

bears and Arctic birds). These activities fall under international conventions and agreements such as the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, the Migratory Bird Treaty, and the Agreement on the Conservation of Polar Bears. International collaborative Arctic science and research is a fundamental aspect of the Government of Canada's participation in such agreements.

Canada and its Arctic neighbours are the stewards of unique wildlife such as polar bears. The Government of Canada recognizes the importance of indigenous knowledge and the need to use it in tandem with Western science in our efforts to better understand polar bears and their habitat.

Canada has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the United States for the conservation and management of a shared polar bear population. In addition, Canada has developed agreements with other Arctic nations to jointly manage polar bears, narwhals and belugas. This work must continue in order to manage other shared species.

As part of its mandate, the Arctic Council has been playing a lead role in identifying large marine ecosystems in the region and determining best practices in ocean management. Canada will play a leadership role in the Arctic Council's Arctic Ocean Review which aims to strengthen and ensure the sustainable development of the Arctic Ocean. In pursuing strengthened Arctic Ocean stewardship, we will work with other interested partners and users of the Arctic Ocean as well as through regional and international organizations, including the Arctic Council and the IMO.

2010 is the International Year of Biodiversity and the Arctic is the focus of considerable attention. Canada will continue to lead the Arctic Council's Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program to ensure information on population status and trends for Arctic species and ecosystems is available and supports initiatives such as the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment. The Council has recently developed the Arctic Species Trend Index, which provides decision-makers with a valuable tool for managing and predicting Arctic wildlife populations. Tracking the index over time will facilitate this prediction of trends and identify species and groups experiencing rapid change.