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## Northwest Researchers Find Hope For Polar Bears

Rob Manning | December 22, 2010 | Portland, OR

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The same Northwest research team that pinpointed the threat climate change posed to polar bears is back with a potential bright side.

A 2007 study concluded polar bears were on track to decline by two-thirds, if greenhouse gases increased at their current pace.

A new study just published in the journal, Nature, concludes that polar bears are not a lost cause. The study says their recovery depends on reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

Bruce Marcot is a U.S. Forest Service researcher based in Portland who co-authored the study.

He developed a model that predicts how various factors influence the Arctic environment. Marcot says saving the polar bear's habitat would require changing business practices.

Bruce Marcot: "Countries would have to cut back on their carbon outfall and other greenhouse gases – CO2 and otherwise - to ensure that sea ice isn't going to vanish as fast as it has been."

Marcot says other factors -- including oil drilling and shipping -- could also hurt polar bears' chances for survival.

Marcot conducted his research with six scientists from Alaska, Colorado, Montana, Virginia, and Washington.

Marcot's Arctic modeling research is continuing with walruses.

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