able to obtain revised instructions permitting him to 'take formal possession' of 'all lands and islands on your way' (Bernier 1906; Gourdeau 1906b). From this broad directive it was only a short step to the type of claim he made in August 1907. But it was a step the government was not yet prepared to sanction.

In the autumn of 1909 the situation was very different. Throughout September, newspapers were filled with stories about the competing claims of Frederick Cook and Robert Peary. Peary alleged that on his arrival at the pole he had annexed it and the surrounding area to the United States (Peary 1910: 297). The validity of the claim was doubtful, since the pole was located on water not land, and in any case Peary's expedition was not an official one. Nevertheless, a popular belief that the US owned the high Arctic might have taken hold. Laurier left no record of his thinking, but there can be little doubt that he now welcomed Bernier's action as a way to offset Peary's claim in the public mind.

Conclusion

In the short term, Bernier had achieved his goal. But in the long term, he remained dissatisfied. The Laurier government never backed up the 1909 proclamation with an official sector claim. Not until 1925, the year of Bernier's retirement, did Canada formally assert a claim extending as far as the pole (Cavell and Noakes in press). Until his death in 1934, Bernier energetically promoted the idea that he had taken possession of the entire archipelago for his country (for example, see Davies 1927), and he began a campaign to be formally recognised for this achievement, perhaps by a knighthood. The under-secretary of state for external affairs, O.D. Skelton, blocked the plan because he saw the 1880 transfer as the true foundation of Canada's northern sovereignty. In Skelton's view, Bernier's self-promotion might do serious harm to Canadian interests by distorting history (Skelton 1933). If Bernier had been content to be praised for his actual role as a man who did much to maintain (though not to create) Canada's ownership of the islands, he might have received much more of the recognition he craved.

The author is currently working on a wider study of the Laurier government's Arctic policy.

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A bowhead whale calf observed in northeast Greenland waters

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ABSTRACT. A bowhead whale mother and calf pair was recorded off the northeast Greenland coast in July 2009. This is apparently the first calf observed in the Spitsbergen stock of the bowhead whale since 1981.

Bowhead whales (*Balaena mysticetus*) distributed in the north Atlantic between East Greenland and Servernaya Zemlya are assigned to the Spitsbergen stock of the species. This stock was heavily depleted by whaling between 1611 and 1911, but has been protected since 1932 (Ross 1993; Reilly and others 2008). The Spitsbergen stock is currently listed as critically endangered (CR) by International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN 2009), due among other reasons, to the 'lack of any calf sightings in recent decades' (Reilly and others 2008). The number of observations in recent years has increased throughout the former distribution range, but the concurrent increase in observation effort has prevented a firm conclusion on population recovery (Gilg and Born 2005; Reilly and others 2008; Boertmann and others 2009; Wiig and others in press). Here we report the observation of a calf during the summer of 2009.

During an aerial survey for seabirds and marine mammals in the coastal areas of northeast Greenland, the permanent fast ice edge between 77° N and 80° N was surveyed on 26 July 2009 (for the method see Boertmann and others (2009)). At 78°

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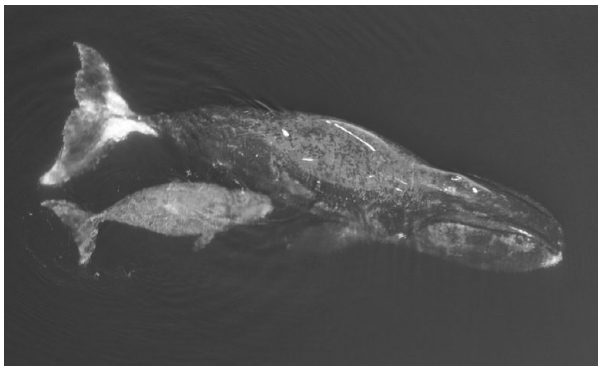


Fig. 1. A female bowhead whale in company with an estimated 3 months old calf photographed from aircraft on 26 July 2009 off the northeast Greenland coast.

24′ 48″ N, 16° 15′ 39″ W, 55 km due east of 'Danske Øer' on the Greenland coast a female bowhead whale in company with a calf was observed close to the ice edge. The length of the calf was, based on photographs, estimated to be some 40% of that of the female (Fig. 1). There is no information on the size of sexually mature females in the Spitsbergen stock, but they are >13.5 m long in the Bering-Chukchi-Beaufort Sea stock (Koski and others 1993). This particular female seemed to be rather small to medium in length, and it is fair to assume that it was approximately 15 m long, indicating a calf length of approximately 6 m.

No other bowhead whales were recorded during the survey despite survey transects in coastal waters between 69° N and 82° N incl. the northeast water polynya. However, fog prevented observations in some of the more important bowhead whale areas.

The calf was, due to its small size, certainly born in the spring of 2009. Calculating backwards and using data from the Bering-Chukchi-Beaufort Sea stock, the observed calf was born in April. The calf length at birth is estimated at 4.0–4.5 m with an early growth rate at 1.5 cm/day (Koski and others 1993). This is somewhat later than the birth dates given by William Scoresby (quoted from Reeves and Leatherwood 1985), who believed that most births in the Greenland Sea occurred in February and March, although he also refers to a newborn calf from April.

The only post-whaling record of calves in the Spitsbergen stock that the authors can trace is an observation in the Zemlya Frantsa-Iosifa [Franz Josef Land] archipelago in April 1981 '11 bowhead whales including calves' (Belikov and others 1984). However, a young bowhead whale was observed off east Greenland in June 2008 (Boertmann and others 2009). This and the calf reported here are apparently the first records of reproduction in the entire stock since 1981 and the first in the western part of the distribution range since the advent of protection.

The increase in observations, although inconclusive with regard to population trends, the young individual seen in 2008, and the calf reported here, are all positive signs for the Spitsbergen stock of bowhead whales, and suggest the beginning of a population recovery. Our observation shows that local reproduction may drive such a recovery, but we cannot exclude the possibility that immigration, facilitated by the reduced summer extend of the polar ice, from neighbouring stocks in Baffin Bay or in Bering Sea, also takes place.

The population estimates for the Spitsbergen stock 'in the tens' (Christensen and others 1992) or 'of a few tens' (for example Zeh and others 1993) are obviously not current as is pointed out by Reilly and others (2008). The many observations reported from east Greenland, the Greenland Sea, Svalbard and Zemlya Frantsa-Iosifa since 1980 (Moore and Reeves 1993; Korte and Belikov 1994; Gilg and Born 2005; Wiig and others 2007, in press; Boertmann and others 2009) and additional unpublished observations by the first author from the northeast water in August 2009 of 11 different individuals indicate a population of at least an order of magnitude higher than these figures.

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Knowledges, resources and legal regimes: the new geopolitics of the polar regions

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ABSTRACT. The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) of the United Kingdom will fund, from January 2010 onwards, a series of four seminars on the theme of 'Knowledges, resources and legal regimes: the new geopolitics of the polar regions'. Details are provided of the seminars and the outputs including the creation of a database outlining British based expertise in the humanities and social sciences. In the aftermath of the International Polar Year, the series should not only be timely but also strategic in the sense of clarifying the disciplinary and geographical range and extent of that expertise.

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Introduction

In 2009, the UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) awarded the two authors a research seminar series grant. These awards are envisaged to create seminar groups that

> 'are multi-institutional groups of academic researchers, postgraduate students and non-academic users who meet regularly to exchange information and ideas with the aim of advancing research within their fields. Where appropriate, Seminar Group members should be drawn from industry, Government Departments and other relevant organisations as well as from academic institutions. The ESRC would particularly encourage Seminar Groups explicitly designed to bring together leading researchers from across disciplines to identify new research agendas or capacity building priorities' (ESRC 2010).

Under the title 'Knowledges, resources and legal regimes: the new geopolitics of the polar regions', the seminar series is designed to investigate critically the contemporary Arctic and Antarctic. The polar regions have recently returned to widespread public attention. Media reports of melting sea ice, the plight of polar bears, the sustainability of indigenous livelihoods and the claiming of both the Arctic and Antarctic seabed have garnered international interest. Geopolitical machinations in both polar regions have been in evidence, from the building of new scientific bases to the commissioning of replacement icebreakers. Meanwhile, oceanographic and geophysical research has gathered momentum within the context of evidentiary submissions of extended continental shelves to the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf. Resource speculation, particularly in the Arctic, has added extra interest and verve to policy-related discussions. Such discussions increasingly now involve a range of participants, including not only the coastal states and the Arctic Council, but also regional organisations such as the European Union, extra-regional states such as China, environmental NGOs, and political representatives of indigenous peoples, such as the Inuit Circumpolar Council.

Scope of the award

This seminar series will undertake the following activities:

- hold four events to take stock of the current situation with emphasis placed on the prevailing geopolitical, legal, scientific, governance and human security dimensions of the Arctic and Antarctic.
- bring together an international, interdisciplinary network of researchers that will involve academics from geography, anthropology, political science, international law, economics, international relations, history and related disciplines, as well as other user communities within government, NGOs and the media.
- encourage the development of future research capacity in these areas by integrating participation by postgraduates, postdoctoral fellows and early career researchers through special bursaries for attendance, invitations to speak at seminars, and other opportunities to interact in the network.
- produce a website to publicise the seminar series and outputs from the seminars, which will be hosted at http://www.polargeopolitics.com
- produce a comprehensive directory of UK-based experts in the social sciences and humanities with research interests in the polar regions.
- finally, it is proposed to hold a follow up conference in late 2011 (the 50th year of the Antarctic Treaty's entry into force), which will focus on 'Approaches to polar geopolitics' and will seek to consolidate the UK-based polar studies network (for example the UK Polar Network)

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