



*How can we support indigenous people's sustainable hunt in the Arctic?
The initiative of a QR Code for Seal skin*

European Parliament
Brussels, 29 November 2017

Gert Polet

WWF Arctic Programme



Gert Polet, 2009



WWF respects the rights of indigenous and local peoples to manage and utilise the natural resources that traditionally are a part of their cultures. We reserve the right to question whether such hunting and harvesting is sustainable, and to promote sustainability where it is not.





Status of Ice Seals

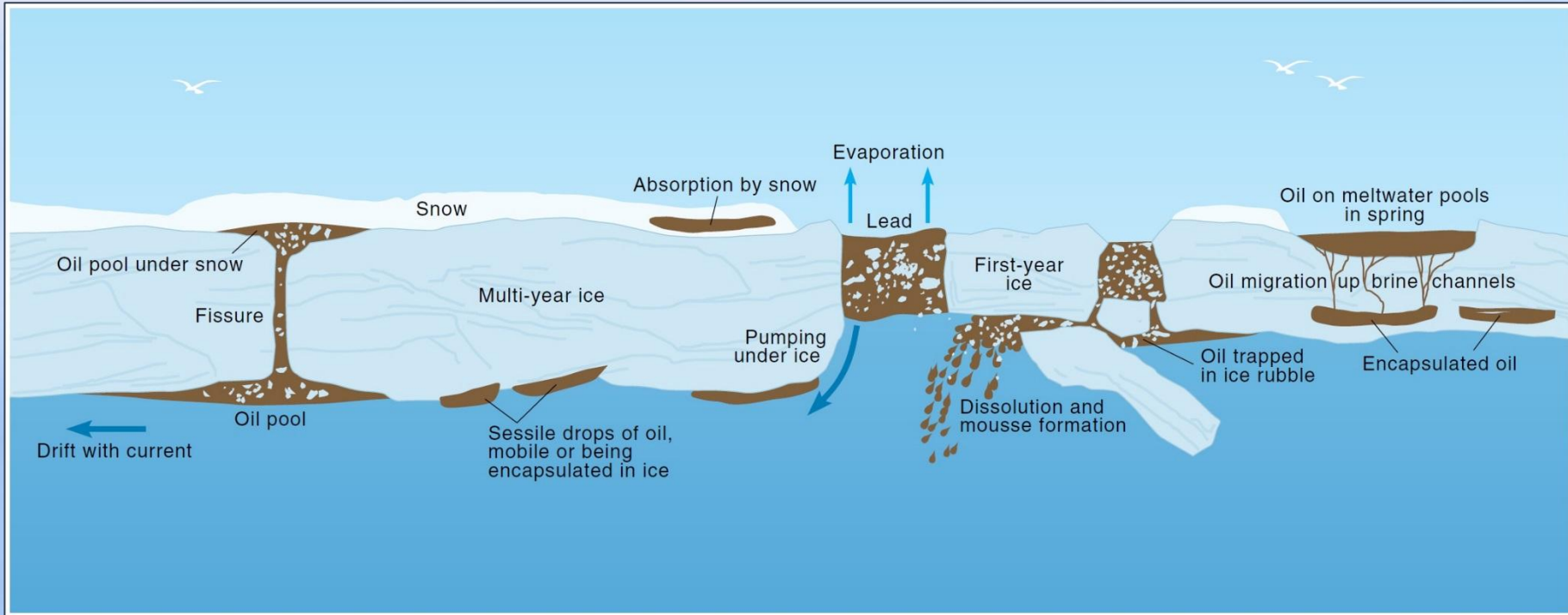
Species	Abundance	Assessment (NAMMCO)	Removals	Concern
Ringed Seal	ca 5 million	not well assessed	Substantial	Loss of sea ice habitat due to climate change
Harp Seal	> 9 million	Well assessed	Sustainable	
Hooded seal	ca 700,000	Well assessed	Mostly sustainable	Greenland Sea population
Bearded Seal	ca 1 million	Not assessed	Not substantial	

Based on NAMMCO 2017

So, WWF works on:

- supporting population assessments
- stimulating functioning co-management regimes
- working with local communities & authorities to safeguard seascapes & landscapes
- and poses questions if there is clear indication that sustainability of management is compromised

Threats to Ice Seals



AMAP, 2007



Threats to Ice Seals

- New economic developments
- Possible effects of climate change



Jon Aars, 2014



- **Authorities make the decisions on management regimes** like harvests- not WWF.
- WWF's concern is the survival of populations. Harvests need to be **sustainable, legal and regulated**, based on up-to-date **population assessments**. WWF respects the **rights of indigenous people to manage and utilise** the animals that traditionally are a part of their cultures under rule of law.
- **Co-management regimes** of the Arctic provide a good platform to bring stakeholders together; **rights come together with obligations**.
- **Transparent management decision-making** is essential.
- **Tracking of seal skin** (products) throughout the value chain is **an integral part** to ensure sustainability and transparency of the management regime.

But also:

- We need to take **accumulation of multiple threats** into account.
- And we need a **forward-looking approach** which predicts a future under rapid climate change.

**So that we are prepared for a future in which all can benefit from-
and enjoy the beauty of this planet**

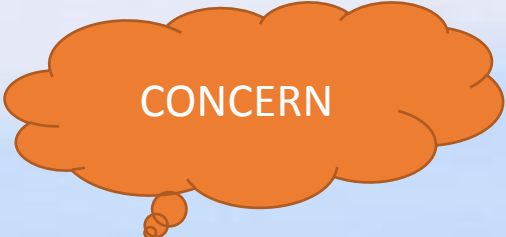




ca 5 million

National (and regional) management. Hunting licence required in Canada, Greenland and Russia, but no restriction on season or numbers that can be taken.

Ringed Seal



<p>Blue, no assessment but no catches and no substantial removals;</p> <p>Orange, no assessment but substantial removals (direct and/or indirect);</p> <p>Green, satisfactory assessment, removals (if any) considered sustainable;</p> <p>Red, satisfactory assessment, removals considered unsustainable or population endangered for other reasons</p>	Stock areas as designated by NAMMCO (1997)		
	Stock Areas	Removals	Most recent assessment
	Area 1: Baffin Bay, Northeastern Canada, and West Greenland	Yes	NAMMCO 1997a
	Area 2: East Greenland and Greenland Sea east to Svalbard	Yes	NAMMCO 1997a
	Area 3: Barents and Kara Seas to the Severnaya Zemlya	Yes	NAMMCO 1997a

Hunting closed in Svalbard during breeding season and quota system for sport hunters off northern Norway. At present little evidence of depletion, but **the species is/will be challenged by the impact of climate change** with predicted reduction in distribution range and numbers.



Northwest Atlantic: 7.4 million
Greenland Sea: 627,000
White Sea: 1.4 million

Harp Seal

Hunted by native peoples for food throughout their range. Canadian and Norwegian commercial hunts.

	Stocks and Areas	Direct Removals	Most Recent Assessment
Blue , no assessment but no catches and no substantial removals;	Northwest Atlantic	Yes	ICES/NAFO/ NAMMCO 2016
Orange , no assessment but substantial removals (direct and/or indirect);			
Green , satisfactory assessment, removals (if any) considered sustainable;			
Red , satisfactory assessment, removals considered unsustainable or population endangered for other reasons	Greenland Sea	Yes	ICES/NAFO/ NAMMCO 2016
	White Sea/Barents Sea	Yes	ICES/NAFO/ NAMMCO 2016



Greenland Sea: ca 70,000
Northwest Atlantic: ca 600,000

Hooded Seal

Previously hunted in both Greenland Sea and Northwest Atlantic. Catches banned in 2007 in Greenland Sea and recently only very low catches from the Northwest Atlantic.

	Stocks and Areas	Direct Removals	Most Recent Assessment
Blue , no assessment but no catches and no substantial removals;	Northwest Atlantic	Yes	ICES/NAFO/ NAMMCO 2016
Orange , no assessment but substantial removals (direct and/or indirect);			
Green , satisfactory assessment, removals (if any) considered sustainable;	Greenland Sea	No	ICES/NAFO/ NAMMCO 2016
Red , satisfactory assessment, removals considered unsustainable or population endangered for other reasons			

CONCERN



Estimated to be 500,000 to 1 million across the Arctic, but data is poor

Bearded Seal

Subsistence harvest throughout its range, some previous commercial harvest in Svalbard and Russia, currently a small sport-hunt in Svalbard

	Stock Areas	Removals	Most Recent Assessment
<p>Blue, no assessment but no catches and no substantial removals;</p> <p>Orange, no assessment but substantial removals (direct and/or indirect);</p> <p>Green, satisfactory assessment, removals (if any) considered sustainable;</p> <p>Red, satisfactory assessment, removals considered unsustainable or population endangered for other reasons</p>	Not enough data to delineate stock structure (if any)	Small numbers	None

In both Greenland and Norway, hunters must have permit, but there is no quota.