The GWPF letter to all UK head teachers will include the following verifiable facts, which Attenborough and/or his advisors would have found had they looked:

* Global polar bear numbers have not declined since 2007 even though summer sea ice dropped precipitously at that time to a level about 40% less than 1979, indicating this species is not as sensitive to changes in sea ice habitat as experts had assumed.[1]

* While the IUCN Red List classified the polar bear as ‘vulnerable’ to extinction, this was based solely on computer predictions of what might happen to polar bear numbers in the future, not on current population size: moreover, the 2015 assessment suggested there was only about a 70% chance that numbers would decline by 30% or more by 2050 but no chance of extinction if summer sea ice continued to decline steadily until mid-century.[2]

* Most of the world’s polar bears live in Canada, where the species is not considered threatened (or vulnerable) but is listed in the lesser category of ‘special concern’ which it has had since 1991.[3]

* Significant declines in polar bear body condition, litter size, and cub survival occurred in Western Hudson Bay for no apparent reason well before sea ice conditions changed on Hudson Bay – and then dropped again when summer ice cover declined by 3 weeks: polar bear specialists emphasize the second drop and keep silent on the first, even though it is well documented in the peer-reviewed scientific literature.[4]

* Only one out of six Arctic seal species are included on the IUCN Red List of Threatened and Endangered Species because there is no evidence they have been harmed by recent declines in sea ice.[5]

* The Pacific walrus is similarly not included on the IUCN Red List of Threatened and Endangered Species because there is no evidence they have been harmed by recent declines in sea ice.[6]

* In 2017, the US Fish and Wildlife Service refused to list the Pacific walrus as 'threatened' on the Endangered Species List because their research revealed walrus populations were high, had not been harmed by recent sea ice loss, and had shown flexibility in adapting to sea ice change.[7]

* Falling off cliffs and hauling up on Arctic beaches in enormous numbers in summer or fall are natural phenomena in Pacific walrus that are not exclusively associated with recent sea ice loss.[8]

summer sea ice decline
see http://nsidc.org/arcticseaicenews/files/1999/10/Sep_monthly_extents13yr.png

16, https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/22823/14871490#assessment-information;
See also Regehr et al. (2016), Conservation status of polar bears (Ursus maritimus) in relation to projected sea-ice declines. *Biological Letters* 12: 20160556, http://rsbl.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/12/12/20160556


Ribbon seal, https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/41670/45230946;
Spotted seal, https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/17023/45229806;
Hooded seal, the exception, is listed as ‘vulnerable’ primarily because of an inexplicable decline in the East Greenland (‘West Ice’) population https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/6204/45225150#assessment-information
