

'Problematic' Greenland polar bear may be shot

August 3 2021



Greenland is experiencing a record heatwave, forcing polar bears to wander further for food.

A polar bear in Greenland may be shot dead next time it endangers people after several close encounters, including one where it bit the hand

of a documentary team member, authorities said.

The attack on the [documentary](#) team near an [army base](#) comes as the autonomous Danish Arctic territory experiences a record heatwave and as polar bears wander further for food.

Early on Monday, while the sun does not set in summer at this latitude, the bear poked his head through a poorly closed window of a research station where the documentary team was staying about 400 metres from the small base of Daneborg.

A Danish Arctic [military unit](#) based in Greenland said the bear bit the hand of one of the three male team members before they used warning pistols to force the animal to flee.

Transported first to Daneborg, the injured documentary maker had to be evacuated to Akureyri, a town in Iceland.

Already blamed for five incidents until now, the bear returned again later in the morning and then again overnight Monday to Tuesday when it broke a window of the research station before fleeing.

"The [local authorities](#) have from now on categorised the bear as 'problematic,' which allows for it to be shot dead, if it returns," the Danish military unit said.

The incident comes as the northeast of Greenland experiences a heatwave, with a new record temperature of 23.4 degrees Celsius (74.2 Fahrenheit).

Experts say the retreat of the ice pack, the hunting ground of the polar bear, forces them to stay on land more often and they find it harder to find food and sustain a species already considered vulnerable.

Although still rare, the [close encounters](#) with humans are increasing as bears more frequently approach inhabited areas in their search for food, environmental protection officers say.

A study that appeared in July 2020 in the publication *Nature Climate Change* warned that [polar bears](#) faced extinction around 2100. They currently number around 25,000 individuals.

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