

Media Alert

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Public Hearing on Listing the Polar Bear under the Endangered Species Act Scheduled in Washington, D.C.

What: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will hold a Public Hearing in Washington, D.C. to present information and take public comments on the 12-month petition finding and proposed rule to list the polar bear as “threatened” throughout its range under the Endangered Species Act.

When: Monday, March 5, 2007, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Where: Department of the Interior auditorium, 1849 C. St NW, Washington, D.C. (C St. Entrance)

The hearing will begin with a background presentation on the petition finding and the proposed rule. That will be followed by a question and answer session followed by testimony.

Anyone wishing to make an oral statement will be asked to register upon arrival at the meeting. Those wishing to deliver spoken comments at the meeting are encouraged to also provide a written copy of their statement.

The Service is particularly interested in comments concerning information on polar bear distribution, habitat selection, food habits, population density and trends, habitat trends, and effects of management on polar bears, the effects of sea ice change on the distribution and abundance of polar bears and their principal prey, the effects of other potential factors (such as oil and gas development, contaminants, ecotourism, hunting, and poaching), any populations of the species that may qualify as distinct population segments, and data and studies referred to within the proposal.

Hearings are also scheduled to be held in Alaska in Anchorage (March 1) and Barrow (March 7).

Written comments will be accepted at the meeting, or can be sent by April 9, 2007 by mail to: Supervisor, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Marine Mammals Management Office, 1011 East Tudor Road – MS 341, Anchorage, AK 99503; by email to Polar_Bear_Finding@fws.gov; or through the federal rulemaking portal at <http://www.regulations.gov/fdmspublic/component/main>. Details will be available at <http://alaska.fws.gov/fisheries/mmm/polarbear/issues.htm>.