

# Canadian Polar Bears Not 'Endangered'

by Gregory Murphy

The polar bear has managed to survive and thrive for about 250,000 years, through both an Ice Age, and the last Interglacial period (130,000 years ago), when there was virtually no ice at the North Pole. But on May 15, the U.S. Department of the Interior, bowing to Al Gore's "save the polar bear" mania, ruled that this resilient species is now officially "endangered."

Canada, where the majority of the world's polar bears reside, declined to follow the United States in this political decision. After reviewing the same information as the U.S. Department of the Interior, Canada's independent Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada decided *against* listing the polar bear as endangered.

What does Canada know that Al Gore and his gaggle of environmentalists have ignored?

## Where Is the Science?

A polar bear expert, just retired from his environmental post with the Canadian government, described some of the reasons for the different approach:

Inuit hunters, he said, who traditionally harvest polar bears as an important part of their economy, "have not reported a decline in polar bears; only two scientific studies have reported a decline in polar bear numbers.... Seven other population studies conducted during the period of ice decline identified viable populations capable of sustaining approximately historical harvest rates."

The scientist continued: "Most of the world's polar bears live within, or are associated with, the Canadian Arctic Archipelago, which has not experienced the same loss of ice as the Arctic Basin or Hudson Bay." He noted that there has been a decades-long decline in sea ice in some areas of the Arctic, which has been to the detriment of some polar bear populations.

"However," the scientist said, "the climate models that project a continued decline in sea ice, make that prediction based on a relationship between CO<sub>2</sub> and global temperature that does not seem to be holding up. There has been no increase in global temperature since 1998, and world temperatures have actually declined, if one looks only at the interval 2003 to 2008. Recent continued sea ice declines appear to be caused by an unusual influx of warm waters from the north Pacific and north Atlantic, not greenhouse gases.



M. Taylor

*Polar bears treating the dump in Churchill, Manitoba, Canada, as an all-you-can-eat buffet. The photo shows that polar bears don't listen to Al Gore and neither should you, when he spins his genocidal tale of how the bears will starve if the Arctic sea ice continues to melt. Historically, polar bears have moved farther inland, away from melting Arctic ice, in search of food and places to den.*

“If unnecessary, the hardship this decision will cause could reduce the credibility of scientific perspectives and undermine the cooperation from indigenous hunters that has been the key-stone to the polar bear conservation success story, since the International Agreement for the Conservation of Polar Bears was signed in 1974.

“The decision may actually work against conservation, by focussing resources and attention away from the information needs and co-management process that are most important to continued conservation of polar bears.”

The cold Winter of 2008 restored Winter sea ice coverage to normal levels, except in areas that had more than normal ice this year.”

“We will certainly do the experiment to find out who is right,” the scientist said. “Carbon dioxide levels will continue to increase, and we shall see the effect on global temperature and sea ice. If the climate modellers and some polar bear biologists are right . . . polar bears will decline in distribution, abundance—and harvesting may no longer be sustainable in some or all populations.

“However, if the weather becomes colder, the sea ice returns to former levels, and/or polar bears retain their current distribution and productivity,” he said, “then this decision will have been a premature and ill-conceived overreaction to a natural environmental fluctuation.”

“If this turns out to be a mistake,” the scientist said, “I hope there will be as much interest in accountability as there was in ‘saving the planet.’ If mistaken, this decision will harm Inuit hunters by unduly reducing their traditional economy, because the designation has implicit trade sanctions.”

### **‘Endangered’ Status Could Harm Bears**

Ironically, as the scientist pointed out, the designation of “endangered” could work to the disadvantage of those polar bears, by restricting the ongoing study of bear populations.

Polar bears look cute in photos, but in real life, they view both human beings and bears from outside their family circle as just another meal. Polar bears live about 25 to 30 years, and adult males can grow to a height of 8-8.5 feet and can weigh 880-1,350 pounds. Adult female polar bears are half the height of males, and usually weigh about 330-550 pounds.

Polar bear fur works like a life-preserver, so, contrary to Al Gore’s fairy tale, the bears can swim distances up to 200 kilometers without much difficulty. This makes polar bears not only smarter than Al Gore, but better swimmers as well.

Polar bear researchers have said that the bears moved to the Arctic ice, and developed the technique of using the ice as a way to trap their prey. This development is an advancement over the polar bear’s nearest relative, the grizzly bear, and shows that the polar bear is highly adaptive to changes in its environment.

*For more about the polar bear economy and politics, see “Polar Bears Are Smarter Than Al Gore,” by Gregory Murphy, [www.21stcenturysciencetech.com/Articles%202007/GW\\_polarbears.pdf](http://www.21stcenturysciencetech.com/Articles%202007/GW_polarbears.pdf). See also “Demographic and Ecological Perspectives on the Status of Polar Bears,” by Dr. Mitchell Taylor and Dr. Martha Dowsley, [http://scienceandpublicpolicy.org/images/stories/papers/reprint/taylor\\_polar\\_bears.pdf](http://scienceandpublicpolicy.org/images/stories/papers/reprint/taylor_polar_bears.pdf).*