

# Polar Bear Trophy Hunt Ban Shot Down

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**03/19/10 — Polar Bear Trophy Hunt Ban Shot Down**

**Most important populations still imperiled by international trade in bear parts**

-- A proposal to end international trophy hunting and commercial trade in polar bear parts was voted down today at a meeting of the

Polar Bear Trophy Hunt Ban Shot Down

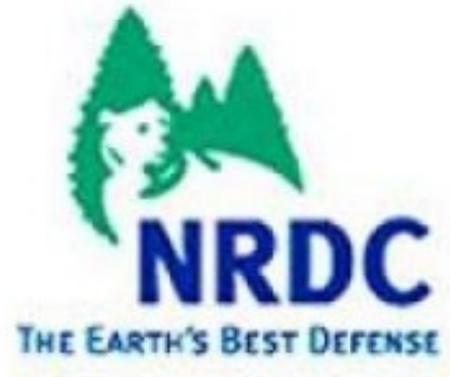
Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

Sponsored by the United States and supported by the Natural Resources Defense Council with a coalition of groups, the proposal was considered critical to help ensure the long-term survival of polar bears in the face of climate change. According to NRDC legal and conservation experts, polar bears suffer from unsustainably high harvest levels driven by trophy hunters and an international market for their pelts, paws, teeth and other parts.

“While there has been a lot of positive momentum in polar bear conservation recently, this is a real setback,” said Andrew Wetzler, Director of NRDC’s Wildlife Conservation Project. “It keeps some of the most important populations of polar bears squarely in the crosshairs. We will continue work to find a new way to protect polar bears from this unsustainable hunt.”

A 2007, the U.S. Geological Survey conservatively estimated that the total

population of polar bears would decline by over 70 percent in the next 45 years as global warming literally melts their habitat. Science-based estimates like these led the US to list the polar bear as threatened under the Endangered Species Act in 2008. Nonetheless, Canada still allows the killing of 300 polar bears a year for international trade and trophy hunting, despite evidence that over half of the polar bear populations in Canada may suffer from overharvest.



NRDC

NRDC is joined by a large group of international NGOs in pushing for this proposal that includes Animal Welfare Institute, Defenders of Wildlife, Eurogroup for Animals, Humane Society International, International Fund for Animal Welfare, ProWildlife and Species Survival Network. The proposal had sought to “uplist” the species to the more highly protected class 1 status under the international treaty. It lost by a vote of 48 - 62 with 11 abstentions.

Check the [Switchboard blog](#) for commentary and analysis from NRDC’s Zak Smith who has been participating in the CITES conference all week.

The Natural Resources Defense Council is a national, nonprofit organization of scientists, lawyers and environmental specialists dedicated to protecting public health and the environment. Founded in 1970, NRDC has 1.3 million members and online activists, served from offices in New York, Washington, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Beijing.

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### **About the author:**

Frances Beinecke, NRDC President: NRDC is the nation's most effective environmental action organization. We use law, science and the support of 1.2 million members and online activists to protect the planet's wildlife and wild places and to ensure a safe and healthy environment for all living things.

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