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TITLE: Tracking arctic marine mammal resilience in an era of rapid ecosystem alteration

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ABSTRACT:

Global warming is significantly altering arctic marine ecosystems. Specifically, the precipitous loss of sea ice is creating a dichotomy between ice-dependent polar bears and pinnipeds that are losing habitat and some cetaceans that are gaining habitat. While final outcomes are hard to predict for the many and varied marine mammal populations that rely on arctic habitats, we suggest a simplified framework to assess status, based upon ranking a population's size, range, behavior, and health. This basic approach is proposed as a means to prioritize and expedite conservation and management efforts in an era of rapid ecosystem alteration.

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