

Importing Your Polar Bear Sport-Hunted Trophy

Do I Need A Permit?

Yes, the polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*) is protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). After you have taken a bear and before you import the trophy, you need to obtain a CITES export permit from the Canadian Management Authority and a MMPA import permit from this office.

Can Bears Taken Before The 1994 Amendments Be Grandfathered In?

If you sport hunted a polar bear before April 30, 1994, you may be eligible for an import permit regardless of which population in the Northwest Territories you took the bear. You will need to show the bear was legally taken.

Otherwise What Determines If I Get An Import Permit?

The MMPA was amended to allow for the issuance of permits to import sport-hunted trophies when the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has made the following determinations for polar bears taken on or after April 30, 1994:

- The applicant legally took the animal while hunting in Canada.
- Canada has a monitored and enforced sport-hunting program consistent with the purposes of the International Agreement on the Conservation of Polar Bears.
- Canada has a sport-hunting program based on scientifically sound quotas ensuring maintenance of the affected population stock at a sustainable level.
- Export from Canada and subsequent import into the United States are consistent with CITES,

and not likely to contribute to the illegal trade in bear parts.

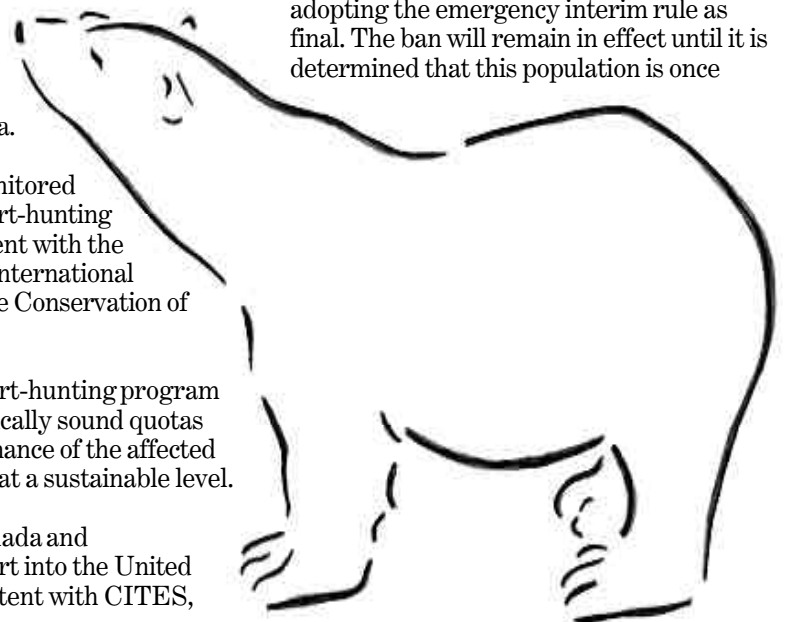
In addition, the MMPA prohibits import of marine mammals pregnant, near term, or nursing at the time of take.

What Populations Have Been Approved For The Import Of Polar Bear Trophies By Permit?

Southern Beaufort Sea, Northern Beaufort Sea, M'Clintock Channel (only for bears lawfully taken on or before May 31, 2000), Viscount Melville Sound, Western Hudson Bay, Lancaster Sound, and Norwegian Bay are approved.

What About the M'Clintock Channel Population?

Bears sport hunted in this population after May 31, 2000, the close of the 1999/2000 Canadian hunting season, will not be eligible for import. The Service announced an interim ban on the import of these bears under an emergency rule published on January 10, 2001, in response to new information which indicates this population has severely declined. The Service published a final rule on October 5, 2001, adopting the emergency interim rule as final. The ban will remain in effect until it is determined that this population is once



again sustainable. For a copy of the rules, visit our homepage at <http://international.fws.gov/>.

What About The Other Populations?

At this time, the Service has not approved Gulf of Boothia, Queen Elizabeth Island, Foxe Basin, Baffin Bay, Kane Basin, Southern Hudson Bay, and Davis Strait. As substantial new scientific or management data become available, the Service will evaluate, after consultation with the Marine Mammal Commission and opportunity for public comment, whether a population can be approved.

What Steps Should I Take To Import A Polar Bear Trophy?

1. Legally take a polar bear in Canada. If taken on or after April 30, 1994, the bear must be from an approved population. The Service will not be able to finish processing an application until after the polar bear is taken and all information is available for the Service to make the required findings, i.e., the bear was legally hunted, the gall bladder and its contents were destroyed, etc.
2. Apply for an import permit from this office using the official application form and pay the \$25 standard processing fee. Upon notification of approval, submit the \$1,000 permit issuance fee. The permit will be mailed to you upon receipt of the issuance fee.
3. Obtain a CITES export permit from the Management Authority in Canada. You must present the CITES permit to Canadian Customs to be validated upon export.
4. Check the expiration dates on your import and export permits before having the trophy shipped. You could lose your trophy if it enters the United States after your permits have expired. Import permits are valid for one year. Canada's export permits are valid for 30 days.
5. Import the trophy through a U.S. port designated for wildlife. Exception to the designated port requirement is only available for full mounts, and only if you have obtained a separate port exception permit from the appropriate U.S. Regional Law Enforcement office. You cannot use the international mail to import your trophy.
6. Contact a Service wildlife inspector at the designated port at least 48 hours prior

to arrival of your trophy to arrange for trophy inspection, clearance, and tagging. The polar bear skull can be imported but should be sufficiently cleaned to allow the inspector to mark it with permanent ink. You will need to provide the original import and export permits, as well as a completed Declaration for Importation or Exportation of Fish or Wildlife (Form 3-177, obtained at the port) to the Inspector.

Why Do I Have To Pay A Permit Issuance Fee?

Congress specifically wrote the law so the Service would use issuance fee funds to develop and implement cooperative research and management programs to conserve polar bears in Alaska and Russia. The fee was set at \$1,000 to produce sufficient revenue to implement the conservation provisions in the MMPA.

How Long Will It Take To Get an Import Permit?

The estimated processing time is 60-90 days. The MMPA requires the receipt of applications be published in the *Federal Register* (with a 30-day public comment period). You can reduce processing time by ensuring your application is complete and that your polar bear is from an approved population.

What Parts Of The Polar Bear Can Be Imported?

You can import for personal use parts that are traditionally considered to comprise a trophy, including the hide, skull, teeth, claws, baculum, other bones, rugs, and full mounts. Internal organs cannot be imported. Articles made from the specimen such as clothing, curio or jewelry cannot be imported or created from imported parts. Polar bear hides purchased in Canada or received as gifts cannot be imported.

**International Affairs
Division of Management Authority
4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Room 700
Arlington, VA 22203
703/358-2104
800/358-2104
703/358-2281 fax
FW9IA_DMA@fws.gov
international.fws.gov**

**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
<http://www.fws.gov>**

October 2001