

DNA Testing Confirms Polar/Grizzly Bear Hybrid Shot Near Banks Island

YELLOWKNIFE (May 9, 2006) - DNA testing has confirmed that a bear shot near Banks Island last month is a polar bear/grizzly bear hybrid.

A sport hunter from the United States shot the animal on April 16, 2006 near Nelson Head on southern Banks Island.

As the animal appeared unusual to the hunter and the guide, the hide was turned over to Environment and Natural Resources officials for testing to determine the species. A wildlife genetics laboratory conducted DNA testing on skin samples taken from the hide. By comparing the DNA from this bear with DNA previously collected from polar bears in the area and

with DNA previously collected from grizzly bears along the coast south of the area, the analysis confirmed that this bear was a hybrid. This could be the first recorded polar/grizzly bear hybrid found in the wild.

ENR will return the hide to the hunter. He was hunting with a licensed guide and had a non-resident alien tag for the animal.

Additional analyses are underway to determine if the mother was a grizzly bear or a polar bear and to determine the age of the bear.

For more information, contact:

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