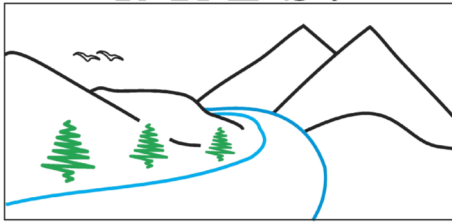


NRESi



"Our environment is our future"

RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM SERIES

Dr. Andrew Derocher

Professor, Dept. of Biological Sciences
University of Alberta



Friday

Oct. 2, 2009

3:30 - 4:30

LECTURE THEATRE

7 - 152

LIGHT REFRESHMENTS
SERVED AT 3:20 PM

The ecology and politics of polar bears and climate warming

Polar bears evolved to become an obligate predator of ice breeding seals. While the global distribution of the species has changed little over recorded history, the rapid change in their sea ice habitat over the past few decades has caused increased concern for their conservation. The symptoms of climate warming on polar bears are manifest in many ways but most importantly, the energetics of polar bears is affected by reduced energy intake, and possibly greater energy use, which results in lower fat stores. Pregnant females with lower fat stores produced fewer cubs with lower recruitment which can result in population declines. Following extensive analyses, polar bears were recently classified as a threatened species in the USA. Canada, however, due to a flawed assessment report, proposed the lower level of risk of special concern. Polarized views on the status of this iconic species augmented by opportunistic pseudo-science have confused the public. In its simplest form, polar bears are facing nothing more than the most common threat to wildlife. Habitat loss is the appropriate metric of change.