



BULLETIN

from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

NEW FUND TO BENEFIT POLAR BEAR CONSERVATION

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation have established a fund to enhance polar bear conservation research and management programs in Alaska and Russia. The seed money for the fund comes from fees collected by the Service for permits (\$1,000 each) to import polar bear trophies from Canada under the 1994 amendments to the Marine Mammal Protection Act. The fund will be managed jointly by the Foundation and the Service's Alaska Region.

"This kind of public/private cooperation clearly is the wave of the future in wildlife conservation," said Marshall Jones, the Service's Assistant Director for International Affairs. "Working together, the Foundation and the Service will use the permit fees to generate additional support for polar bear conservation efforts both here and in Russia."

The Service works with Federal, state, and international partners to coordinate measures for polar bear conservation, sustainable use, habitat protection, and to study Alaska-Chkotka (Russia) shared polar bear populations. These partners include the U.S. Department of State, the Marine Mammal Commission, the Biological Resources Division of the U.S. Geological Survey, the State of Alaska, the Alaska Nanuq Commission, the North Slope Burrough, and the Russian Federation.

In addition to existing programs, the Service and the Foundation plan to use the additional resources generated by the fund for activities such as the development of a harvest monitoring management program, aerial den or populations surveys, and technical assistance for enforcement programs.

"This innovative approach offers an exciting opportunity for the Foundation, the Service, and other groups to join together to leverage funds and make more money available for these programs," said the Foundation's Executive Director, Amos Eno. "During the next few months, the Foundation will let the private sector know of this new way it can help support polar bear conservation."

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages 511 national wildlife refuges covering 92 million acres, as well as 67 national fish hatcheries.

The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, administers the Endangered Species Act, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that funnels Federal excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state wildlife agencies. This program is a cornerstone of the Nation's wildlife management efforts, funding fish and wildlife restoration, boating access, hunter education, shooting ranges, and related projects across America.

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation is a private, not-for-profit conservation organization established by Congress to encourage, accept, and administer private gifts for the benefit of, or in connection with, the activities and services of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

October 17, 1997

Patricia Fisher 202-208-5634

