

### 3rd meeting of the U.S.-Russia Polar Bear Commission

Moscow, Russian Federation

27-29 July 2011

The 3rd meeting of the U.S.-Russia Polar Bear Commission was held from 27-29 July 2011 in Moscow, Russia. The group consists of representatives from the United States and Russian Federation representing federal, state, and Native interests in polar bear conservation and management. The goal of the meeting was to continue implementation of a Bilateral Treaty for the shared Alaska-Chukotka polar bear population, which inhabits the Bering and Chukchi seas.

The Commission affirmed that a quota of 58 polar bears per year will be shared between the two countries. This quota, established in June 2010, represents a historic step toward protecting the ability of the Native peoples of Alaska and Chukotka to take polar bears for traditional subsistence purposes, and ensuring that polar bear harvest is sustainable. The Commission affirmed the full participation of Native peoples in the conservation of the Alaska-Chukotka population and recognized the continued importance of Traditional Ecological Knowledge. The Commission announced that a multiyear quota system will be used to manage polar bear harvest in the U.S., starting in 2013. Subsistence harvest of the Alaska-Chukotka polar bear population in Chukotka, Russia, was banned in 1956. A joint communication group was identified to inform the public of the Commission's progress toward the conservation and management of the Alaska-Chukotka population.

Geoffrey Haskett, director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Alaska Region, and Amirkhan Amirkhanov, Deputy Head of the Federal Supervisory Natural Resources Management Service, viewed the polar bear meeting as a successful example of scientific collaboration between the U.S. and Russia on Arctic issues.