

BBC “Five live” Interview with Scott Armstrong during the International Conference on Climate Change on March 9, 2009 (audio tape at theclimatebet.com)

Host: The New York conference “Global Warming: Was It Ever Really A Crisis?” has been described as the world’s largest ever gathering of global warming skeptics. Professor Scott Armstrong from Wharton School of Management at the University of Pennsylvania and a world renowned forecaster has turned his attention to the global polar bear population. Professor Armstrong, hello, welcome to Five Live.

Professor: Well thank you, Mark.

Host: Could you tell us a little bit about the findings of your research into polar bears?

Professor: Right, well just a little background. I’ve spent 48 years in forecasting and we’ve made some wonderful advances in the science of forecasting. So, I was interested in trying to find out how this is applied in the climate area, because as I understand, they get billions of dollars for these forecasts. So I thought maybe I can learn something and maybe I can also contribute something to this thing. So I got involved in a number of projects, one of them being the polar bear project that you have mentioned.

Host: And what did you find out?

Professor: Well we examined some government reports that claimed that the polar bears are being threatened. And so we did an audit of that. We examined: Do they follow proper principles of forecasting? We found that they only followed 12% of the principles correctly. I don’t know how most people’s jobs are, but if you only follow 12% of the proper principles in many jobs you wouldn’t last long. We reported this, we contacted the people that made these forecasts and we said, “We are puzzled why all these principles are being violated. Could you answer some questions for us and could you review the paper for us?” They said, “Absolutely not.” They did not want to comment but they would be willing to act as peer reviewers if the paper was sent for publication. So we then sent the paper off to publication and I told the editor of the journal that one of them would like to be a reviewer. So one of them was invited to be a reviewer and then he refused to review. So then the editor went back and said would you like to write a commentary on the paper and he said maybe, but he hasn’t gotten around to it.

Host: So what did your research actually say because everything that we read over here in the UK says that the global polar bear population is really under pressure at the moment?

Professor: Well people aren’t sure how many polar bears there are but there seems to be a consensus; when I testified before the US Senate, there seemed to be a consensus that they’ve been growing in numbers over the past few decades, mainly because of hunting restrictions. So they’ve been growing and we were puzzled: How in the world could the government scientists conclude that there was a decline? They did a number of things: First of all, they assumed that the global climate, global warming has been shown to be true. We’ve looked at that, and we’ve actually found not a single scientific forecast to support global warming. Secondly, they looked at five years of data and they concluded from that the sea ice is receding because of this assumed global warming and they related those...there

was actually six years of data but they threw one year away because it was an outlier. So they assumed that from these five years of data, that they could relate that to polar bear reproduction and population and they made a 50 year forecast from that.

Host: We've got a guy here, a very esteemed TV broadcaster and zoologist, David Attenborough. I don't know if you know him, Scott. He put out this most heart wrenching documentary on the TV on national tellie about a month ago showing the polar bears starving to death, the ice slopes melting, they can't get to the seals anymore, population's in decline. So David Attenborough wouldn't be lying to us, would he?

Professor: Actually, I've seen some of those ads and I've contacted the World Wildlife Fund and I said I think they're engaged in false advertising because it's in conflict with what we have found. In addition, on their own website they say that the number of polar bears is not declining. So, their ads are contradicting what they say on their own website. I think it's a case for false advertising and I hope someone raises this case.

Host: Tell me something more generally about your opinions, then about the general climate situation, you sort of touched on it a moment ago. Are you saying it's a completely made up fallacy?

Professor: Yeah, I was so excited when I got in here I thought it's a real chance to learn but my interactions with the polar bear forecasters have been common for what I find with the global warmers. They do not act in a civil tone. They're not aware of the literature. They try to suppress it. When I try to tell them about the work we've done, they're not interested.

Host: Why would they want to do that, Scott? What would that motive be?

Professor: I think money and power. There's an awful lot of money being involved, being spent for people that follow the party line that there's global warming.

Host: Would they really want to panic us all so unnecessarily by making it all up? Are they that cruel?

Professor: I actually think they are, yes. It's a completely anti-scientific movement. Some people have likened it to the eugenics movement. We're working on another study too to look at different analogies, but it's an anti-scientific movement.

Host: And the people who are there at your conference, what sort of areas of expertise are they drawn from?

Professor: Oh, it's a broad area. There are weather forecasters, there are climate people, people of all different sorts of sciences that are related. And it's not just for skeptics. There were other people invited. Al Gore was invited last year and this year. He's not a scientist, but he was invited. We were told he would get his fee, but he doesn't show up.

Host: Scott, well those who are there, I hope you have a great time. We shall be keeping an eye and listening to everything that comes from your conference. Professor Scott Armstrong from Wharton School of Management at the University of Pennsylvania, one of the main speakers at that big

conference "Global Warming: Was It Ever Really A Crisis?" which is taking place at the moment in New York. Five Live at 260.