

## The Hudson Bay Project Bear Safety Program

Polar bears are frequent visitors to the La Pérouse Bay and Cape Churchill region. Other than denning pregnant females, polar bears winter on the ice on Hudson Bay where they feed mainly on seals. As the ice breaks in June and July, the bears swim ashore or raft there on ice flows. Once ashore, they remain in the general area waiting for fall freeze-up. Due to prevailing winds, water movements in the Bay, and other factors (such as lower salinity due to rivers emptying into the bay) the La Pérouse Bay region has some of the earliest ice formation in Hudson Bay. The bears have learned this and it is one of the reasons for their high local numbers during the summer and fall. The other is the presence of denning areas south east of the camp. While the bears are in our area, they spend their time wandering, foraging and sleeping. These activities bring them into potential contact with folks at the La Pérouse Bay Research Station. In 1999, Discovery Channel Canada filmed and aired examples of our safety program. We were chosen as an exemplar of one of the few, if not only, research stations to have never had an incident resulting in harm to either staff or bears.

Since 2006, we have also had yearly encounters with grizzly and black bears and several of these have been at the Research Station. Like polar bears, grizzly and black bears are curious and usually hungry. Although grizzly bears have a reputation of being more confrontational than polar bears, our experience has not found that and we have found that our safety procedures work effectively with grizzly and black bears. As such any safety procedures detailed here for polar bears should be followed for encounters with grizzly or black bears.

Bears are a fact of life at La Pérouse Bay. There have been years that polar bears were encountered daily either in the field or around camp, especially in July and August. There are years when they are much less frequent. We have had polar bears at the camp as early as May and with the advance of sea ice breakup, this trend has increased. We have learned to adjust to the hazards of this dangerous predator and as of this writing no researchers have been harmed at La Pérouse Bay.

Just as importantly, no bear has been harmed or destroyed. This record is the result of our polar bear safety program. This program has evolved over the nearly 50 years we have worked in the area. It has benefited from cumulative personal experiences and extensive discussions with other researchers, local residents and native peoples who have worked and lived with these animals. We vigorously practice this program and all members of the research team as well as visitors to the facility are required to learn it and practice it. Failure to comply with any aspect of the safety program is sufficient grounds for immediate removal from the facility at your own expense.

**A safe polar bear is a distant polar bear.** This phrase, taken from a poster distributed by Manitoba Department of Natural Resources in the 1960's, is a basic tenet of our program. Vigilance is the key to making this tenet work and minimizing encounters. Spotting a bear approaching workers in the field or the camp before it reaches either is our best initial line of defense. Another crucial element to our program is knowledge of the bears and their behavior. This is best obtained by reading about them – there are many resources at the camp – and observing them. Our collective experience began with a local member of the Dene First Nation (“grandfather” Bighead) who spent time with us at the camp. He admonished us to sit quietly and observe the bears. He explained that all bears are different. Most are fine but some are not – just like people. By observing them you will learn to tell the difference.

### Safety Procedures

Bear safety at the La Pérouse Bay camp (Figure 1) can broadly be divided into three categories: general guidelines that apply under most all circumstances, camp procedures and field procedures. Nearly 50 years of personal experiences as well as the combined knowledge of locals, natives, and natural resource officers are difficult to distill into a document intended to train and explain in a concise manner. This document is a starting point. Our formal training (required for all research team members) normally involves more than a full afternoon of lectures. Informally, training goes on throughout our entire field season. There are discussions following most every incident to explain why this was done and that was not. There are practice walks with experienced crew members who pose virtual problems that require split second solutions. Finally, our policy is to **defer to experience**. The camp should never be without an individual with 3 or more years of experience. If you do not know what to do, **ask**.

## General Procedures

**Vigilance** - our best policy is to always be on the alert. Remember, **WE** are the prey. Bears may show up at any time, day or night, in the field or around camp. They may show up at camp while no one is around. While you are staring at a study plot or looking down searching out bird nests, a bear may seem to appear out of nowhere. Always look around. Use a timer to remind you if necessary (a five minute interval is recommended). While walking (either in the field or around camp) keep looking all around. Don't be offended if experienced crew members don't look you in the eye while conversing. They would rather spend their time scanning the horizon while talking to you. Likewise, the best positions to occupy while indoors are those that allow you a view out a window.

Look around before you go anywhere. Don't rush out of doors, especially at night. Open the door slowly and peak out first. While in camp, scan from the roof with binoculars on a regular basis (keeping an eye on field workers and "defending" the camp). Before leaving camp for the field, do a thorough roof scan with binoculars. In the field, get up on a rock to get a good look around you before moving from one study location to another. Unless explicit, special and specific permission is given by the senior person in charge, no one is to leave the camp alone.

Elevation is crucial to getting a good view at La Pérouse Bay. You can simply step up out of a streambed, or climb on a rock, or, if in camp, get up on a roof. You may feel you have a good view from wherever you may be standing, but if you can spot a bear an extra half mile away (or one hidden just on the other side of a willow stand) you will be far safer.

Learn the terrain. There are many rocks that at a distance look just like bears lying down. And quite often a bear lying down looks just like a rock. Learn the areas that may conceal bears, and avoid going into them. Learn the local names for locations around camp and the La Pérouse Bay region. Don't assume that the new name that you and your partner have assigned to a spot are known by everyone else. **This is especially crucial** – the experienced crew and the local helicopter pilots who may be able to save your life use a long-standing set of names for things and places – **learn them**. Also, learn compass directions and learn to estimate distance. If you need assistance in these matters don't hesitate to ask (these things can be tricky to get the hang of).

Use your binoculars. They are an invaluable resource and should never be left behind. There should be a pair in most buildings. There will be spotting scopes available in camp and can be used from the safe roofs. Keep your optics clean, it makes a world of difference.

Use your ears. Although bears can walk nearly silently over the tundra, they splash through the river channels surrounding the camp. So do the herds of caribou (which are not carnivorous). Polar bears are generally not in herds. Your ears are most important at night. If a bear should breach the electric fence (see below), the most likely target will be the "Bob" (where we cook, eat and keep much of the food). The Bob contains chairs that 600 to 1200 pound critters scoot noisily and knock over. Bears like to lick things and knock them off shelves. New members of the team, who often have difficulty sleeping through the snoring and noises of the "Sleeper", are likely to be the first to hear these noises. If you hear something, awaken an experienced crew member. Do not, under any circumstance, check the noise out yourself.

Do not reduce or eliminate your chances of hearing bears or attempts to contact you by using devices that require the use of headphones. The same applies to the volume level of the camp stereo. Don't be offended if a more experienced crew member reduces the volume of your favorite tunes. If you are using the telephone, make sure someone else knows that and is listening for noises and monitoring the camp radio frequency.

Use the buddy system. Although some of the more experienced folks may go out into the field alone, it is a risky practice and requires permission of those in charge of the station. Four eyes are better than two and a partner can give a second opinion as to whether a rock is a rock. The buddy system extends to telling someone where you are going to be - both within the camp and in the field. It is crucial, for example that we know you went to the outhouse so that if someone sees a bear approaching it, you can be warned. Before leaving for the field, enter your name(s), destination(s) and projected return time onto the white board in the "Bob". If you are going to be delayed, notify the camp immediately.

Stay in touch. The camp owns sufficient communications radios to allow all field crews to have a radio. Avoid using the radio for trivial communications (which may cause other folks to avoid monitoring due to the "noise"). Always monitor the camp channel. You never know when someone else may need assistance, or when someone else may be trying to contact you. While in camp make certain that someone is able to monitor the base radios.

You will be thoroughly trained on the use of our radios and on proper radio protocols. Always carry a spare radio battery. Just because your radio was on the charger, do not assume it has been taking a charge. Before leaving camp, and periodically in the field, perform radio checks to ensure you can send and receive communications.

Be familiar with your weapon. Although crew members will have been required to take the classes and tests associated with acquiring relevant permits, they are not allowed to handle any weapons until they have completed our hands-on gun course and demonstrated their proficiency of use **and safety** to the satisfaction of one or more of the individuals in charge of the station. Visitors are not allowed to handle the weapons except in threat of life situations. We have very strict rules regarding weapons and a zero tolerance for violations. We are as proud of the fact that we have never had any gun injuries as we are of our record of no bear injuries. Learn to treat your weapon well - keep it clean, and hope you will never need to use it. Don't put it down and walk away to your next study plot. It may be awkward to carry it all the time but please do.

Life in remote areas is stressful even without bears. Humor is a great way of reducing stress and you will find that teasing and joking are a way of life at La Pérouse Bay. There are 2 exceptions. **Jokes involving weapons or bears are not allowed.** We do not tolerate anything other than safe handling of weapons. We are also intolerant of any pranks or jokes involving bears or anything that might look like a bear.

### Camp Procedures

We follow a fairly strict protocol in camp relating to bear safety. Everything from personal behavior to kitchen cleanliness is involved in running a safe camp. There is an electrified perimeter fence, weapons may be used to launch noisemaker deterrents, and all camp participants are expected to follow the instructions of camp leaders. We are a research TEAM at La Pérouse Bay and safety demands a team effort.

#### *Mornings and evenings and overnight*

Bears are active at night and it is possible that a bear will have come into camp and be exploring or sleeping near a building in the morning. For that reason, no one is to leave the sleeper and head for another building until an experienced staff member has "cleared" the camp of any bear presence. The individual who clears the camp will notify the camp when it is safe over the radio. During the night, if you have to relieve yourself, wake an experienced member to accompany you, especially if it involves using a Wilderness Comfort Station in the Wet Spot. Even a trip out of the front door of the sleeper to urinate should be done with caution and preferably with a more experienced staff member until you have been checked out on safety procedures. In the evening, when the last experienced staff member is ready to call it a night, everyone is required to head for the sleeper and remain there until morning.

The sleeper building has a "double door" system. During the earlier part of the season before we are able to put up the fence, the innermost door will have an additional barricade across the door.

The satellite phone is normally kept in the Flower Pot. During the day, it should be brought to the Bob as long as there are some folks in that building. When folks go to the roof over a bear situation, the sat phone should be taken along. The last person retiring to the Sleeper at night should bring the sat phone to the Sleeper and put it on the shelf by the base radio (SE corner). During the day, when no one is in the Bob or when everyone is out of camp, the sat phone should be in the Flower Pot.

#### *The Fence*

The La Pérouse Bay camp is situated on an island surrounded by an electric fence. This fence is a standard cattle fence that puts out a jolt of up to 10,000 volts once a second. This will shock anything that touches it (if it is making good contact with the ground) but will not generally harm the creature (or person). (Newcomers to camp are encouraged to test the fence in the time honored tradition of touching it.) Some folks tend to do this on a regular basis. Bears approaching camp tend to sense the presence of the fence (maybe they sense the electric field) and have been seen to lick or bump the fence with their nose; we count on the surprise factor to set them moving away from camp.

The fence charging unit is powered by a 12 volt battery that is kept charged by a solar panel. Proper operation of the charger may be verified by observing that the meter needle is "pegged" to the right hand side of the meter. A clicking sound will be heard at one second intervals when the unit is functioning properly. Every member of camp should learn the sound of a properly working charger. Experienced staff should be notified if there is a hint of trouble.

The fence needs to be continuously maintained. If it rubs against the posts, if grass grows into it, or if spiders use it to anchor their webs, it will not have its desired effect. It should not be used as a laundry line. Grasses, sedges, and shrubs need to be kept trimmed and not allowed to touch the fence. Spider webs need to be brushed off. Someone should walk the fence perimeter at least once per day to check for obstructions or problems. Even if the fencer meter needle is “pegged” and appears to be operating correctly, objects touching the fence can significantly dampen the charge. A special voltmeter should therefore be used daily to check the charge in the fence wire (>7000 volts indicates the fence is operating correctly). If you are in camp and not doing anything important, maintain the fence, please.

#### *On alert and the roof*

Our best defense against bears is our own vigilance. We must constantly be on the alert, always scanning the horizon, always looking around while outside, always looking out the windows. On opening a door to the outside, it is imperative to look around before exiting. Rooftop scans are a must; elevation is an important aide in our defenses. Binoculars are indispensable in deciding if a rock is a rock or if it is a bear (this may sound amusing but it can be nearly impossible to distinguish between a sleeping bear and a rock). Someone (you, perhaps) should scan from the roof every 15 minutes or so.

When a bear is sighted it may be close to camp or at a distance. If you spot a bear, notify everyone in the camp, especially one of the camp leaders. Try and provide a direction and distance. If the bear is at a "safe" distance, someone will be designated to keep an eye on it. Field workers should be notified of the bear's location and direction of movement (if any). If it is determined that the bear is moving away from camp or is otherwise not an imminent threat then the camp can stand down to normal bear awareness protocol. You will find that bears move very quickly across the landscape. Keeping eyes on a bear near camp is crucial as they may disappear behind willows or move quickly out of the area you last saw them in.

If a bear is spotted approaching camp, an experienced member of camp will decide how closely the bear will be monitored. When the bear moves close enough, everyone in camp will move up to a rooftop. Depending on circumstances, it will be either the roof of the Bob or the Sleeper. Under ideal circumstances folks may have enough warning time to allow them to grab their cameras before going up on the roof. It is best to ask the person in charge if it's alright to take the time to do so. We prefer that all camp members go up on the same roof (granted this is not always possible but it is preferred). Since we may be there a while, it is best to have a jacket with gloves and a hat in the pockets (as well as bug dope) handy.

Once on the roof we wait. We stay quiet as the bear approaches. One or more members of the camp will be designated gunners with cracker shells (and no slugs) in their shotguns; one or more members will stand ready with slugs in their guns. Sometimes the bear may approach then veer off. Sometimes they skirt the camp along the fence without ever touching it. And sometimes they sniff or lick the fence. **Only when they touch the fence, do we reinforce their shocking surprise by firing a volley of cracker shells high above the bear and shouting loudly.** One goal is to have the bears associate negatively with researchers and our camp. The other is to pair the shock with the noise of cracker shells. **Under no circumstance is a cracker to be launched at a bear.**

**This is very important.** Cracker shells are crucial for safety and only work only if bears run from the noise. Bears on Akimiski Island, for example, are not normally deterred by the noise, likely because they have been exposed to gunfire related to local duck and goose hunting. By always waiting until bears approaching the camp touch the fence and get a shock before firing cracker shells, we are “shaping” the bears in a standard animal behavior fashion to associate the noise with the shock. The principle is that they will associate the two and “forget” which came first, “shock” or “bang”. The fact that numerous bears begin running when they hear the “click-click” of a round being chambered in a Remington 870 is consistent with the success of our shaping.

**The only time a weapon is pointed at an animal is when the intent is to destroy the animal in a threat of life situation.**

#### *Short notice*

It can happen that you spot a bear as it is at or very near the fence. Immediately start yelling (**direction and distance**) and get yourself and everyone else onto a roof. We will rehearse for this situation and designated folks will have grabbed weapons. Take radios and the satellite phone with you and check to see if any field workers are approaching camp. If the bear is between camp and field crews, have the field crews “shelter in place” and

hold position (see below). Make sure someone checks the shower and the outhouse. It is crucial that everyone follow the directions of the person in charge (remember we defer to experience). **Do not hesitate to do exactly what you are told – immediately.** (We'll apologize later, if need be.) If you are in a building and can not exit without moving towards the bear, yell your location to others in camp. Those handling the situation will not necessarily know that your banging and chair-scraping is you **unless you call out your location.** Odd as it may seem, try to stay calm or at least keep your wits about you. We have been in these situations before and have handled them without incident.

### *Food handling*

Food is stored either in the food shelter, the freezer, or the Bob (cooking building). No food is to be stored or consumed in other buildings. If you have brought personal food please inquire of the experienced staff as to where it may be stored. Meals should be eaten in the Bob. Please do not discard scraps in building trash receptacles except in the Bob. Kitchen trash should be burned daily. It is probably best burned during the day so as to not present a smoldering barbecue all night long. While someone may be the designated camp garbage pyromaniac, everyone is encouraged to help. Morning coffee and late afternoon libations are often enjoyed by a group around the burning trash barrels.

### In the Field

#### *Vigilance*

You should be ever-alert in the field. Scan the horizon and closer regularly as you walk. Make sure you look behind you. Periodically stop, get on a rock and scan 360 degrees with your binoculars. If you are working at a nest or on the ground look around at least every 5 minutes. Never walk into a blind spot or area. It may take longer, but walk around it. A firearm should always be taken into the field (either by you or by another experienced crew member who is working alongside you). If you are in the field without a firearm, never leave sight of other crew members with firearms, and never stray more than 50m from crew members with firearms, even if they are within sight. If you are the person with the firearm, it should be kept on your person at all times.

If you spot a bear, remember our main principle – **a safe bear is a distant bear.** Your actions should always maintain or increase the distance. Never move towards it. Most often, it will not be moving towards you. If it is a kilometer or more away, just stop and watch until it is a very distant bear. If it is moving in your general direction, move laterally away (and upwind – see below). The lateral move will let you judge if it is really moving towards you or is moving to (or through) where you were. Make a general radio call notifying everyone that there is a bear, where it is and what it is doing. In the event it is moving towards you, hale the camp or anyone else in the field on the radio (all of the experienced camp leaders have radios with them). Tell them the exact situation and seek their advice. Remain calm.

The other type of bear you may spot, especially from an elevated perch, is a sleeping bear. The old adage is the best one. **Let sleeping bears lie.** To avoid waking it up, give it a very wide berth on the upwind side if you need to be on the other side of it. Make sure you notify the camp and other field workers of its location as soon as you spot it, before proceeding. Check in regularly to let everyone know you have moved past it safely if you are required to be on the other side of it.

There is another important principle related to sleeping or relaxing bears and work. Part of research in the north is the realization that sometimes data just do not get collected or that they get collected on northern time. Bears in a study area are a case in point. Except in extraordinary circumstances, and only when approved by camp leaders, we do not move bears so that we can work where they were. There is always plenty of other work you can do.

#### *Odor is Good and More Is Better*

While it is hard to imagine an animal this large feeling threatened or nervous, bears appear to be so, especially if they are not certain of their surroundings, including you. You are foreign to them and they appear to be less edgy when they have you firmly positioned. Bears rely most heavily on their sense of smell and we take advantage of that. The best place to be is upwind from the bear. This allows it to localize you – they will often rise on their hind legs and carefully “scent” you. If you are in a group, it is important that you get and stay close to each other. This centralizes and strengthens the odor field. Data so far suggest that the odor of ripe, minimally washed field biologists is offensive to bears. We often find that as a group moves upwind, the bear will scent us and then turn and leave – often running.

### *Backing Off*

It is possible that even with vigilance and careful movements, you will confront a bear or have one approach you directly. This is where knowledge of polar bear behavior, and that of large carnivores in general, can save your life. Remember that these critters have evolved highly sophisticated systems of behavioral cues to prevent killing each other – if they hadn't, they'd likely be extinct. We take advantage of these. First, stay calm (or at least pretend to be). Bears can sense fear and it may make them consider you a subordinate that they can do with what they want. Second, back away slowly – **Do not turn your back on the bear**. Third, look at the bear but avoid direct eye contact. Try to convey the notion that while you are not afraid, you are yielding the space. (For those of us that work in New York it is just like dealing with hostiles on the subway.) Once you have put 500 meters or so between you and the bear, turning and walking away fast (but not running) is wise – but keep an eye on the bear even as you make it more distant. (If you are with a partner, get together with the one closest to the bear facing it and the other leading the way.)

Remember they are curious. If a bear follows you, slowly remove your day pack and place it on the ground as you continue backing away. Most likely the bear will spend time inspecting it and especially its contents – giving you time to make it a distant bear. If need be, drop additional items. Sandy, for example, managed to get back to camp when a bear, who ignored and stepped over her pack containing chocolate cake, stopped and spent a long time inspecting and chewing the shirt she removed and dropped. Bears do seem to have a fascination with human body odors!

### *Cracker shells in the field*

You can deter an approaching bear with cracker shells but their use is more complicated than it might seem. The theory is simple – place the charge between you and the approaching bear and when it explodes the bear will run away. There are two sets of problems. First, the loads are light and tend to be blown excessively by the ever-present winds. The charge could go beyond the bear and when it explodes the bear could run towards you. Alternatively, the charge could be blown out of effective range. The second issue is there are usually other people or teams in the region and you have to be very careful not to chase the bear towards them. Knowing where everyone is at all times is important. You will receive extensive training on both sets of problems. More of the live portion of our gun training is on use of cracker shells than of slugs and such. (Most of the training is on general safety and gun care and cleaning). You will not be permitted in the field with a weapon until you have convinced some of the experienced members of the camp that you can both place the shells correctly and know when to do so. **Under NO circumstance should a cracker shell be fired at a bear.**

### *Helicopter Support*

Usually from late June, there are helicopters in the area. The pilots monitor our radio frequency and are all quite knowledgeable about bears. If you can not get away from a bear or can not contact experienced camp members, you can hale the helicopter over the radio. We will explain the protocol during our radio session. This, however, is a last ditch option since our arrangement with the pilots is to involve them only in life-threatening situations.

### *Approaching Camp*

As you approach, hale the camp by radio for information or instructions regarding bears. This is especially true if you see people on the roof. There are several blind spots associated with willows and streams near the camp. When you are returning from the field, hale the camp on your radio when you are about 1 km out and ask that someone go to the roof and scan the area for you (elevation is everything).

In the event that a bear is between you and the camp, you must rely on directions given to you by the folks there. Every situation is different but people on the roof will likely have you either hold where you are or will have you move so that you are upwind of the animal (this increases the chances the bear will know where you are and not be surprised or feel threatened). Once they feel the bear's position is stable or they have deterred it in the opposite direction, they will have you walk into camp.

Instructions will preferably be given to you over the radio. In the event radio communication does not work, we use a set of standardized hand signals. Using the standardized set eliminates confusion and they will be demonstrated to you. The key principal, however, is simple and crucial. **Always point to safety. Never point at a bear.** Doing so could inadvertently cause someone to move towards it.

### *Threat of Life*

Despite our best efforts, it is possible that you may be placed in a threat of life situation. If it is at all possible, try and calmly get behind a team member with more experience. In doing that, keep in mind you should **NEVER** turn your back on a bear, especially an aggressive one.

For all bears, aggressive encounters derive from “conflict” behavior wherein the animal is experiencing opposing drives (the fight/flight syndrome). In polar bears especially, the initial stages of conflict are evidenced by “yawning” and “lip smacking”. The animal will have both front feet firmly planted side by side and slightly in front of the head. It may sway its head and neck from side to side. It may produce a “houghing” or deep exhalation sound. In the final stages, it will lower its head and begin a charge. These behaviors usually begin when the animal is within 25 to 50 feet.

It is possible that the animal will break off the charge, especially if you or others are shouting at it or if **OTHERS** fire cracker shells straight up. When a charge is imminent, you should chamber a slug and assume firing stance with one foot ahead of the other. Note: destroying a bear is an absolute last resort, and is only done under immediate and direct threat of life. If the animal charges, take off the safety, breathe deeply and fire for a spot on the spine right behind the lowered head. Keep firing at that spot or into the chest if the animal falls. The latter may require repositioning yourself slightly but again, **NEVER** turn your back on the bear in such a scenario.

After making sure the safety is on, reload the weapon with the extra slugs you should have in your backpack. Have everyone with you gather at least 50m upwind from the downed animal and radio the camp or other experienced staff to let them know what has happened. Watch the animal for any signs of movement or breathing and if they are detected fire more slugs into the chest. You alone should approach the animal to make certain it is dead only after more experienced staff has given permission. When you do this, make sure a live round is chambered and if the animal moves at all, empty the gun into its chest.

The last situation to consider is one with a bear entering an occupied building. With diligence and alertness this should not happen with the possible exception of during the night. A bear entering the occupied sleeper at night is a “threat of life” situation by definition. If you detect the animal start shouting “**bear in the sleeper**” and move to one of the long (east or west) walls and get prone on the floor – under a bunk if possible. Only experienced staff sleep with weapons and Rocky, Andrew and Chris sleep at the north end, furthest from the door, which is the most likely entry point. They will dispatch the animal as soon as they see there is nothing past their line of fire.

It is possible that a bear could enter another building if folks are not paying attention but the likelihood is remote. The only exception would be the Bob, especially during a meal, when food odors could be an additional attractant. Guns are kept at both ends of the building for just such an eventuality. The bear’s entry would most likely be through the main porch door and this would again be a “threat of life” situation by definition. Yell “**bear in the bob**” and whoever can get to a weapon should do that and try to get it quickly to an experienced staff member. After making certain the line of fire is clear, that staff member should dispatch the animal as described above. If you here yelling about a bear in a building move away from it and get onto a safe roof and stay there until instructed to do otherwise.

### Closing Thoughts

We have worked safely around polar bears for nearly 50 years without injuries or deaths to either bears or personnel. This document summarizes the major points of our safety program. Although it should be thoroughly read before coming to the camp, it **DOES NOT** replace the formal training session given at the camp and it certainly **DOES NOT** substitute for the experience you need to gain to begin working safely around these animals.

## La Pérouse Bay Research Station

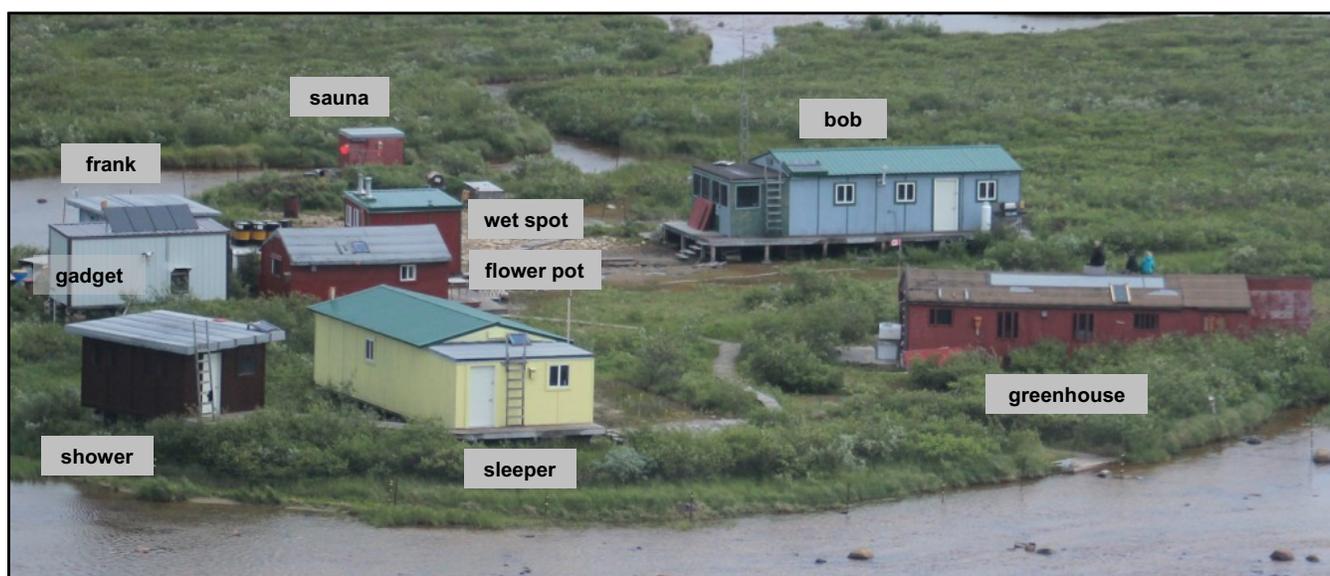


Figure 1. *shower* contains 2 showers and sinks; *sleeper* is the bunk house; *greenhouse* is a science building; *bob* is the kitchen and general use building; *wet spot* contains the wilderness comfort stations; *flower pot* is science building; *gadget* is for power supply and water treatment; *frank* is the shop; *sauna* is the sauna. Roofs of shower and greenhouse and the porch roofs of bob and sleeper are bear safe.

# Bear Safety Guidelines

*“A safe bear is a distant bear”*

## Safety Equipment (to keep on hand at all times)

- Radio and spare battery
- Firearm and ammunition in waterproof container (if a senior staff member)
- Binoculars

## General Guidelines

- Stay vigilant
- Continuously monitor surroundings (sight and sound)
- Always let others know where you are going
- Buddy system
- Keep radios charged
- Keep firearms clean and ammunition dry
- Never approach a bear
- Never move a bear towards other crew members (e.g., with cracker shells)
- Always point to safety (not to bear)

## Camp Guidelines

- Always let others know where you are
- Maintain the fence
  - Trim grasses, sedges, and shrubs
  - Remove spider webs
  - Check insulators and fence wires
  - Check charger unit
  - Use voltmeter to check fence charge
- Scan regularly from the roof
- If a bear is spotted from camp:
  - Notify others immediately
  - Get on nearest roof (without approaching bear)

- Defer to senior crew members for instruction

## Field Guidelines

- Always let others know where you are (and where you are going)
- Alert crew when you leave and enter camp
- Before leaving camp, scan the horizon from a rooftop
- Never leave camp without a firearm or without an experienced crew member who has a firearm
- If you are in the field without a firearm:
  - Never leave sight of a crew member with a firearm
  - Never stray more than 50m from a crew member with a firearm
- Continuously monitor surroundings
- Never walk into blind spots
  - If you can't see through it, don't walk through it
- If a bear is spotted in the field:
  - Remain calm
  - Let others know immediately
  - Get together as a group
  - Move laterally and away slowly
  - If possible, stay upwind of bear
  - Coordinate actions with other crew members
  - Defer to senior crew members for instruction