

# Population Decline of Polar Bears

*By Olivia Townsend*

## Procedure and method

I spent some time researching about polar bears and using my own knowledge of them to investigate the link between climate change and the population decline of polar bears. I tried to use good, reliable sources of information such as BBC, National Geographic, WWF and my Dorling Kindersley fact book about animals.

## Introduction

Polar bears are internationally known as a vulnerable species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The main concern for polar bears is habitat loss and less food because of climate change. Scientists predict that as the Arctic continues to warm, two-thirds of the world's polar bears could disappear within this century (source: Polar Bears International). However, it is also shown that if we as humans take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions soon, maybe polar bears can survive.

## My investigation into the link between climate change and the decline of polar bears

### Polar bear facts and why they are dying

- Rapid loss of sea ice is the main threat to the polar bear's long-term survival.
- Polar bears are found in the frozen wilds of places like the Arctic, which means as the earth warms up due to climate change there is a risk their habitat disappears.
- Their huge size and weight make them the largest living carnivores (meat eaters) on Earth! Because they are so big, they need a lot of food and there is not enough food to go around so less polar bears can survive.
- These magnificent mammals have an incredible sense of smell which they use to track their food, seals. They can sniff out prey from up to 16km away! But they are having to travel further and further to find food so even with this sense of smell, they still need to travel further.
- Climate change is causing them to travel further to find food, so it's a good thing that Polar bears are excellent swimmers. They have been spotted in waters over 100km offshore!
- Polar bears aren't quick enough to catch seals in open water so they depend on the ice as a hunting platform. Because the ice is melting polar bears have less hunting platforms to catch the seals
- Sadly, these incredible creatures are classified as "vulnerable". The biggest threat to polar bears is climate change. Rising global temperatures means that sea ice is melting earlier and forming later each year, leaving polar bears less time to hunt for food.
- Other challenges include pollution, increased commercial use of the Arctic, overharvest, disease, and inadequate habitat protection (denning and seasonal resting areas).

## Five ways to help polar bears

1. The most important thing is to stop the planet warming up because of climate change. If the governments, scientist, business people and all of us can help stop climate change then polar bears will be able to live freely in their habitats which will remain as they should do.
2. There are loads of really cool ways everyone can do their bit to help save the environment and reduce climate change. In the photo, you can see the book I bought about how we can save our planet - there are 500 ways to make a difference. Me and my family are working our way through it!
3. Raising awareness about Polar Bears for example on the 27<sup>th</sup> of February every year it is International Polar Bear Day. You could get involved by sharing things on social media, tell your friends about it, teachers could teach about it.
4. You could watch a live webcam and imagine how it would feel [Polar Bear Facts & Conservation - Polar Bears International](#) and watch the bear tracker to see how far they have traveled.
5. Adopt a polar bear to find out more about them and the money will go to charities such as WWF. Giving money to WWF means that they can work with governments, businesses, banks and communities to help the environment.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, I have identified the link between the decline of polar bears and climate change, why they are dying and what we can do to stop it. I believe that now people are raising awareness about it and there are lots of charities helping that if we all try, we can prevent polar bears from becoming extinct.

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*Just remember that it is never too late to save polar bears!*

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## References



ARTWORK BY REMPS IMAGINATION

POLAR BEARS AND CLIMATE CHANGE - POLAR BEARS INTERNATIONAL

ADOPT A POLAR BEAR | WWF