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Department of  
Fish and Game

Division of Wildlife Conservation

STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE



**For Immediate Release**

## **Test Results for Polar Bear Involved in Fatal Attack**

**Feb. 3, 2023 (Juneau)** – Tests have been conducted on samples collected on January 18 from the polar bear involved in the attack in Wales, Alaska, that resulted in two deaths. In the event of animal attacks, these tests help us understand factors that may have influenced the animal's behavior. Dr. Kimberlee Beckmen, Wildlife Veterinarian of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's Division of Wildlife Conservation examined and collected samples from the polar bear head. The following is a brief synopsis of the pertinent findings from her analysis.

The polar bear was an adult male. The available evidence suggests that the bear was likely older and in poor body condition. A tooth was sent to a lab to determine the age of the bear, but that information will likely not be available for several months.

Standard tests on available tissues for pathogens that affect the brain and cause aggressive behavior including rabies, toxoplasmosis, distemper and avian influenza were negative. There is no definitive explanation as to why the bear was in poor body condition.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Alaska Nannut Co-management Council, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service extend our sympathies and support to the family of Summer Myomick and Clyde Ongtowasruk and the communities of Wales and St. Michael.

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