

# Proposal to ban polar bear trade shot down

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A US proposal to outlaw international trade in polar bear parts including paws, fur and teeth was [voted down today](#) in Doha, Qatar, at [a triennial international summit on trade in wildlife products](#).

Opposition was mainly from Canada, Norway and Greenland, whose aboriginal communities hunt the bears as a resource for food, clothing and shelter. By-products from the hunts are sold internationally, especially from Canada.

The US proposal would not have affected the rights of indigenous peoples to carry on killing polar bears sustainably to obtain food and material for their own use. But it would have made it illegal to sell that material internationally.



*(Image: Geoff Moore / Rex Features)*

It would also have imposed new restrictions on the latitude for trophy hunters to bring polar bear parts home with them afterwards.

The US [Natural Resources Defense Council](#), which supported the US proposal, said that key [opposition to the proposal came from Europe](#), mainly in support of Norway and Denmark, which administers Greenland. In the end, the proposal was defeated by 62 to 48, with 11 abstentions.

The US [listed the bear as endangered in 2008](#), saying they were threatened by global warming, which is shrinking the Arctic sea ice on which the bears depend for hunting.

As predicted by conservationists, the bears have become [more of a nuisance to humans](#) as the vanishing ice has brought them in closer contact with towns and communities.

The polar bear listing is controversial within the US itself, and was famously [opposed in 2008](#)

by [Sarah Palin](#), former governor of Alaska, where a fifth of the world's 20,000 to 25,000 remaining bears live. More recently, Palin's successor, Sean Parnell, became the third governor of Alaska to oppose federal protection for the bears, which are seen in Alaska as an impediment to drilling for oil and gas.