

Timeline of Polar Bear Actions

- **February 16, 2005** - the Center for Biological Diversity files a petition with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to list the polar bear as threatened world-wide under the Endangered Species Act and to designate critical habitat. The petition can be found at:
<http://www.eswr.com/latest/polarbearpetition.pdf>
- **July 5, 2005** - Natural Resources Defense Council and Greenpeace, Inc. join the Center for Biological Diversity as petitioners.
- **October 11, 2005** - Petitioners send the Service a 60-day Notice of Intent to sue for violating the ESA by failing to issue a preliminary finding within the statutory 90 days.
- **December 15, 2005** - Petitioners sue the Secretary of Interior and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for failing to make the 90-day finding within the statutory timeframe.
- **December 27, 2005** - The Service receives additional information from petitioners. When the petitioners submit the new information, the Service extends the timeline for the completion of the 90-day and 12-month findings.
- **February 9, 2006** - The Service published a positive 90-day finding in the *Federal Register* and initiated a 12-month status review of the species as required under the Act.
- **March 9, 2006** - Petitioners send the Service a 60-day Notice of Intent to sue for violating the ESA by failing to issue the 12-month finding within 1 year from receipt of the petition.
- **June 27, 2006** - The Service and petitioners enter into a stipulated settlement agreement and the Service agrees to complete and submit to the Federal Register a 12-month finding for the polar bear on or before

December 27, 2006. Completion of the 12-month finding discharges the agency's obligations under the settlement agreement.

- **December 27, 2006** - In accordance with the court-approved settlement agreement, the Service submits a 12 month finding and proposes to protect the polar bear as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. The finding and proposed rule are published in the Federal Register on January 9, 2007. The text of the proposed rule is available here: http://alaska.fws.gov/fisheries/mmm/polarbear/pdf/Polarbear_proposed_rule.pdf
- Concurrent with the proposed rule, the Service opens a public comment period to solicit scientific information on the taxonomy, distribution, habitat, loss of sea ice, and threats to polar bears. The Service also held 3 public hearings – two in Alaska and one in Washington, DC – to solicit additional scientific information and hear concerns from the public. In total, more than 670,000 responses were received.
- **September 7, 2007** - USGS announces the findings of their comprehensive polar bear research, which includes information on the population of polar bears in the Northern and Southern Beaufort Sea and the Southern Hudson Bay; the loss of sea ice in the Arctic region; the reduction in available habitat for polar bears; polar bear population trends in response to the decrease in available habitat; and the likelihood of polar bear extirpation due to the loss of sea ice. The Service opens a comment period to allow the public time to review the USGS reports and respond to the new information, which closed on October 22, 2007. The USGS reports can be found here: http://www.usgs.gov/newsroom/special/polar_bears/
- **January 7, 2008** - To allow additional time for Service biologists to adequately evaluate and incorporate the USGS scientific information and public comments received, Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dale Hall announces a delay in the final decision.

- **April 28, 2008** - The United States District Court for the Northern District of California orders the Department of Interior and US Fish and Wildlife Service to make a final decision on whether or not add the polar bear to the list of threatened and endangered species by May 15, 2008. and threats to polar bears. The Service also held 3 public hearings – two in Alaska and one in Washington, DC – to solicit additional scientific information and hear concerns from the public. In total, more than 670,000 responses were received.
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- **May 15, 2008** - The Service published a Final Rule in the Federal Register listing the polar bear as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). This listing is based on the best available science, which shows that loss of sea ice threatens and will likely continue to threaten polar bear habitat. This loss of habitat puts polar bears at risk of becoming endangered in the foreseeable future, the standard established by the ESA for designating a threatened species.
- **May 15, 2008** - The Service also published an Interim Final Rule for the polar bear under Section 4(d) of the ESA. December 11, 2008 - Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne announced that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service finalized a Special Rule under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) providing for the conservation of the polar bear.