

TRAFFIC Recommendations on the Proposals to Amend the CITES Appendices at CoP15

	Species	Comment	Recommendation
3	<i>Ursus maritimus</i>	<p>CoP15 Prop. 3 [United States of America] Transfer from Appendix II to Appendix I.</p> <p>There is an estimated global population of 20 000–25 000 Polar Bears <i>Ursus maritimus</i>, which range through Canada, Greenland, Norway, the Russian Federation and the USA. The majority of these animals—approximately 15 000— either occur entirely in Canada or are in populations shared by Canada with Greenland and Alaska. The global conservation status for Polar Bears was assessed in 2008 by IUCN as Vulnerable. While international transactions in scientific specimens of the species and some personal possessions have increased since the 1990s, commercial trade has not increased, and trends in trade are not indicative of harvest levels. Canada is the only country that currently allows commercial exports of Polar Bear parts and products—all of which result from aboriginal subsistence hunting. Since the 1990s, approximately 300 Canadian Polar Bears (about 2% of the population) have entered international trade annually. The primary threat to Polar Bears is the retreat of sea-ice habitat, driven by global climate change. The global population of Polar Bears is not small and has not undergone a marked decline in the recent past; the species' area of distribution is not restricted; and the projected rate of population decline as a result of climate change is estimated to be approximately 30% over the next 45–50 years. Therefore, the Polar Bear does not meet any of the biological criteria for inclusion in Appendix I. Trade is not a significant threat to the species.</p>	REJECT