

Alaskans, Canadians focus on polar bears

Representatives of the North Slope Borough and the Northwest Territories recently agreed to work toward a formal agreement on the management of the Beaufort Sea polar bear.

Nolan Solomon, chairman of the North Slope Borough Fish and Game Management Committee, and Andy Carpenter, chairman of the Inuvialuit Game Council of the Northwest Territories, recently committed in writing to work toward a formal agreement, according to the North Slope Borough.

The historic decision to work together is the result of two years' work by the American and Canadian groups to develop a common approach to polar bear management. It is in keeping with the 1973 International Agreement on the Conservation of the

Polar Bear, regarding cooperation in the management of shared populations.

"Representatives of the North Slope Borough Fish and Game Management Committee and the Inuvialuit Game Council have finally come to an understanding about the need for the protection of the polar bear population which the people of their regions share," Solomon said after the signing.

"This is the culmination of talks which both organizations have attended in Alaska and Canada during the past two years. We now have something on paper which allows us to start work on a Polar Bear Management agreement between us and

Canada," he added.

Solomon pointed out that the Inuvialuit Game Council has approved a draft memorandum, and it is now up to the North Slope Borough Fish and Game Management Committee to do the same at their Nov. 4-5 meeting this year.

If the draft is approved in Barrow, a joint commission will be formed which will develop, by the end of this year, a detailed Beaufort Sea Manage-

ment Plan for review by both groups.

The memorandum indicates that the management plan must develop strategies for protecting females, cubs and denning bears in keeping with the fundamental principles of conserving the bear populations and achieving a sustained yield in perpetuity.

Those who want further information may contact Solomon at 640-6613 or Benjamin P. Nageak at 852-2611, extension 240.