

Polar Bear Studies

Spring 2011



Scientists are studying polar bears along Alaska's western coast. The results will help the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Alaska Nanuq Commission determine sustainable harvest levels. The results will also help to increase understanding of the effects of global climate change on polar bears.

The USFWS will coordinate with local communities to avoid subsistence activities such as whaling, sealing, and caribou hunting. Similar to previous years, flights around Kivalina and Point Hope will be restricted during spring whaling.

Polar bear studies will start in mid-March and end in late April. The USFWS will capture and release about 50 polar bears on the sea ice between Shishmaref and Point Hope. Some bears will be fitted with temporary radiocollars or radio ear tags.

For questions about polar bear studies or concerns about aircraft, please contact Eric Regehr or Karyn Rode with the USFWS at 1-800-362-5148.

For questions about the subsistence harvest of polar bears, please contact Jack Omelak with the Alaska Nanuq Commission at 907-466-8263.



An adult female with three yearlings in the Chukchi Sea, 2010.

USFWS



USFWS



USFWS

The type of helicopter and fixed-wing aircraft used for polar bear studies in 2011.



USFWS

Radio ear tags are used to track polar bear movements.