Scientists have suggested that due to the adverse effects of Arctic ice melting, the hybrid of a polar bear and grizzly bear - dubbed the 'grolar bear', might rise in numbers.

According to a report in *The Sun*, the effects of climate change means that the hybrid bears could become more common as their habitats increasingly overlap due to global warming.

"One of the real things that is happening is that grizzlies are moving north, at the same time the polar bears are forced to be on the beach and we have found a number of grizzly bear polar bear hybrids," said biologist Dr George Divoky, who has worked in the Arctic region for over three decades.

"Essentially that could mean that it would save the polar bear genes in the grizzly population," he added.

Biologists have already spotted the hybrid species.

In April 2006, a white bear with brown patches was shot in northern Canada and DNA tests confirmed it was a 'grolar' bear. It was said to have been fathered by a male grizzly and a female polar bear.

In spite of the emergence of the hybrid bears, scientists fear that the overall impact of Arctic ice melting could have a disastrous effect in the long run.

"Having seen things, I would never be surprised if in 2008 the summer ice disappears," Dr Divoky said. "This has never happened in the period of human observation. We will know it when it happens and we will have to deal with that," he added.

Some of Dr Divoky's data has been used by experts trying to predict the melting of the sea ice in the future.

"You don't need to have models to show the rate of change in the Arctic, it's there in terms of the observations," said Dr Divoky.

Some of the starkest evidence Dr Divoky has seen of the changing Arctic is more polar bears foraging for food on his island, where he sleeps in a hut when he is carrying out research.
From 1975 to 2002, he saw just three polar bears.

Since then, they have become an annual occurrence, and one year Dr Divoky saw twenty polar bears in three days. "Now polar bears are annual and regular," he said.