The IUCN Polar Bear Specialist Group

Recognizing that the contracting parties shall manage polar bear populations in accordance with sound conservation practices based on the best available scientific data according to the Agreement on Conservation of Polar Bears Article II, and;

Recognizing that an agreement between Canada and Greenland outlining shared responsibility for sustainable harvest management is forthcoming, and;

Recognizing the right of local people using traditional methods to take polar bears according to the Agreement on Conservation of Polar Bears Article III, and;

Recognizing that scientific evidence indicates that the shared Baffin Bay polar bear population has been subject to long-term over-exploitation by Canada and Greenland, and;

Recognizing that scientific information and Inuit Knowledge are in apparent conflict, and;

Recognizing that significant reduction in the sea ice in Baffin Bay may have affected the distribution of polar bears, and,

Recognizing that the existing estimate for the Baffin Bay population from 1997 is outdated in light of the climate induced changes which in itself may negatively have affected the population, therefore;

Recommends that a new assessment of the Baffin Bay population be conducted jointly by Canada and Greenland.

Res#5-2009: On minimizing human-polar bear interactions

The IUCN Polar Bear Specialist Group

Recognizing that interactions between polar bears and humans can result in loss of human life, disturbance and destruction of bears, and loss of property; and,

Recognizing that polar bear mortalities resulting from interactions with people can adversely affect bear population welfare and management strategies; and,

Recognizing that such interactions are increasing, and likely to continue increasing because of increased human activity and climate change induced changes in polar bear distribution;

Therefore resolves that all Signatory Nations to the Agreement on Conservation of Polar Bears should make immediate use of all available information, methods and means, in order to minimize detrimental interactions between polar bears and humans and urges those nations to conduct cooperative investigations necessary to do so.

Res#7-2009: International study to understand the effects of climate change on pollution levels and the effects of pollution in polar bears

The IUCN Polar Bear Specialist Group

Recognizing levels of mercury and perflourinated compounds in polar bears of some regions have significantly increased in recent years, and;

Recognizing that persistent organic pollutants are still present at levels in polar bears that can interfere with endocrine, immune and reproductive function, and;

Recognizing that the high pollutant levels in polar bears appears to result from long range atmospheric transport of pollutants from low latitude sources into the Arctic environment, and;

Recognizing that such transport mechanisms may be enhanced and effects on polar bears amplified as a result of climate change, and;

Recognizing that previous studies by researchers in Denmark and Norway have laid the groundwork for an understanding of the dynamic links between climate change and changing contaminant burdens, therefore;

Recommends that Denmark and Norway build upon past work to lead a circumpolar study of the dynamic links between climate change, pollution levels, and the physiological effects of pollution in polar bears.

Res#8-2009: Recommendations for the collection of scientific samples from harvested polar bears

The IUCN Polar Bear Specialist Group

Recognizing that the contracting parties of the International Agreement on the Conservation of Polar Bears shall manage polar bear populations in accordance with sound conservation practices based on the best available scientific data according to the Agreement on Conservation of Polar Bears Article II

Recognizing that sound management of polar bear populations requires collection of biological samples that allow for determination of age and sex of the harvest, but that such samples are not currently being collected in all jurisdictions, therefore

Recommends that all jurisdictions implement a system for monitoring the polar bear harvest that ensures the collection of biological samples.