

Polar bear ranges in Greenland have shifted in recent years, and the risk of research teams encountering a polar bear while conducting fieldwork has increased. The National Science Foundation (NSF) strongly recommends compliance with policies of host areas and collaboration with the PI's institutional safety and risk offices regarding this low probability but high potential impact field hazard.

CH2M HILL Polar Services (CPS) provides the following guidelines to disseminate information and encourage field teams to develop their own risk plan regarding bears.

### **What should I do if I see a polar bear?**

If you see a polar bear, leave the area immediately. Do not stop to take photos or collect belongings. Once you've reached safety, immediately notify police or local hunting officer to inform them of your observation.

### **What if I can't leave the area?**

Attempt to scare away an approaching bear by using a warning shot, signal pistol, foghorn, or other noise maker.

### **What resources are available?**

CPS provided resources include:

- Bear fence
- Bear spray

### **Are polar bear guards available?**

Researchers may choose to hire a local guard to accompany their field team. Researchers are responsible for identifying, hiring and paying bear guards; CPS will not provide these services.

With NSF approval, CPS can reimburse the researchers for the cost of the bear guard on an expense report after the field season if researchers do not have funding in their grant for this service. The researcher must provide an invoice and proof of payment submitted on an expense report.

### **Can I bring a firearm for polar bear protection?**

Yes, researchers can bring firearms to Greenland. Researchers are responsible for the purchase, licensing and training associated with firearms; CPS will not provide these services.

#### ➤ **Who needs to bring a firearm? Is a permit required?**

Projects and expeditions to the Greenland National Park are required by the Government of Greenland (GoG) to bring a firearm as well as polar bear deterrents.

GoG strongly recommends all expeditions on the coastal areas of Greenland outside the National Park bring a firearm and polar bear deterrents as well. However, this is strictly a recommendation and not compulsory in order to obtain a permit.

If research groups choose to use a firearm in Greenland, they must apply for a firearm permit with the Government of Greenland. The firearm application form is available at: <http://www.nanoq.gl/expeditions>. Applications must be sent to the Chief Constable not later than 6 weeks prior to expedition start.

#### ➤ **What type of firearm is permitted for polar bear protection?**

The Government of Greenland, in the Executive Order on the Protection and Hunting of Polar Bears, has established the minimum calibre for firearms is 30.06 (7.62 mm). The firearm must be a manual rifle; semi or fully automatic rifles are NOT allowed in Greenland.

#### ➤ **Is firearm training required?**

The National Science Foundation (NSF) strongly recommends researchers who take firearms into the field to participate in formal firearms training prior to deployment. Training needs to be provided by a recognized organization such as the National Rifle Association, affiliated organization or through

a law enforcement agency. If firearms training is completed please provide proof of the training to the CPS Project Manager prior to deployment.

➤ **How can I transport a firearm to Greenland?**

Researchers may transport firearms to Greenland for bear protection via the 109<sup>th</sup> Air National Guard and via Air Greenland commercial flights. Researchers must comply with carrier specific hazardous material packaging and shipping regulations.

It is also possible to purchase a firearm in Greenland without Greenlandic residency or nationality.

### **What are the legal ramifications of killing a polar bear?**

Firearms may only be used in self defense. It is generally considered illegal to shoot polar bears and actions should be taken to avoid killing the animal. If possible, contact the following before making a decision to kill a polar bear:

Amalie Jessen, Head

Ministry of Fisheries, Hunting and Agriculture

Phone: +299 345304, Mobile: +299 553342, Email: [apnn@nanoq.gl](mailto:apnn@nanoq.gl), [amalie@nanoq.gl](mailto:amalie@nanoq.gl)

If a polar bear is killed outside the National Park, the local police and gamekeeper/ranger must be informed. A detailed report, including photos, describing events must be sent to the Chief Constable of Greenland ([politi@politi.gl](mailto:politi@politi.gl)), the Ministry of Fisheries, Hunting and Agriculture ([apnn@nanoq.gl](mailto:apnn@nanoq.gl)) and Ministry Domestic Affairs, Nature and Environment ([exp@nanoq.gl](mailto:exp@nanoq.gl)). The polar bear carcass will be confiscated by the Police as evidence.

If a polar bear is killed inside the National Park, the Sirius patrol ([Sirius@glk.gl](mailto:Sirius@glk.gl)) has police authority and should be contacted. Morten Gormsen, Greenland Island Command and Coordinator for Land Operations with Sirius patrol, should also be contacted ([landops@glk.gl](mailto:landops@glk.gl)), phone: +299 691955 Ext. 130, Mobile: +299 542734.

### **What is the polar bear sighting procedure at Thule Air Base?**

When a bear is sighted at Thule, the base is notified via the community broadcast system consisting of loudspeakers in every structure on base. Depending upon the proximity of the sighting, all base staff may be instructed to remain indoors until the danger has passed. Local security/police will chase bears out of the area with vehicles and broadcast notification when it is safe to go outdoors again.