

Polar Bears: Are They in Danger?
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Many have been hearing about Global Warming. Most ignore the fact that it is happening and go on with their daily lives. Some even don't believe it is happening. But if we continue to ignore the fact that Global Warming is real we could lose a lot. One of those things is the majestic polar bear. Because of the melting of ice it is causing the polar bears to starve and drown. This large member of the bear family is going to disappear from the wild along with its habitat, if we don't do something now. The late arrival in snow and ice combined with the early ice break up is more deadly than you think for the polar bears.

The polar bear is the largest member of the bear family. Unlike other bears polar bears have water-repellant guard fur and dense under fur. Their fur can range from white to yellow. They also have small ears, teeth specialized a carnivorous rather than a omnivorous diet and large paddle-like feet with tiny papillae on the underside, which increase traction on the ice. A typical year for the polar bears consists of two things; hunting and fasting. The polar bears appetite mostly consists of seals. During the beginning of the winter the ice builds up creating the opportunity for the polar bears to hunt seals when they come up for air in the breathing holes that are formed in the ice. In open water the polar bears can't hunt the seals. So during the early spring and summer when the ice starts melting and the polar bears move on to the land they start fasting.

So basically what is happening with Global Warming is the ice is melting early making the polar bears go into fasting earlier than normal. Then when early winter comes along and the ice doesn't build up so quickly the polar bears fasting is longer, pushing some of them into starvation. Also every year there is less ice than the year before that.

The polar bears habitat is literally disappearing. The amount of sea ice has dramatically dropped. In 1979 the estimated amount of sea ice was 7 million square kilometers, while in 2007 the estimated was at about 2.92 million square kilometers. In 2007 the arctic sea ice area broke the record for the minimum for the arctic sea ice area. The US Geological Survey says that two-thirds of the world's 19 polar bears populations could be gone by 2050. In forty or fifty years polar bears will likely be eliminated from Alaska and the southern end of their range, where the ice is moving farther from the land. Recent studies have even shown the disturbing fact that because of the ice melting a unpredicted number of polar bears are actually drowning. Also studies have shown that polar bears now days are becoming thinner making them infertile.

These amazing creatures are starting to disappear before our very eyes. We need to do something now before it is too late. I suggest we change our ways. The cause of global warming is mostly because of the gas Carbon Dioxide emitted by certain things in our world. The biggest gas-emitting things are cars, power plants and meat. About 33% of U.S. carbon dioxide is from the burning of gasoline in the internal-combustion engines of cars. Vehicles with poor gas mileage contribute the most to global warming. For example a car with 12 miles per gallon will emit an estimated number of 800 pounds of carbon dioxide over a distance of 500 city miles. So poor gas mileage isn't only bad for your wallet, it is bad for the environment. If we find an alternative car that doesn't emit carbon dioxide and other gases bad for the ozone it would help salvage the arctic ice and save the polar bears.

The other big carbon dioxide emitting thing is power plants. In 2002 40% of U.S. carbon dioxide emissions were from the burning of fossil fuels for the purpose of

electricity. Coal accounts for 93% of the emissions from the electric utility industry. If we could use alternative energy sources it would reduce emissions, helping the polar bears.

Another thing that contributes a lot to the carbon dioxide emissions is beef, poultry, pork and other meats. The meat that contributes the most is beef. I know it is hard to believe but it is true. It turns out that producing a half a pound of hamburger releases as much gas as driving a 3,000 pound car nearly 10 miles. The FAO report found that current production levels of meat contribute between 14 and 22 percent of the 36 billion tons of carbon dioxide equivalent greenhouse gases the world produces every year. What can be done? I know that not everyone is going to give up meat for that. So we could improve waste management and farming practices to help. Also we could have methane-capturing systems. This would also help the polar bears and the environment.

Another way we could help the polar bears is to pass a new law. It would have to require finding alternative energy sources to help stop global warming. It should also help protect the polar bears. It may also include the stopping of oil and gas drilling. The law would be hard to pass, but it would be necessary. We have to help the polar bears. We can't ignore the fact that we need to do something about it now. Plus we also could do something individually by helping reduce our carbon foot print. Some ways we could do that is reduce and reuse. Reducing your garbage by 25% will reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 1,000 pounds a year. Recycle aluminum cans, glass bottles, plastic, and cardboard to reduce your home's carbon dioxide emissions by 850 pounds a year, which will make a big difference. We also could take the green way. Leave your car at home for two days a week and you can reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 1,590 pounds per year. You could walk, bike, or take public transportation. Another way is turn off your t.v,

video player, stereo and computer when you aren't using them. Turn off the lights when you leave the room. Other tips to help the world and the polar bears is Use programmable thermostats so you don't waste energy when you're at work or out of the house. Use lights that work off solar energy. They're quite common now and realistic in price. Change your heating and cooling filters every month. This not only saves electricity, but lengthens the life of the appliance. Dry your clothes on a clothesline instead of in a dryer. Not only will you save electricity or gas, your clothes will smell good, too! Plant trees. Set a goal of being CO2 neutral, which means the amount of CO2 that a family produces needs to be offset by planting trees that can transform it back into oxygen. Support the research and educational efforts for the polar bears by making a donation.

Protecting these animals from becoming endangered and maybe eventually becoming extinct in the wild should be our main concern. The best way to help them is to stop the further melting of the ice. Stopping global warming will not only help the environment, it will help the polar bears stay in their natural habitat, their beloved home. We can not afford to lose these extraordinary creatures. These magnificent predators might not be around in there natural habitat for your grandchildren or their children to see if we don't do something. We can't let our ignorance stand in the way of the polar bears safety. We have to do something now not later. Don't wait until it is too late to save the polar bears.

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