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Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)
Grand Conseil des Cris (Eeyou Istchee)

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Cree Nation Government
Gouvernement de la Nation Crie

Whapmagoostui
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Chisasibi
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Wemindji
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Eastmain
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Waskaganish
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Nemaska
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Waswanipi
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Ouje-Bougoumou
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Mistissini
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Washaw Sibi
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MoCreebec
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The Role of the GCC(EI)/Cree Nation Government in Polar Bear Management

The Cree Nation Government is a regional government structure, acting with the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) or GCC(EI), to represent the interests of the Cree populations and Cree Nations/communities of Eeyou Istchee. Through the James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) and the Eeyou Marine Region Land Claim Agreement (EMRLCA) the GCC(EI)/Cree Nation Government play a role in polar bear management through governance of the territory, and participation in the co-management regimes. As the signatory to the JBNQA and EMRLCA, the GCC(EI)/Cree Nation Government are responsible for the implementation of the agreements. This includes ensuring that wildlife populations, such as the Southern Hudson Bay (SHB) polar bear subpopulation, are managed to support the rights and interests of the Crees. To this end, the GCC(EI)/Cree Nation Government work closely with the Cree First Nations, the Cree Trappers' Association, the Hunting, Fishing, Trapping Coordinating Committee (HFTCC) and the Eeyou Marine Region Wildlife Board (EMRWB).

Additionally, the GCC(EI)/Cree Nation Government serve as the 'government designated organization' (GDO) responsible for implementing the Eeyou Marine Region Land Claim Agreement (EMRLCA), which established the EMRWB. The GCC(EI)/Cree Nation Government participate in the co-management process, including through the appointment of the Cree members to EMRWB.

Section 24 of the JBNQA created the HFTCC, whose purpose is to oversee the hunting, fishing and trapping regime throughout the JBNQA territory and be a forum for decision-making among the parties involved in wildlife co-management in the region.

For these regimes to be effective, the EMRWB and HFTCC must collaborate to align their respective efforts in wildlife management. To ensure consistent and effective wildlife and polar management throughout the region, the HFTCC will need to work closely with the Eeyou Marine Region Wildlife Board (EMRWB) and the Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board (NRMWB). This is particularly important considering that the SHB polar bear subpopulation spans the borders of the JBNQA and the EMRLCA territories and the jurisdictional complexities of managing wildlife in offshore and coastal areas. The GCC(EI)/Cree Nation Government facilitate and coordinate such collaboration to advance a unified vision for wildlife management in Eeyou Istchee.