



Polar Bear Conservation

WWF and polar bear issues



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Polar bear on ice pack, Russia.

KEY THREATS

- **Loss of sea ice** habitat through climate change
- **Increased industrial activities**, primarily oil and gas exploration and development
- **Unsustainable harvest** for some populations (both legal and illegal). WWF supports traditional sustainable harvest by Indigenous peoples
- **Loss of primary prey** due to sea ice reduction: impacts to availability and abundance

WWF knows polar bear issues. We have a polar bear scientist on staff who leads our global polar bear programme, as well as staff in field offices across the Arctic who have also worked with the bears for many years. We have been working to protect arctic wildlife and its habitat for 20 years.

POLAR BEARS NEED ICE

Polar bears need ice to survive. The ice acts as hunting and movements platform for the bears, but is also important to the entire Arctic food chain that produces the prey bears eat.

The sea ice is the very “soil” of the Arctic ecosystem as we know it today- supporting a

mostly hidden world of life from tiny zooplankton to the massive bowhead whale.

Loss of ice has direct impacts to bears beyond feeding. New research has documented swimming events as far as 600 kilometres, but long swims are costly and can be dangerous for the bears.

Our 2020 vision for polar bears

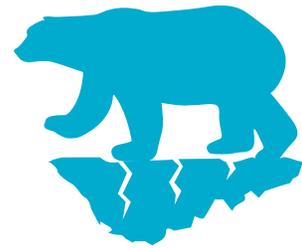
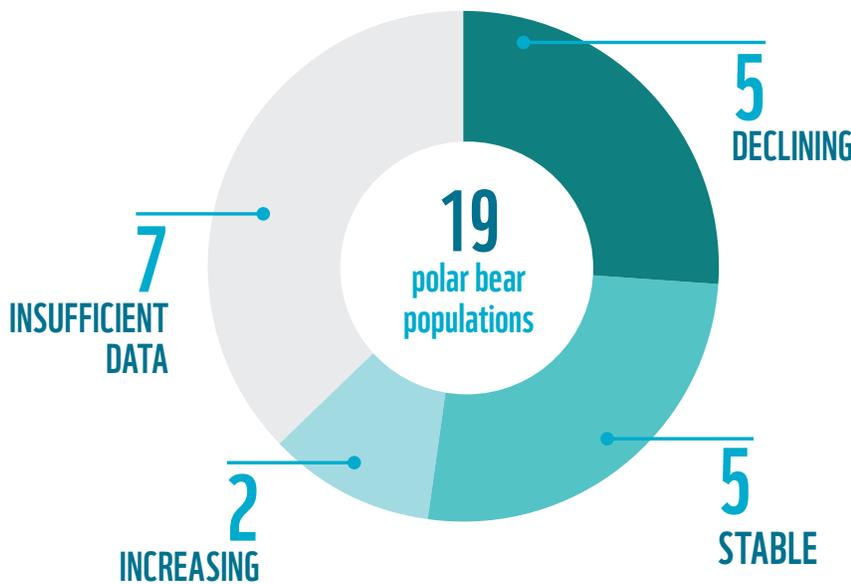
Polar bear populations remain viable around the circumpolar world, maintaining their ecological and cultural importance.

WWF SOLUTIONS

- Work with governments, industry, and individuals to reduce GHG emissions and mitigate climate change
- Ensure sustainable consumptive and non consumptive use of polar bears, by preventing activities that harm the species, such as unsustainable hunting, poaching, industrial impacts, illegal trade, and unsustainable tourism
- Protect critical habitat including important movement corridors, and denning habitat
- Prevent or remove direct threats from industrial activity such as oil and gas development, and arctic shipping

WWF ACTIONS

- Work with stakeholders to protect critical polar bear habitat throughout the Arctic
- Support for and communication of key science that will help us build resilience
- Engagement with indigenous/local communities and governments to reduce human-wildlife conflicts and work towards sustainable development opportunities



20-25,000
POLAR BEARS
IN THE WORLD

19
RECOGNIZED
SUBPOPULATIONS

13
SUBPOPULATIONS
FOUND WITHIN OR
SHARED BY CANADA

AT LEAST 5
POPULATIONS
IN DECLINE

We are seeing declines in the populations for which we have the best data. These declines are likely duplicated in related sub populations for which we do not have adequate data. The two increasing populations are rebounding after heavy hunting pressure was relieved.



Why we are here.

We are creating solutions to the most serious conservation challenges facing our planet, helping people and nature thrive.

panda.org

Information

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