

## Laurie David: Things Go Better With Coke

Laurie David, Dec 2, 2005

Over the Thanksgiving weekend, Coca Cola unveiled its holiday advertising campaign. It features a beautiful animation of polar bears and penguins. Apparently no one at the company or its ad agency thought it ironic to use the two soft and cuddly icons to sell soda when they both are in serious danger of extinction due to global warming pollution. So serious, in fact, that three environmental groups (NRDC, Greenpeace, Center for Biological Diversity) recently filed the first legal action to officially declare a species at risk due to global warming.

Polar bears live in the Arctic and are totally reliant on sea ice which is vanishing faster than previously expected. The outlook is grim. Bears are so confused by rapidly changing weather cycles, they are

waking up too early and disrupting their entire life cycle. For every week of winter lost due to warming, adult polar bears lose 22 pounds because their food supply is so scarce. And thinner bears mean fewer cubs. Starting to get the picture? Not very soft and cuddly, is it?

Penguins face a similar plight. A few years ago, when two giant icebergs broke off the Antarctic ice sheet, it blocked the route from their breeding colonies to their feeding areas. As a result they had to walk an extra 30 miles to reach food -- no small task given that a penguin's average speed is one mile per hour. And, on the other side of the continent, thousands of emperor penguin chicks have drowned because the ice they

were living on broke up before they'd learned to swim.

Companies have been using the image of polar bears to sell everything from soda to insurance for years. Maybe it's time for corporate America to consider protecting a species that has been such a profitable sales tool. They say things go better with Coca Cola. For the sake of the penguins and the polar bears, let's hope so.

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