



U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
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Bulletin

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Agency Recommends Polar Bear Status Remain as Threatened

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — As required by the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) recently completed a status review of the polar bear. After a thorough review of new and updated scientific information on the polar bear's biology and threats, FWS concluded that it continues to meet the [definition of a threatened species under the ESA](#).

In 2008, FWS listed the polar bear as threatened due to the loss of its sea ice habitat. This status review continues to support the conclusion that polar bears rely heavily on sea ice for survival and that loss of sea ice is continuing due to a rapidly warming Arctic. However, other stressors to the species identified in the status review remain relatively unchanged and are being actively managed by FWS and its partners.

Globally, there are 19 subpopulations of polar bears in the United States, Canada, Norway, Greenland and Russia. Two polar bear subpopulations in Alaska are shared across international boundaries; the Southern Beaufort Sea subpopulation with Canada and the Chukchi Sea subpopulation with Russia.

Last month, FWS released the Polar Bear Conservation Management Plan (CMP), which outlines actions that will help address some of the challenges polar bears face in the near-term. Actions include prevention of human-polar bear conflicts, protecting polar bear denning areas, minimizing the risk of contamination from oil spills, and collaborative management of subsistence harvest. While the CMP focuses on management actions for the two U.S. subpopulations of polar bears that live off the coast of Alaska, it will contribute to efforts to conserve polar bears in the other four range states of Norway, Greenland, Canada and Russia.

This status review, the CMP and other information on polar bear conservation can be found at:
<https://www.fws.gov/alaska/fisheries/mmm/polarbear/pbmain.htm>

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