



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on October 13, 2015

Photographer Says His Pictures Were Misused to Prove Global Warming

Accomplished nature photographer Josh Anon has criticized an article published October 8 in Britain's *Daily Mail* that used his photographs of four polar bears dining on their prey to illustrate an article attempting to prove that polar bears are losing their ice habitat due to global warming. Anon charges that the article was "more fiction than fact." "It's so scientifically wrong it's a bit embarrassing," he added.



Anon took the photos during a recent trip past the Norwegian island of Svalbard, between mainland Norway and the North Pole, during which he sighted a trail of blood that proved to have been from a seal killed by polar bears. Anon captured photos of the four bears as they competed to devour the seal, and documented the interaction between them. On his own webpage, Anon titled his photo essay "A Polar Bear Crime Scene." Noting that "bears aren't good at sharing," he recorded the bears' effort to steal the meal from each other.

From his essay, it is evident that Anon is an environmentalist and is concerned about preserving the polar bear population in the wild. However, his concern about the bears' survival is not mainly due to "global warming" (which he does not dispute) but over a more direct threat to the bears: hunting. He explains his priorities:

One trend is clear: as the conditions change, the polar bear will leave many areas they're in now and wind up in parts of Greenland and northeast Canada only. Because of that, the polar bear's often used as a symbol of climate change, but we're likely too late to prevent it from disappearing from these other places. Plus climate change is abstract: what actionable thing can we do right now to stop it?

Anon does not state whether he believes that climate change is a natural phenomenon, or if he believes that mankind has contributed to it. But since he doubts that we can do anything about it, he prefers to concentrate on something that humans do have control over:

On the other hand, hunting is concrete. We know polar bears are threatened yet hundreds of bears are legally killed each year.... The most actionable thing you can do right now to help the bears survive is to **help stop polar bear hunting**. [Emphasis in original.]

Hunting, of course, is an entirely separate subject from global warming, and beyond the scope of this article. Yet, the *Daily Mail* chose to ignore Anon's views on that subject while choosing to play up an area he barely touched on — receding ice apparently caused by climate change. The article captioned a picture of a lone polar bear standing on a piece of ice (shown) surrounded by water: "Polar bears are listed as a threatened species by the World Wildlife Foundation due to the receding ice which makes it hard for them to hunt."

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The paper's photo essay also ignored the main point of Anon's original work — the interaction among the bears following the kill of the seal — to suggest that the solitary bear they pictured was without companions. Among the misleading statements found in the article:

- "The loneliest bear in the world: Curious polar tries to get close to a boat packed with tourists... but ends up getting stuck on an ice floe."
- "American photographer Josh Anon snapped the beautiful beast floating on an ice floe in the Arctic."
- "The polar bear was caught out when the ice he was walking on receded from the coastline."
- "Photographer fears that, due to the melting ice, polar bears could 'disappear completely' from the area."

In a comment posted to the *Daily Mail* article, Anon attempted to correct the paper's misinterpretation: "I'm the original photographer, and I agree this story is scientifically inaccurate and more fiction than fact.... I also originally posted a message about hunting being a more immediate and actionable concern than global warming."

As we noted, Anon does not dispute climate change, but it is not his main priority. His main objection to the *Daily Mail's* article (which used photos that Anon had submitted to a wire news agency) was that it did not tell the story he intended to tell and omitted photos showing more than one bear, to support its own story.

As for the larger subject of global warming, there is no clear-cut consensus of opinion about it among the world's scientists, but a substantial number of credible scientists dispute that it exists. Even some who acknowledge that there has been "climate change" insist that it is a natural cyclical occurrence, and is not anthropogenic, or caused by human activity. Some scientists even suggest that the process has even reversed itself and that sea ice has begun to increase. As just one example, in January of 2014 [The New American](#) cited findings unveiled to reporters by NASA and NOAA indicating that Antarctic sea ice extent in September of 2013 was the highest ever documented since records began.

And as we noted in an [article posted last June](#), data from the U.S. Climate Reference Network (USCRN) developed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) indicated that the United States has undergone a cooling trend over the last decade.

It is obviously impossible for the untrained layman to determine which theories postulated by scientists on either side of the global-warming debate are accurate and which are not. However, one thing is certain: There is enough disagreement among credible scientists to cast serious doubt on the assertion that we are in a period of catastrophic "global warming," and furthermore, whether such warming (if it exists at all) is caused by anthropogenic (human) carbon dioxide emissions.

This raises an interesting question: If scientists are still debating the plausibility of global warming (one indication of which, supposedly, is receding Arctic and Antarctic sea ice) why do news outlets such as the *Daily Mail* find it necessary to deliberately distort stories in an attempt to prove that polar bears are threatened by global warming-induced receding ice? Why not simply allow the facts to speak for themselves?

Photo of polar bear on sea ice by Josh Anon

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