

Smart Stuff

with Twig Walkingstick



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
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EXTENSION
OHIO AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH
AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER

For the week of
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By Kurt Knebusch
(330) 263-3776
knebusch.1@osu.edu

Notes: Read the official May 14, 2008, press release from the U.S. Department of Interior, "Secretary Kempthorne Announces Decision to Protect Polar Bears Under Endangered Species Act," at http://www.doi.gov/news/08_News_Releases/080514a.html. Read recent previous Twig columns on Arctic and Antarctic ice-cap melting at <http://www.ag.ohio-state.edu/~news/archive.php?series=science>. Scroll down to those dated Jan. 9 (whose URL is already mentioned), 16 and 20, 2008, and Dec. 20 and 30, 2007.

Section of Communications and Technology

2021 Coffey Road
Columbus, OH 43210-1044
(614) 292-2011

208 Research Services Bldg.
1680 Madison Ave.
Wooster, OH 44691-4096
(330) 263-3780

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Q. Dear Twig: We talked in class about polar bears. They just got listed as "threatened." What's it mean?

A. On May 14, the head guy of the U.S. Department of Interior, taking the advice of the head guy of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, said this: that his department would now list the polar bear as a threatened species under the U.S. **Endangered Species Act**. "Threatened," the Act says, means a species could become **endangered** in the near future.

"Endangered" means a species stands even closer to **extinction** — very close, in fact.

And "extinction" is when a species blinks out, vanishes from Earth, and never can or will come back.

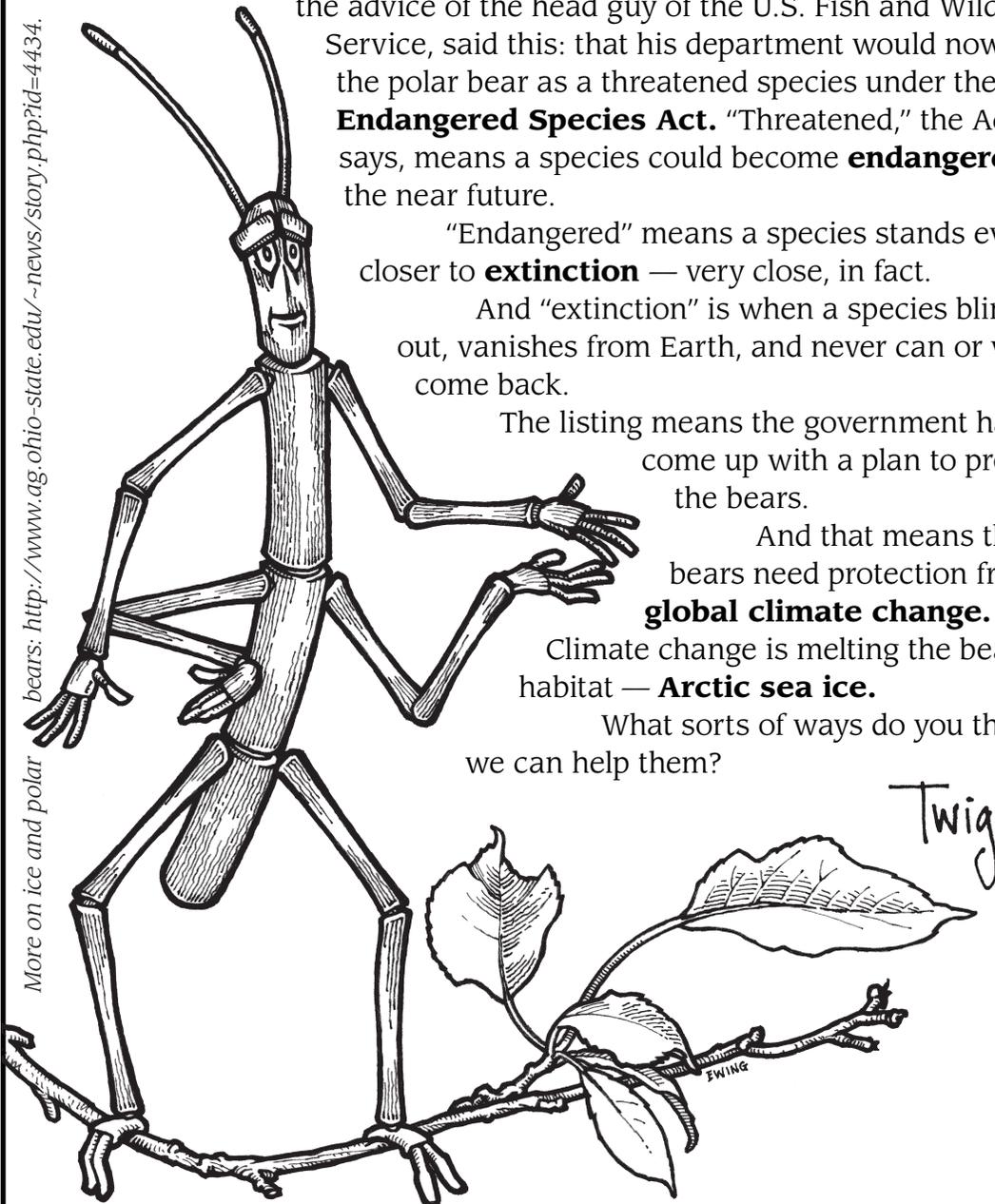
The listing means the government has to come up with a plan to protect the bears.

And that means the bears need protection from **global climate change**.

Climate change is melting the bears' habitat — **Arctic sea ice**.

What sorts of ways do you think we can help them?

More on ice and polar bears: <http://www.ag.ohio-state.edu/~news/story.php?id=4434>.



From your scientific friends at The Ohio State University — specifically, the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (www.oardc.ohio-state.edu) and OSU Extension (extension.osu.edu).