

## Polar Bears Can Wait

By Alexander Toldt

11:22, January 9th 2008

If “Heaven can wait,” why wouldn’t polar bears do the same?

Unfortunately, the global warming phenomenon is something that we cannot “erase and rewind”; if we don’t make an effort to stop it, the Earth will quickly transform into a melting, very blue planet.

The United States’ Fish and Wildlife Service announced on Monday that it would have to delay taking the decision on listing polar bears as threatened species due to global warming. Although polar bear cannot wait, the institution blamed its delay on the fact that the decision it has to take is a very difficult one. The deadline for deciding whether to list or not the polar bears as threatened species under the [federal](#) Endangered Species Act is today.

Dale Hall, the United States’ Fish and Wildlife Service’s director, said that the institution hoped to have a recommendation within weeks so that the Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne could announce his decision within a month.

According to Dale Hall, until now, the Fish and Wildlife Service has never been put in the position to decide on whether to declare a species threatened or endangered because of climate change. In fact, it is this alarming issue that complicated the decision. "That's why this one has been so taxing and challenging to us," Hall said.

The Fish and Wildlife Service’s announcement to delay the listing decision with one month (if not more, taking into account the complexity of the situation) was called by Andrew Wetzler, director of the Endangered Species Project at the National Resource Defense Council, “outrageous and unwarranted.”

On the other hand, Kassie Siegel, an attorney for the Center for Biological Diversity and lead author of the petition to list polar bears as threatened species, said that environmental groups would start legal action when the deadline passes Wednesday, with a formal notice to sue as required by the Endangered Species Act.