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Katja Kleinrubatscher, Akademisches Gymnasium Innsbruck, 10. Schulstufe, 6 Jahre
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Why Polar Bears Will Soon Only Be a Legend if We Do Not Act Now

The population of polar bears in Canada has decreased by 30 percent in forty years due to the melting of ice. That would approximately be a decline of 10 percent every decade. Climate change is a widely discussed topic around the world. It concerns everybody, but especially the wildlife and the nature of our planet. The Great White North is most affected by this natural catastrophe. Many animals are affected by the melting ice, which takes away their home. Polar bears, for example, have no place to live and hardly find any food. As a result, they are dying due to the increase in temperature in the last years. Scientists surmise that polar bears might soon become extinct due to climate change. How exactly does climate change affect the polar bears, and what can we do to avoid their extinction?¹

Climate change causes temperature rises all over the world: Ice is melting in the north, there have never been as many bush fires as there were in the past years in the USA and Australia. These catastrophes have fatal consequences, such as the death of many animals and the loss of their habitat. The ice literally breaks away below the feet of the helpless polar bears, and they have nowhere else to go. Some of them are trapped on an ice floe for days, weeks or even months, and they then die due to dehydration or starvation.

Increasing temperatures do no good to the Great White North. The massive reduction of ice in the north causes the habitat of the animals living in the Arctic Sea to minimize. This loss is principally a hazard to polar bears. Already 400 individuals out of 1,200 in one of the subpopulations have disappeared in the last forty years. A significant decrement in these subpopulations is expected in the next decades. Scientists state that there will be a loss of most of the nineteen subpopulations² by 2100 if the temperatures continue to increase so rapidly.³ Due to the warming climate, the water should usually freeze in autumn, but the freezing time is delayed by weeks. Therefore, the polar bears are forced to stay on land for four weeks longer than they would have back in the 1980s. Seals living in the water and being the main prey for the polar bears are hard to reach for them since they cannot get close to the sea. Meanwhile, they must eat berries, kelp, or eggs to get a few of their nutrients. This is not a proper meal, and it is obviously not enough for a big bear. Polar bears lose lots of fat during this time due to the small amount of calorie intake. Pictures of their emaciated statures can be found on the internet and they are distressing for many people. Records of the western Hudson Bay have found that nowadays the bears are less likely to

¹ Gignac Julien. 2020

² Wiig Ø, Aars J, Born EW. 2008

³ MAWDSLEY, J.R., O'MALLEY, R. and OJIMA, D.S. 2009

survive until maturity than 40 years ago, and scientists have discovered a decrease in height in this animal species. Due to the weight loss, the fertility rate is decreasing in polar bears. These animals are already going extinct due to climate change. The chances of them reproducing are declining each year, too.⁴ How are polar bears supposed to survive if nothing changes? We have to act now.

But what possibilities do we have to preserve polar bears from extinction? We need to take more care of the nature of our planet and we need to develop environmentally conscious behaviour. It does not hurt anybody to conserve resources and to care for our flora and fauna. There are only benefits for everyone. The first step is to reduce CO₂ emissions. We can do that by using public transport more often instead of driving cars individually. We could travel by train instead of an airplane. It might take longer to reach the destination by train, but it is definitely worth it to help preserve our nature and the animals. Another thing every one of us could do is to plant trees, which help clean the air and do something very benefitting for the wildlife. Eating less meat can also affect our climate, and it even has a positive influence on our health if we reduce our beef intake. Switching out normal electricity generation to a non-carbon-based one is helpful for our environment. One can do that, for example, by installing solar panels to get electricity from a natural source, the sunlight.⁵

In conclusion, polar bears are threatened by our careless handling of our environment. This is something that we should not underestimate. Polar bears will go extinct if we do not act now and save them. Shouldn't we as humans be capable of rational thinking to stop our nature from going down the drain like this? We have to support our flora and fauna now to stop climate change. The future of polar bears is lying in our hands. We need to solve this problem together as a community and save these animals from extinction. Therefore, I am appealing to all of you to care for our nature and the poor and innocent animals on this earth. Let's start doing something now!

(887 words)

⁴ Gignac Julien. 2020

⁵ Jacobo, Julia. 2019

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