



# US ARCTIC PROGRAM FRAMEWORK

for healthy oceans that benefit  
the planet, people, prosperity, and peace

The Arctic is an extraordinary place, characterized by vast intact land- and seascapes. Some of the richest and roughest seas in the world can be found in the Arctic, as well as an extreme and variable climate, diverse human cultures whose traditions are closely tied to the bounty of the land and sea, and abundant wildlife.

Today, the Arctic is facing unprecedented challenges with climate change and other stressors impacting the polar regions three to five times faster than they impact the rest of the world. Global warming is causing the rapid loss of polar sea ice and threatening dramatic local loss of critical biodiversity and ecosystems essential not just to well-functioning global planetary systems but also to the Indigenous Arctic peoples that have been supported by them for thousands of years.

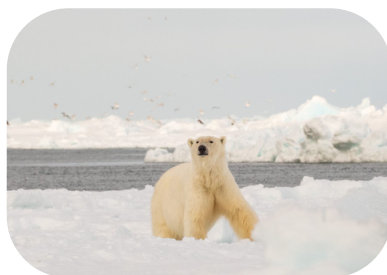
Accelerated polar sea ice melting is also opening the Arctic to activities that have been limited in the past. New expanses of open water and longer open water seasons are creating potential for expanded offshore oil and gas development, mineral exploration, fisheries, and shipping.

Immediate, coordinated action is needed to safeguard the biodiversity of the Arctic for future Arctic and global generations. **The Arctic Program vision is of healthy Arctic ecosystems that support the cultural, social, and economic needs of the people living there, and that protect the diversity of Arctic life.**

The WWF-US Arctic Program framework sits at the nexus of WWF's two pillars: area-based conservation and whole planet solutions. Our program priorities and goals are focused in three critical Arctic seascapes—Bristol Bay, the Arctic Ocean coast, and the Bering Strait.



**BRISTOL BAY**



**ARCTIC OCEAN COAST**



**BERING STRAIT**

Through establishing the enabling conditions for nature-positive conservation, deploying place-based programming at the intersection of conservation and local socioeconomic development, and identifying and deploying sustainable financing models, we have developed the following 3-to-5-year goals:

- Achieve permanent protection of the entire Bristol Bay watershed
- Enact operating standards to protect wildlife and communities for vessels transiting through Arctic waters
- Achieve permanent protection from unsustainable and high-risk natural resource extraction and development for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge
- Design and designate conservation areas in the Bering, Chukchi, and Beaufort Seas
- Secure populations of key Arctic marine mammal and seabird species
- Contribute to designing a regulatory and enforcement system for the Central Arctic Ocean Fisheries Agreement
- Support the transition of land and biological resource management to Indigenous-led co-management organizations throughout the US Arctic
- Design and implement traceability mechanisms for Alaskan fisheries products
- Improve habitat protection around Essential Fish Habitat in BSAI fisheries

To achieve our vision, the WWF-US Arctic Program strives to integrate Alaska Native-led stewardship, values, and sovereignty with WWF's science-based conservation practices. This integration will make WWF's science-based conservation more effective, equitable, and inclusive in order to achieve conservation results that benefit the planet and provide prosperity and peace for all the people of the US Arctic and beyond. The Program will accomplish this by working collaboratively with communities as informed, willing participants to jointly pursue wildlife and habitat conservation goals, and by engaging agency, NGO, and other community partners to work collaboratively and inclusively toward shared goals.

## WWF-US ARCTIC PROGRAM TEAM



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