

**FTS-DOI-FISH & WILDLIFE**

**Moderator: Shane Wolfe**  
**December 27, 2006**  
**01:00 pm CT**

Coordinator: Welcome and thank you for standing by. At this time, all participants are in a listen-only mode.

During the question and answer session, please press star-1 on your touchtone phone.

Today's conference is being recorded. If you have any objections you may disconnect at this time.

I will now turn the call over to Mr. Shane Wolfe, you may...

Shane Wolf: ...yes, Secretary of the Interior, Dirk Kempthorne will be joining us shortly with an announcement about the status of the Polar Bear.

Also joining us on the line and providing a few comments after the Secretary is Director of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Dale Hall.

And joining us for questions and answers following that, Mark Myers, traditional spelling M-Y-E-R-S, Director of the US Geological Survey

and also Tom Melius, last name M-E-L-I-U-S, he is the Regional Director for the Alaska Region for the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

And with that, I will introduce Secretary of the Interior, Dirk Kempthorne.

Dirk Kempthorne: All right. Shane, thank you very much.

Today, the Interior Department of US Fish and Wildlife Service is proposing to list polar bears as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act.

We're making this proposal because the scientific review of the species by the Fish and Wildlife Service found that populations may be threatened by receding sea ice which polar bears use as a platform for many activities essential to their lifecycle including hunting for their main prey, arctic seals.

Polar bears are one of nature's ultimate survivors. They're able to live and thrive in one of the world's harshest environments, but there's concern that their habitat may literally be melting.

I like all Americans support conservation of the polar bear and we'll work in partnership on measures to achieve this goal.

The proposal I'm announcing today will be open for public comments for the next three months with the final decision on whether or not to list as threatened to come in 12 months.

I'm directing the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the US Geological

Survey to aggressively work with the public and the scientific community over the next year to broaden our understanding of what is happening with the species. This information will be vital to the ultimate decision on whether this species should be listed.

The total number of polar bears worldwide is estimated at between 20,000 and 25,000 individuals distributed throughout most ice-covered areas over the northern hemisphere in the United States, Canada, Greenland, Norway and Russia.

Canada's Western Hudson Bay population of polar bears in Canada has suffered a significant 22% decline.

Alaska populations have not experienced a statistically significant decline. The Fish & Wildlife service biologists are concerned that they may face such a decline in the future.

While the proposal to list the species as threatened sites the threat of receding sea ice, it does not include a scientific analysis of the causes of climate change.

That analysis is beyond the scope of the Endangered Species Act review process which focuses on information about the polar bear and its habitat conditions including reducing ice.

However, climate change science and issues of causation are discussed in other analysis undertaken by the administration.

The administration treats climate change very seriously and recognizes the role of greenhouse gases in climate change. The Service

extensively analyze the impact of both onshore and offshore oil and gas development on polar bear populations, and determine that development does not post a threat to the species.

The Service had its preliminary analysis of polar bear populations upon which this proposal is based - peer reviewed by 12 outside experts on polar bear biology.

I recognize also that harvesting, polar bears is a great social, cultural and economic importance to native people throughout much of the arctic. Therefore, maintaining a harvest within sustainable limits remains one of my priorities.

This subsistent harvest is carefully monitored to ensure it is consistent with polar bear conservation even if the polar bear is listed next year. And that, if that this decision has not been made, the Endangered Species Act would provide for the continuation of this subsistent harvest as long as it continuous to be consistent with the long-term conservation of the species.

Polar bears are already protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972. In addition, this species is protected by international treaties involving countries in the (bears range).

For example, earlier this month, the Congress passed the United States-Russia Polar Bear Conservation and Management Act of 2006 implementing a treaty with Russia designed to conserve polar bears shared between the two countries and I expect President Bush to sign this legislation into law. This treaty calls for the active involvement of native people and the organizations in Alaska and Russia in managing

persistent harvest levels.

Additionally, the treaty establishes a bilateral commission that will direct research and establish sustainable and enforceable harvest limits.

The Russians are ready to implement the treaty and the Interior Department is working with the State Department to coordinate US implementation of the treaty including appointment of commissioners once it has been presented to the President for signature and signed into law.

The proposed rule does not include a proposal for designating critical habitat. As part of the request for comments on the proposed rule, the Service is seeking information regarding measures to consider and reasons why any habitat should or should not be determined to be critical habitat for the polar bear if the listing becomes final.

I share the desire to conserve this species. When making our final decision on whether to list the polar bear a year from now as a threatened species, we will again consider the best available science and the efforts being made by states and other nations to protect the polar bear.

Our goal ultimately is to take in mind the best science available with the power of working hand-in-hand with states, and tribes, and foreign countries, industry and other partners, to minimize the threats to polar bears and to conserve this great icon of the arctic for future generations.

With that I'm going to turn to Dale Hall for some comments before we then open this up to questions.

Dale Hall: Thank you Mr. Secretary.

I think I would like to just highlight three points that the Secretary has mentioned in his discussion with you.

The first point is that we'll start with the facts that we know of what has happened. We know that the polar cap has been reduced by an estimated 20% over the last 20 plus years and a rate of permanent ice loss that's as much as 9.8% per decade.

And we know that the West Hudson Bay in Canada has experienced a bear population decline of between 20% and 22%. And in that decline, they were - a prelude to that was a lost in the weight of some of the adults, a lack of cub survival and recruitment, and a general lessening of the health of the adult bears and the young prior to then going into a population decline.

While we do not have a statistically valid population trend downward in the Southern Beaufort Sea, we do see the same sorts of physical health criteria that were witnessed in the West Hudson Bay.

So over the next 12 months, we will be looking very hard at the reliability, the probability if you will, of the models that are out there. How accurate are they, both in the sea ice melting and in the timeline in which it melts because 45 years has been established as the foreseeable future for the polar bear. That's generally three generations from the International Union of Conservation and the naturalists

recommended that as well as other polar bear experts and we accepted that.

We'll be evaluating the sea ice models and the polar bear population models that we have to try and determine what is reliable and what isn't.

And then the final point that I would like to stress is, there are five factors that must be analyzed in listing a species under the Endangered Species Act as threatened or endangered.

Only one of those factors was found to be relevant for the polar bear and that was the range in extent of its habitat, the polar ice.

And so oil and gas was analyzed thoroughly and found not to be a threat, subsistent harvest was analyzed thoroughly and found not to be a threat. So the other activities there going on in Alaska were not found to be a threat to the bear.

This is directly tied to the sea ice loss and the ultimate dependents of the polar bear on drift ice and on its prey species in being able to hunt the seals which are its main prey species.

So with that, Secretary or Shane, I would turn over and let you...

Shane Wolfe: We are ready to take some questions from the participants on the call now.

Thank you operator.

Coordinator: Thank you sir.

We will now begin the question-and-answer session. If you would like to ask a question, please press star-1 on your touchtone phone at this time. You will be prompted to record your name. If your question has been asked, you can withdraw it by pressing star-2.

One moment for the first question.

(Andrew Revkin), go ahead please.

(Andrew Revkin): Hi thanks for holding this briefing.

As the recent estimates I've seen for the total polar bear population (of it) is it's thought to be increasing, how much of your focus is on - I mean, how - is this just one population you would need to find that has trouble that would - could get you to a threatened listing?

Shane Wolfe: Yeah, Dale why don't you respond to that.

Dale Hall: The current global population of polar bear is estimated between 20,000 and 25,000. We have information on very few of the 19 populations that are out there. Very little recent information.

We have pretty substantial information on Hudson Bay population that I've discussed and the USGS has done an excellent job in looking at the Southern Beaufort Sea populations.

We have not been seeing increases in polar bear except possibly in localized areas. And there, we are uncertain as to whether or not



there's actually an increase in the population numbers in that area or whether or not the loss of sea ice drift is seen simply to push more bears on land than we were normally used to seeing.

But we are looking at this globally, and if we can find out some connections between the sea ice retreat and polar bear reduction in population numbers in certain areas, and if the models that Steve Amstrup and others at USGS will be running on the relationship between those factors that we talked about earlier of the health of the bears and the reduced populations, we believe that that would be legitimate to be thinking about that wherever the bear occurs.

If the sea ice is retreating and they are not able to do their normal feeding on seals and be mobile on drift ice and they depend a lot on drift ice to conserve energy to move around in and catch their prey, then we believe that there is a correlation there. But we'll need to substantiate that.

And right now, we really don't have a substantiation for that but the information that we do have is a strong indicator that we should move to this next step which is going in another 12 months and do more evaluations.

(Andrew Revkin): Thanks.

Shane Wolfe: Before we move to our next question, let me just say two things that I failed to mention.

This - we're taking questions from reporters for a new (unintelligible) list on this call and also, if you would please state your name in

addition to your affiliation.

Thank you, next caller?

Coordinator: The next question is from Mike Edgell from Global National (Unintelligible).

Go ahead.

Mike Edgell: I'm really not totally clear on the - who might be to blame.

Are you saying that your research found that northern industry in the arctic, in Alaska, is not to blame, but domestic industry in North America maybe?

Dirk Kempthorne: No. The analysis done by US Fish & Wildlife Service on this proposed rule is stating that oil and gas development is not a factor, period. That the factor that's causing the Fish & Wildlife Service to propose this rule is that the sea ice is melting which is the prime habitat for the polar bear.

So again, as they look at those five factors, one of those factors about oil and gas development is not one of those factors that is a threat to the polar bear.

Dale, I don't know if you want to add to that.

Dale Hall: Yes sir, I would.

The polar bear spends the vast majority of his life on ice -- on the drift

ice on the solid ice. There are maternity dens that we know of where they can come on shore where there is snow and build their dens, you know, there's some maternity activities there.

And then they move. They tend to move back offshore or back on to the ice because their main prey is the seal. And so, they spend the vast majority of their lives out on the ice.

And so, what we're saying about oil and gas exploration on and offshore is that we have seen no demonstrated impact from oil and gas operations on the polar bear's life history.

And what we're saying is that the cause of us taking this next step is the warming of the climate to reduce the sea ice that the polar bear depends so much upon.

Mike Edgell: So I guess the question is who is to blame for that, the warming of the ice.

Dale Hall: That's not an analysis that is either required or that we have the expertise to perform under The Endangered Species Act with the Fish & Wildlife Service biologists.

Shane Wolfe: As we prepare for the next question, let me state before we lose any callers that materials including the press release and frequently asked questions are posted at our Web site, [www.doi.gov](http://www.doi.gov), and they include links to several Fish & Wildlife Service Web sites as well.

Dale Hall: Can I put a little (tag) on the end of that question?

The administration has spent approximately \$29 billion trying to find the answer to the last question the gentleman asked, but other people and other organizations outside the Fish & Wildlife Service are dealing with that.

Shane Wolfe: Next question please?

Coordinator: The next question is from Steve Milloy. Please state your affiliation.

Steven Milloy: I'm Steve Milloy from Fox News.

I guess my question is what is the real world goal of this rulemaking if the main legal reason for undertaking this rulemaking is that the polar bears habitat is shrinking?

Well, I mean, there's nothing that could be done about that. There's no thermostat out in the arctic that can be turned down.

So, you know, obviously, the polar bear is going to be moving south. We're going to allow - apparently harvesting will be allowed. I think this is going to be the first time in the history of endangered species where we're going to have harvesting of an endangered species.

You know, what are we trying to do here?

Shane Wolfe: Yeah, Dale?

Dale Hall: Okay. I guess we have two or three in there.

Let me start with the harvest aspect of it. We certainly - now, we do

have examples where threatened species are harvested under the Endangered Species Act where the harvest either has a benefit in helping us learn more about the movements of the species or whatever or if they cause us no harm.

Threatened stage just allows those sorts of permissions to be given. And, you know, we have bowhead whales and sea otters, both that have the ability to be harvested and yet they're both on the list.

And I'm sorry, I missed the first part of your question.

Steven Milloy: So is the purpose in just to protect the polar bear as it inevitably - the population to move south into areas populated by humans and in effect, you know, to limit whatever harvesting there is because nothing can be done about the polar bears habitat?

There's no one - no climate scientist will say that, you know, we can reverse what's going on in the polar region, whatever that is.

Dale Hall: I think it's important to remember the mandates of the law here. The Endangered Species Act, and I mentioned the (unintelligible) - the five factors that we analyzed.

That fifth factor says, manmade or natural causes for the decline of the species and anyone of those factors -- loss of habitat, over harvest or overutilization, disease and predation, lack of regulatory protection is in place and then that fifth one of natural or manmade -- anyone of them qualify the species to be placed on the list whether or not we have the answers as to how to solve the problem.

Steven Milloy: Yes. I understand that. And my original question is, so what is the real world goal here since we can't stop the shrinking habitat. What is the real world goal?

Dale Hall: Well, the real world goal is in two steps right now.

The first step is 12 months from now. To walk through and try to understand what we know or don't know, what we can rely on, what we can't rely on, so that a decision can be made as to whether or not we'll place it on the list.

If it is placed on the list and if we reach that point, then we would follow the normal process of trying to pull together all of the people that can help make this happen from international to national to Alaskan to the Native Americans all of the scientists that we have, all - everyone to try and sit down and help us (crack) a recovery plan. And that's where those sorts of questions would be vetted out.

But the main thing right now is to get through the first 12 months and understand the signs in what we can rely on and what we can't.

Steven Milloy: Okay. So right now, you don't have any idea whether in fact the polar bear can be safe without, you know, perhaps, you know, infringing on the rights of the folks in Alaska for example?

Dale Hall: We're not at the point be able to answer that question based on the analysis and the depth of what was done so far.

Steven Milloy: Okay. Thank you.

Shane Wolfe: Next question please?

Coordinator: The next question is from (Andrew Boncome). Please state your affiliation.

(Andrew Boncome): Thanks very much. (Andrew Boncome) from the Independent Newspaper of London.

Mr. Secretary, thank you. In your opening remarks, you pointed out very clearly that the melting of the ice was the cause of this lost of habitat.

And then you're also certifying (unintelligible) -- you could correct me -- to the administration to treat some climate change (unintelligible) and recognizes the role of greenhouse gases.

In these circumstances, under the 1973 Act, is the administration now obligated to act to curve the emission of greenhouse gases and if not, why not?

Dirk Kempthorne: (Andy), the - at the end it was stated earlier with the Endangered Species Act that the element we're working with right now, that whole aspect of climate change is beyond the scope of the Endangered Species Act.

Now, as also been pointed out with President Bush, with his administration, where there's been an investment of \$29 billion dealing with this issue of climate change.

So in a different venue, there will continue to be discussions,

identification of the science, discussion as to what efforts can be done, but we're actually seeing that there has been some reductions here in the United States.

So we're going to continue that effort, but that is outside the scope of this. What we're talking about right now with the Endangered Species Act is one species, our polar bear.

And during the next 12 months, will be an evaluation of that animal, what is happening to its habitat and what sort of mitigations could be brought forward that could be of help to that species.

(Andrew Boncome): Thanks very much. (If there's time), if I may follow up.

If you're saying the Act obliges you to try and protect the habitat, and you're also admitting that, you know, the administration sees the link between climate change and greenhouse gases, why are you not therefore legally obliged to try and deal with these greenhouse gases?

Dirk Kempthorne: Again, it's not part of the Endangered Species Act.

Dale I have enough -- do you have any - further on that?

Dale Hall: Well, you know, the President set a goal for 18% reduction in greenhouse gases I believe in 2012. And that's happening in other aspects, under other mandates and funding sources.

Sir, to be honest with you, we don't have the expertise in the Fish & Wildlife Service to make those kinds analysis. We're biologists by trade and so, we deal with the fact they're out on the landscape. And in



this case, we're dealing with the fact of reducing ice and that's what we're able to analyze.

(Andrew Boncome): Okay. (Thank you very much).

Shane Wolfe: Next question please?

Coordinator: The next question is from Steve Davies. Please state your affiliation.

Steve Davies: Yes. I'm with the Endangered Species & Wetlands Report Newsletter.

Just to follow up a little bit. You were saying climate change is beyond the scope of ESA completely. Mr. Secretary, you said we're actually seeing there have been some reductions in the United States. We're you talking about greenhouse gases?

Dirk Kempthorne: Well, efforts in this whole environmental effort as well.

Steve Davies: Okay, so no reductions and you're not talking about greenhouse gas reductions in the US.

I just want to be sure you were saying - because you weren't referring to polar bears, right?

Dirk Kempthorne: Right. That's right.

Steve Davies: Okay.

One other question on the peer reviews, will those be made available?

((Crosstalk))

Dirk Kempthorne: Dale, can you respond to that?

Dale Hall: The peer review information is - (as we're surveying) the part of the records that we will have, that will be available for review.

Steve Davies: Okay.

Dale Hall: And the peer review is on the status review itself and then we took the status review and the peer review and put the rules together.

Steve Davies: Right.

Just one quick one. On the five listing factors, there is - I think you're mentioning Director Hall manmade...

Dale Hall: Yes, the fifth thing...

Steve Davies: ...habitat modification...

((Crosstalk))

Dale Hall: ...manmade impacts.

Steve Davies: Right, right.

And, you know, just to follow up on what the guy from the Independent was talking about, I mean we do cause pollutions so how can we not look at that?

I mean if there's a mountain top mining operation that is depositing filling into stream and, you know, endangering a mussel or some kind of species there, I mean that's a direct impact.

But this is something where many people believe that the climate is changing. The climate, you know, that change is causing the sea ice to melt.

So, I don't know. How do you say that's beyond the scope of the ESA completely?

Dale Hall: Well, I'm not sure that we're not twisting some questions here, but let me answer it this way.

Steve Davies: Sure.

Dale Hall: We - if we have pollution going on to a stream or if we have (unintelligible) that's been filled or if we have various activities that our expertise allows us to analyze and make the conclusion on, then we do that.

In the case of atmospheric and climate change, we don't have that kind of expertise. So we depend on NASA, we depend on USGS, we depend on others to do these kinds of analysis for us and then we understand what it is they're telling us and try and work with this science to understand what the reasonable prediction is, is what really will happen.

Steve Davies: Uh-huh, okay.

Is there any explanation in the proposal about warranted but precluded? Did you consider that as an option and how do you justify proposing the bear is threatened when there are other species out there that are, you know, warranted but precluded?

Dale Hall: Well, normally, as you know, because, you know, I visited with you before and with respect to the work that you do, you know that the warranted but precluded is generally used when we get a petition...

Steve Davies: Uh-huh.

Dale Hall: ...and we say that we don't have the staffing or the funding or there are other high priority species ahead of this one to work...

Steve Davies: Right.

Dale Hall: ...and that is when we use the warranted but precluded.

Steve Davies: Uh-huh.

Dale Hall: In this case, Alaska was able to work for petition and was able to work through the court settlement timeframe and so, it seem to us to be a little disingenuous to say warranted but precluded when we've done the work to analyze the information at least to this stage.

Steve Davies: So, obviously -- and this is my last one guys...

Shane Wolfe: (You know), that's three questions that I've counted thus far...

Steve Davies: Okay. Where'd you got the money in the budget?

Shane Wolfe: ...Mark Myers is going to offer a thought.

Mark. Myers: Yeah, just a little bit clarification with the Secretary's statement. I think what has occurred is an actual decrease in the rate of increase of CO2 and other greenhouse gases.

Shane Wolfe: That's Mark Myers, the US Geological Survey Director.

Next question please.

Steve Davies: Thank you.

Coordinator: Our next question is from Elizabeth Shogren. Please state your affiliation.

Elizabeth Shogren: This is Elizabeth Shogren with National Public Radio.

If you can't propose reducing emissions of greenhouse gases to help the polar bears, what real tangible things can you do to help the polar bears? Or will you be able to do nothing?

Dale Hall: Do you want me to go ahead Secretary?

Dirk Kempthorne: Yes that would be fine Dale.

Dale Hall: Okay. I think the (unintelligible) part that we were discussing a little while ago, we're now analyzing should even a warrant be in place on the endangered species list as a threatened species.

If we reach that point, that question is exactly the kind of question that we would ask a recovery team to advise us on, what are those feasible, practical things that can actually be done to try and help the polar bear. And we formed this recovery teams in order to give us advice from a lot of different perspectives.

And they're always...

((Crosstalk))

Elizabeth Shogren: ...I think they're in (Excel).

Dale Hall: What?

Oh, okay...

Elizabeth Shogren: No, I'm not. I'm just listening.

Dale Hall: And those perspectives are always very valuable because they are from different views and they come up with some pretty innovative ideas sometimes in recovery plans.

So I would not want to prejudge what our recovery team that we would ask to come and advise us on how to try and address it if we reach the point of listing at this point.

Shane Wolfe: Next question please?

Coordinator: The next question is from (Allison Taylor). Please state your

affiliation,

(Allison Taylor): CBS Evening News.

This is a symbolic designation and are there going to be attached provisions that would ensure the ice habitat is not in jeopardy?

Dale Hall: Well, I'm not sure what you mean by symbolic because we're following a (letter) of the law here in analyzing the signs as we know it.

We have a court settlement. We have a petition to list the bears threatened then we - we're delayed in getting that underway and so, we reached an agreement with the plaintiffs on a court settlement date -- today -- to have an answer at the 12-month signing stage. And that's what we're going through.

The law requires us to analyze the information that we're analyzing and to make decisions on various points along the way. And this is one of those required points.

Getting on to the endangered species list, finding species is a step-wise progression.

If we're doing it internally, we would spend time analyzing information first then deciding whether or not we should propose, then proposing, then getting more information from the public and from other scientists and then moving on to whether or not we should list.

In the case of a petition, we analyze the petition to see if it has

adequate information to warrant further review. And if it does, then we pick up and do that next step which is to analyze the information and decide whether or not it should be proposed for listing.

That's what we have done here and so, it is - it's not a symbolic effort for us. It is our responsibility under the law.

(Allison Taylor): All right, and what about attached provisions? Are they going to be attached provisions that would ensure that the ice habitat is not jeopardized?

Dale Hall: Well, I'm not sure what you mean by attached provisions.

When we list the species, we placed it on the list of threatened or endangered species. We identified in the rule what the causes are and the only cause that we can identify now that warrants further review is the ice melting.

And then once we list the species, we move in to a recovery planning process where we get that kind of advise on what we could do that's feasible and practical. And out of that comes the measures that we work with others to try and implement.

(Allison Taylor): One just quick follow up please. Are you acknowledging that the ice melting is due to global warming?

Shane Wolfe: Okay, (Allison), this is your last question.

(Allison Taylor): Okay, I promise. Okay.



Dale Hall: Yes, ma'am. We are.

(Allison Taylor): Are - so the answer is yes, you're acknowledging that?

Dale Hall: Yes ma'am.

(Allison Taylor): Thank you.

Shane Wolfe: Next question please?

Coordinator: Next question is from Jason Moore. Please state your affiliation.

Jason Moore: Channel 2 News up in Anchorage Alaska.

I was wondering if you're aware of polar bear denning areas in either the National Petroleum Reserve or in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge?

Dale Hall: Secretary, if you would, I'd like our - there's some of our Alaska biologists out here getting their information here to try to answer it. We do know that there are a little over 60 denning sites across the north slope, but I'll turn it to Scott to answer that question.

Could you give your name to them please?

Scott Schliebe: Sure. My name is Schliebe with the US Fish & Wildlife Service.

Man: Scott, could you please spell your name as well?

Scott Schliebe: My last name is spelled S-C-H-L-I-E-B-E.

And in answer to your question, we are aware of denning that (takes place) by polar bears within the NPRA, on the coast - northern coast of Alaska along Barrier Islands within some of the riverine in (bear) habitat, as well as further to the east in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

This information comes to us from satellite telemetry studies that are being conducted by the US Geological Survey Group and have been conducted over a series of years. Telemetry goes back to the mid 80s and our database is quite strong on den site selection in (Fidelity) to the barriers.

So I do think that we have a wealth of information on how bears are selecting some of this - for some of these areas for denning and it's certainly going to be a very beneficial piece of information that we will look at.

And we've already been looking at and quite closely actually in working closely with the operators up on the north slope in order to mitigate, minimize or eliminate effects of human activities that one day may occur within denning habitats.

So we'll continue to operate in that passion in, you know, denning habitat. It's probably - and the event of denning is probably one of the most important polar bear functions during their lifecycle. This is the way that new animals are recruited into the population.

Jason Moore: With - the administration just opened up large areas of the National Petroleum Reserve to oil and gas leasing. Is - I mean, given the

uncertainty of this listing, Mr. Secretary, do you think it's - I think important to maybe slow down on that? Or what are your views of that leasing?

Dirk Kempthorne: No, my views at this time are, Number 1; we'll always abide by the most stringent of environmental standards. But also in this proposed rule, it's very clear that the oil and gas activity in that area does not pose a threat to the polar bear.

And also, in fact, they have been effective partners - the industries. So - no, I think that we're - we can proceed while on the parallel course in the next 12 months doing this analysis by the Fish & Wildlife and by the USGS.

Shane Wolfe: We have time for just a couple more questions.

Next question please.

Coordinator: Our next question is from Stephanie Kirchgaessner. Please state your affiliation.

Stephanie Kirchgaessner: Hi, it's Stephanie with the Financial Times.

This is a question for the Secretary. I have a - just a clarification.

So right at this moment, a discussion of the reason behind climate changes beyond the remit of department, so that could change if the polar bear were listed as threatened? Or is that never going to be on the table no matter how it is classified?

Dirk Kempthorne: No. That is not a factor with the Endangered Species Act.

Now, again, we need to just concentrate and focus on the species and its habitat.

But again, referencing that the Bush administration and the (unintelligible) administration has made investments of \$29 Billion on this issue and that will continue as...

Stephanie Kirchgassner: But...

Dirk Kempthorne: ...the Scientific Community keeps working to make a determination what is occurring, how does that fit into historic realities, what is the projection for the future.

Stephanie Kirchgassner: So it's the estimation - for me, that it deserves to be on the list and put on the list, then the department would turn to other agencies within the Bush administration to make a determination of what was causing the habitat to change.

Dirk Kempthorne: Well again, that - I cannot project that. I mean, that's part of what the 12-month is about.

Dale, you want to add anything to that?

Dale Hall: During the 12-month period, we will be going - we've already gone (international) and US Geological Survey, we've gone to Alaska to the biologists up there, we've gone to international scientists.

I'll reiterate that the peer review of our status review on the bear which

was the foundation for writing the rule literally had scientists from every country that has polar bears during the peer review. We had - we asked for 12 people to review, 10 did and all 5 countries had to have their scientist there.

That's a process that we will simply keep going down in order to better understand over the next 12 months exactly what the right path is.

Stephanie Kirchgassner: So what I guess - and just to (unintelligible), what I really just don't understand is how it is that the department could make a very firm determination today before the 12-month is over that the oil and gas industry has nothing to do with the changing habitat. That, that is beyond the remit of the department to decide what is going on with the climate change.

How is one - how can one be such a firm conclusion and then not making any sort of conclusion on another question?

Dale Hall: The proposal to list species is just exactly that it is a proposal. If you want to look at that way as a draft that we would move forward with and it contains what we know today.

And all of the 30 years of experience that we have with the oil and gas industry upon the north slope has proven to us so far that the oil and gas industry has had no negative impact on polar bears.

That's all we're saying on these and it's open - it will be out there for 90 days for the public to give us comments and give us information that maybe we don't have.

Shane Wolfe: Before we take our last question which will be the next question - I want to recognize Lynn Scarlett, the Deputy Secretary of the Interior who has joined the call.

Lynn, are you with us?

Lynn Scarlett: Yes I am, Shane.

Shane Wolfe: Do you have a couple of points about some of the questions?

Lynn Scarlet: Yes. There's been a lot of discussion in the questions about the administration's position on climate change. And I just wanted to amplify the responses that you've heard so far on that.

You've heard both Dale Hall and Secretary Kempthorne in the case that the administration has expanded some \$29 billion on both climate research as well as technology development to address greenhouse gases.

But I want to add to that, that in addition, we have over 60 measures ranging from mandatory measures to voluntary measures and partnerships designed to reduce greenhouse gases and greenhouse gas intensity that is the level of greenhouse gases emitted in relationship to economic productivity.

And those measures include partnerships with 14 different industry sectors to help us reach our 18% reduction in greenhouse gas intensity by 2012 as well as, for example, mandatory requirements for appliance efficiency.

Many of you are familiar with the light truck fuel emission standards that were promulgated and a variety of other measures along those lines.

So I want to underscore that well.

This particular proposal, to list, is focused on the ESA. There are many other measures being undertaken on climate change.

Shane Wolfe: Thanks very much, Lynn.

This is the last question. Go ahead please.

Coordinator: The last question is from Alex deMarban. Please state your affiliation.

Alex deMarban: Hi. I'm with the Anchorage Daily News in Alaska.

And oil and gas development is not a relevant factor, that's been said earlier. I just wanted to know if this - if polar bears are listed as threatened and how will oil and gas development be affected.

Dale Hall: This is Dale Hall.

If it is listed as threatened, then the oil and gas industry would have to - whoever is permitting it from the Federal government standpoint would have to (unintelligible) with Section 7 Government-to-Government under the law Section 7 Consultation which they already do for the (unintelligible) and whoever species is listed, this would be another factor that they would have considered in environmental

impact statements in describing that the potential impacts of the action and then the Section 7 Consultation that we would give them dealing with that. And that primarily would be the impact to oil and gas that will occur.

Alex deMarban: Okay. Has (unintelligible) or any other animal that's listed as endangered actually halted any kind of project or slowed it down? Any kind of oil and gas development project in Alaska?

Man: Well as you know, I'm not with the National Marine Fisheries Service but I understand that whales - there had been issue at least to be considered in the past offshore, but that's the only one that I can recall.

Alex deMarban: Okay. Thank you.

Shane Wolfe: All right. Thank you very much everyone.

Before I close, I just wanted to reiterate that [www.doi.gov](http://www.doi.gov) has the press release announcing of this proposed listing as threat of the polar bear and other materials including photos and downloadable video.

Thank you very much for joining the call.

Coordinator: At this time you may disconnect. Thank you for attending.

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