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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[Docket No. FWS–R7–ES–2015–0141]

[FXFR133707PB000–156–FF07CAMM00]

Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Initiation of a 5-Year Review of the Polar Bear

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice; request for information.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce our intention to conduct a 5-year status review under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA), for the polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*). A 5-year status review is based on the best scientific and commercial data available at the time of the review; therefore, we are

requesting submission of information that has become available since the last review of the species in 2008.

DATES: To ensure consideration of your comments in our preparation of this 5-year status review, we must receive your comments and information by **[INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]**.

However, we will accept information about any species at any time.

ADDRESSES: Please submit your information on the current status of the polar bear by one of the following methods:

- U.S. mail or hand-delivery: Public Comments Processing, ATTN: FWS–R7–ES–2015–0141, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, MS: BPHC, 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041–3803; or

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting information to Docket No. FWS–R7–ES–2015–0141.

For more about submitting information, see **Request for Information** in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section, below.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Hilary Cooley, Polar Bear Lead, Marine Mammals Management, by telephone at 907–786–3800. Individuals who are hearing impaired or speech impaired may call the Federal Relay Service at 800–877–8339 for TTY assistance.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: We are initiating a 5-year status review under the ESA for the polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*).

Why Do We Conduct A 5-Year Review?

Under the ESA (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), we maintain Lists of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants (which we collectively refer to as the List) in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) at 50 CFR 17.11 (for animals) and 17.12 (for plants). Section 4(c)(2)(A) of the Act requires us to review each listed species' status at least once every 5 years. Further, our regulations at 50 CFR 424.21 require that we publish a notice in the Federal Register announcing those species under active review. For additional information about 5-year reviews, go to <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/what-we-do/recovery-overview.html>, scroll down to "Learn More about 5-Year Reviews," and click on our fact sheet.

What Information Do We Consider in Our Review?

A 5-year review considers all new information available at the time of the review. In conducting these reviews, we consider the best scientific and commercial data that have become available since the listing determination or most recent status review, such as:

(1) The biology of the species, including, but not limited to, population trends, distribution, abundance, demographics, and genetics;

- (2) Habitat conditions, including, but not limited to, amount, distribution, and suitability;
- (3) Conservation measures that have been implemented that benefit the species;
- (4) Threat status and trends in relation to the five listing factors (as defined in section 4(a)(1) of the Act); and
- (5) Other new information, data, or corrections, including, but not limited to, taxonomic or nomenclatural changes, identification of erroneous information contained in the List, and improved analytical methods.

Any new information will be considered during the 5-year review and will also be useful in evaluating the ongoing recovery programs for the species.

Species Under Review

Entity listed: Polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*),

Where listed: wherever found.

Classification: Threatened.

Date listed (publication date for final listing rule): May 15, 2008.

Federal Register citation for final listing rule: 73 FR 28212.

Request for Information

To ensure that a 5-year review is complete and based on the best available scientific and commercial information, we request new information from all sources. See **What Information Do We Consider in Our Review?** for specific criteria. If you submit information, please support it with documentation such as maps, bibliographic references, methods used to gather and analyze the data, and/or copies of any pertinent publications, reports, or letters by knowledgeable sources.

Public Availability of Comments

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comments, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Completed and Active Reviews

A list of all completed and currently active 5-year reviews addressing species for which the Alaskan Region of the Service has lead responsibility is available at <http://www.fws.gov/alaska/fisheries/endangered/reviews.htm>.

Authority

This document is published under the authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

Dated: September 25, 2015.

Karen P. Clark,

Acting Regional Director, Alaska Region

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