

# Polar bears face extinction in 100 years

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Polar bears could become extinct over the next century as their habitat melts away, a report warns.

A group of polar bear specialists within the World Conservation Union -- an international organization of scientists from 181 countries and some 800 non-governmental organizations -- concluded that if warming in the Arctic continues to melt sea ice, many polar bears will starve. The loss of habitat would drive them ashore, or onto increasingly smaller floes, in their hunt for seals to eat, the Anchorage Daily News reported.

The polar bear specialists warned the population of the Arctic's top predator could plummet by 30 percent over the next 35 to 50 years. The group's outgoing chairman, biologist Scott Schliebe, said the polar bear should be rated as vulnerable on an international "Red List" of threatened species.

"Polar bears don't have a place to go if they lose the ice," said Schliebe, who oversees management of polar bears in Alaska for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

"It's now abundantly clear that we're looking at a retraction of the sea ice environment," he said. "The projection from the climatologists is very grim."

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