

2023



Annual Impact Report





Your impact on polar bear conservation.

Howling winds. Frigid temperatures. Vast expanses of sea ice. Snowy nurseries for cubs. The icy home where polar bears roam is challenging and incredibly beautiful. Protecting that home — and ensuring the polar bears’ future — lies at the heart of everything we do.

In our Annual Report to members, we’re excited to share highlights of the progress we made together on behalf of polar bears in 2023 — all thanks to your generous support and involvement.

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Science & Research

Unveiling Secrets of the Arctic

With research projects that span the circumpolar Arctic, we focus our efforts on projects that inform conservation and add to our understanding of the polar bears' needs and vulnerabilities. ***Here's what you made possible in 2023.***





MATERNAL DEN STUDY

Denning is the most vulnerable time in a polar bear's life. Your support allowed us to deploy **3 remote cameras** at den sites in Svalbard, Norway, adding to our understanding of the needs of denning families. This long-term study builds on our earlier den research in Alaska. [Watch our video.](#)

GROUNDBREAKING RESEARCH

Your generosity made several key scientific papers possible in 2023. This includes one by our chief scientist emeritus, Dr. Steven Amstrup, that **paves the way for adding climate protections** for polar bears under the U.S. Endangered Species Act. The findings could be applied beyond the U.S. and help other climate-impacted species. [Discover more.](#)

FOUNDATIONAL SCIENCE

Only by understanding what it truly means to be a polar bear can we determine what is needed to protect their future. Thanks to your generosity, we **helped fund 6 studies**, from genetics research to energy use and population studies, working with a range of partners across the Arctic. [Explore our range of studies.](#)

TECH INNOVATIONS

Because of you, we were able to wrap up our **Burr on Fur** study. We tested these new, minimally invasive tracking tags with the help of **15 Arctic Ambassador Center zoos** and **3 government and academic partners**. The "stick on" tags will allow researchers to track adult male and young polar bears, two littlestudied groups. [Watch our video.](#)



INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

Thanks to your commitment, we supported our **2nd Indigenous Knowledge study**, this one on how Indigenous peoples in Churchill, Manitoba, Canada, coexist with polar bears and what they envision for the future. We also added **2 Indigenous board advisors** to our board of directors, broadening our insights and perspectives. [Learn more.](#)



NEXT GENERATION RESEARCHERS

Your support allowed us to help fund **2 postdocs** in 2023. We also **mentored early career scientists** on how to work with the media and communicate with lay audiences, through opportunities including serving as ambassadors in our interpretive centers, contributing website articles, and taking part in interviews, webcasts, and live chats.

PROTECTING DEN SITES

To protect polar bear dens from being disturbed, we need to know where they are. In 2023, you helped fund **6 ultra-wideband radar tests** in Svalbard, Norway, to detect dens under the snow, with promising results. We plan to follow up with additional tests in Alaska, on different terrain. [Learn more.](#)

Left: © Kt Miller / Polar Bears International, Middle: © Emily Ringer / Polar Bears international, Right: © Kt Miller / Polar Bears International

SCIENCE AND RESEARCH BY THE NUMBERS

Deployed

3

DEN CAMERAS

Funded

6

ADDITIONAL STUDIES
BY PARTNERS

Conducted

6

DEN DETECTION FLIGHTS

Worked with

15

ZOO PARTNERS

Conducted

2ND

INDIGENOUS
KNOWLEDGE
STUDY

Worked with

3

GOVERNMENT AND
ACADEMIC PARTNERS

Funded

2

POSTCDOCS

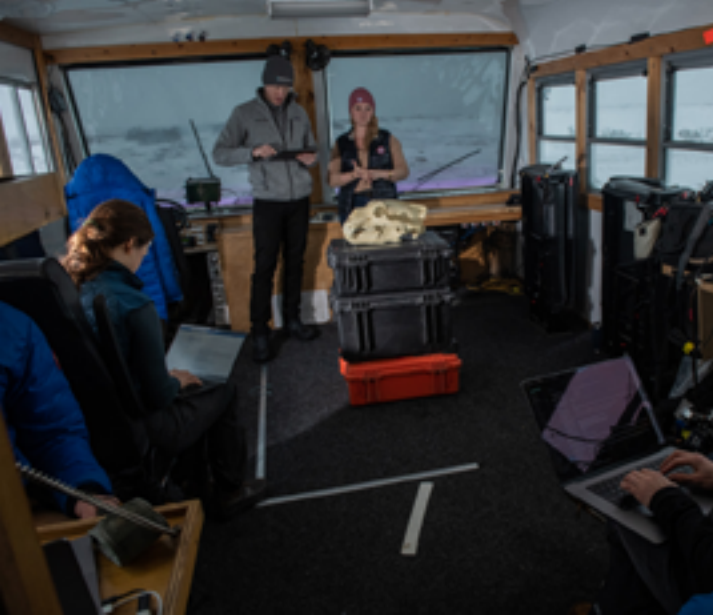
n-Gregory Age: 12

i made a shelter
to make a home for the bear

First name: Matthew

Igniting Curiosity, Inspiring Action

Through our top-ranked website, Tundra Connections broadcasts, and other engaging content, we inspire teachers, students, and life-long learners to follow their curiosity and get involved. ***Here's what you made possible in 2023.***



TUNDRA CONNECTIONS® WEBCASTS

Because of you, we reached over **480,000 people** around the world in 2023 through **Tundra Connections** webcasts and live chats, giving viewers the chance to engage with scientists and other experts and ask questions. The broadcasts included one-on-one connections with classrooms in Canada's North. [Watch our archives.](#)



INTERPRETIVE CENTERS

Your support allowed us to test the concept of a pop-up interpretive center, **Polar Bears International Ice House**, in Svalbard, Norway, during the summer Arctic cruise season, with plans to continue it in 2024. The project builds on the success of our interpretive center in Churchill, Manitoba, Canada, now open for **3 seasons**. [Learn more.](#)



SUMMER CAMPS

In 2023, a generous donor allowed us to pilot **2 week-long summer camps** for kids in Churchill, Manitoba, Canada, a town famous for its polar bears and a base for many of our research and outreach efforts. Activities centered around Indigenous Knowledge and included crafts, berrypicking, natural history lessons, and more. [Discover more.](#)

STRONG PARTNERS

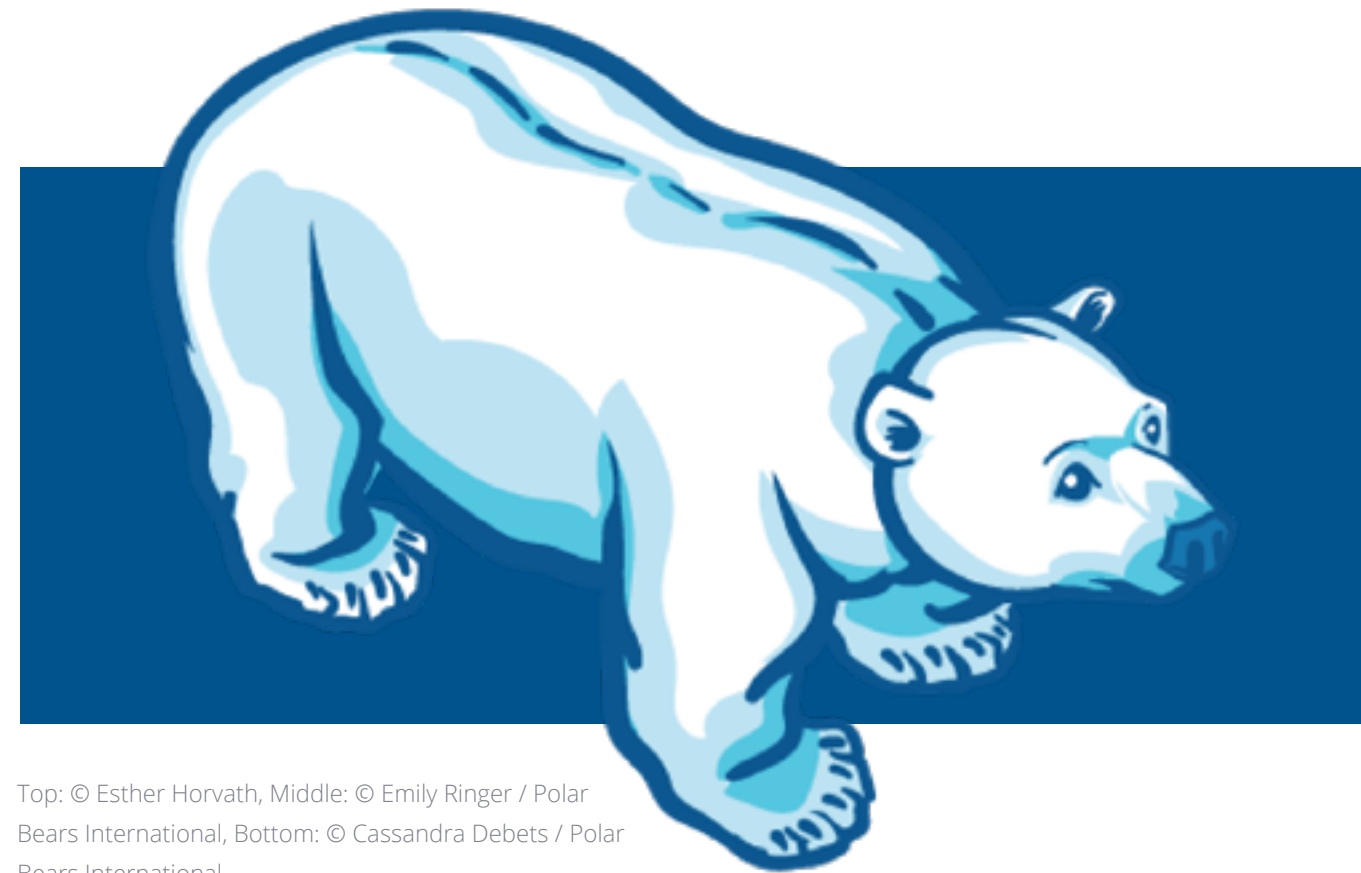
In 2023, the LEGO Group joined us in Churchill, Manitoba, Canada, for a live broadcast during polar bear season, helping to **amplify our reach and impact**. Other educational partners include Discovery Education, TakingITGlobal, Connected North, Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, and Microsoft Flip. [Learn about the LEGO visit.](#)

ARCTIC AMBASSADOR CENTERS

Thanks to your support, we welcomed **2 new Arctic Ambassador Centers** to our network in 2023, bringing the collective impact to **49 zoos and aquariums** from 25 U.S. states, 4 Canadian provinces, and 7 European countries (Austria, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, the U.K., France, and Belgium), helping us reach millions of people with our conservation message. [Learn more.](#)

TOP RANKED WEBSITE

Thanks to your generosity, more than **526,000 people from 218 countries** visited our website in 2023, with conservation information on polar bears among the top-ranked content. We were also able to add **3 new units and lesson plans** to our educational offerings, including "Mom and Me," "Top of the World," and "Polar Bear Tracker." [Visit our Education Center.](#)



Top: © Esther Horvath, Middle: © Emily Ringer / Polar Bears International, Bottom: © Cassandra Debets / Polar Bears International

GLOBAL EDUCATION BY THE NUMBERS

218

COUNTRIES REACHED

3

Created
NEW
EDUCATIONAL UNITS

Aired

11

WEBCASTS AND
LIVE CHATS

Worked with

6

EDUCATIONAL
PARTNERS

Staffed

2

INTERPRETIVE
CENTERS

2

Held

SUMMER CAMPS

Reached

480K+

PEOPLE THROUGH BROADCASTS

Arctic Ambassador Center
Network grew to

49

ZOOS
AND
AQUARIUMS

2

Deployed

BEAR TRAPS

Hosted

526K+

WEBSITE VISITS

Coexistence

Sharing the Arctic Home

With more polar bears coming ashore in more places as the sea ice melts, our coexistence efforts are more important than ever, designed to allow polar bears and people to live safely with each other. ***Here's what you made possible in 2023.***



CHURCHILL BEAR SMART GROUP

We continue to support Churchill in becoming the world's **1st Polar Bear Smart Community**, building on the town's already robust efforts. In 2023, thanks to your generosity, this work included finalizing a series of **new safety videos**, funded by Polar Bears International, and rolled out to the public in the fall. [Watch here.](#)

DIVERSE PARTNERS

From Environment and Climate Change Canada to York University and the King's Bay Company in Norway, we worked with a total of **7 partners** on conflict-reduction measures, expanding the reach and impact of our coexistence efforts. [Learn more.](#)



EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS

Your support allowed us to test **3 "Detect to Protect" radar systems** to alert communities of approaching polar bears and to work with a partner to train the AI to recognize them. Further testing will continue this year, including a unit mounted in one of our Arctic Ambassador Center zoos. [Read our Q&A.](#)

SVALBARD, NORWAY

Because of you, we were able to work with partners on human-polar bear safety measures for the **research community of Ny-Ålesund**, which has seen an uptick in visiting polar bears. Efforts included giving safety presentations and distributing handheld flares and educational materials on human-bear coexistence. [See brochure.](#)

SOUTHERN HUDSON BAY

Your generosity allowed us to work with **2 Cree communities** on coexistence efforts. Guided by their unique situations and cultural preferences, we supported them in developing safety plans; supplied non-lethal deterrents and training in their use; and provided **2 bear traps** for relocations. [Discover more.](#)



COEXISTENCE BY THE NUMBERS

Worked in

2

COUNTRIES

Worked with

7

PARTNERS

Deployed

2

BEAR TRAPS

Created

1

SAFETY VIDEO

Tested

3

"DETECT TO PROTECT"
SYSTEMS

Worked with

MULTIPLE

NORTHERN COMMUNITIES

Held

3

DETERRENCE TRAINING SESSIONS

Policy & Advocacy

Speaking for the Bears

Government policies have an impact on polar bears, which is why we focus efforts on ensuring decisions are in their best interest. This includes empowering our followers to become involved citizens and advocates for polar bears. ***Here's what you made possible in 2023.***



POLICY MEETINGS

Your generosity enabled us to take part in **3 important international policy spaces**: the Arctic Circle Assembly, the Polar Bear Range States meeting, and COP28 — where we strengthened our networks and spoke up for polar bears. We also shared **6 COP accreditation badges** with Indigenous and youth leaders. [Read our Q&A.](#)

EXPERT COMMENTARY

Because of you, we were able to provide **in-depth expert commentary**, based on the latest scientific data, on the need to protect polar bear moms, cubs, and denning areas from industrial disturbances in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. We also met with government agencies on issues related to polar bear conservation.

AWARENESS EVENTS

Year after year, our **3 annual awareness events** shine a global spotlight on the challenges polar bears face in a warming Arctic and how we each can help. They include International Polar Bear Day on February 27; Arctic Sea Ice Day on July 15; and Polar Bear Week during the first week in November. [Learn more.](#)



VOTE FOR POLAR BEARS CAMPAIGN

Every time we step into the ballot box, we have an opportunity to step up for polar bears. Our Vote for Polar Bears campaign emphasizes the power of **voting with the climate in mind**, in each and every election, at every level of government. In 2024, we plan to create an Engaged Citizens Campaign. [Discover more.](#)



CLIMATE ALLIANCE TRAINING

In 2023, you made it possible for us to share tested messaging on polar bears, sea ice, and climate change with **19 zoo professionals** from **3 countries**, bringing the total to **237 graduates**. The **7-month course** empowers participants to communicate effectively on climate change, helping to move the dial in their communities. [Discover more.](#)

Top: © Emily Ringer / Polar Bears International, Bottom Left: Design by Polar Bears international, Bottom Right: © Shervin Hess / Oregon Zoo

POLICY & ADVOCACY BY THE NUMBERS

Trained

19

ZOO PROFESSIONALS

from

3

COUNTRIES

Provided expert
commentary on

1

KEY PROJECT

Met with

37

GOVERNMENT
OFFICIALS

Took part in

3

INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS RELATED TO
POLAR BEAR CONSERVATION

Held

3

GLOBAL
AWARENESS
EVENTS

Shared

6

ACCREDITATION BADGES

to

COP 28

Outreach

Sharing the Story of the Arctic

Through media stories, live cams, videos, and compelling photos, we help keep polar bears and the Arctic top of mind, highlighting the need to protect the bears and their fragile ecosystem. ***Here's what you made possible in 2023.***

GLOBAL MEDIA REACH

Your generosity enabled us to share accurate, science-based facts on polar bears, sea ice, and climate change through worldwide media coverage from NBC Nightly News to NPR, the Associated Press, The Guardian, Reuters, AFP, Smithsonian, The Weather Network, and more. In 2023, we were featured in **3,520 unique media stories** with an estimated reach of **5.4 billion people**. [Explore more.](#)

TED TALK

Thanks to your support, our own Alysa McCall presented a TED Talk in New York City in 2023, titled “What to do when there’s a polar bear in your backyard.” Her talk focused on human-bear coexistence efforts including Churchill’s Bear Smart Working Group and our Burr on Fur tracking tags. As of this writing, it’s been viewed more than **1.4 million times**. [Watch here.](#)



VIDEOS AND PHOTOS

In 2023, you made it possible for us to produce **121 videos**, from short social media clips and reels to longer educational videos like “From the Den to the Sea Ice” and “A Day in the Life: Joanna Sulich.” Our video views on YouTube grew to 168.5K. We also continued to add photos to our photo library, including those donated by wildlife photographers. [Visit our YouTube channel.](#)



SOCIAL MEDIA

Because of you, we reached a global audience of **489,959 people** through our social media networks in 2023, where we shared videos, field updates, live chats, and links to educational content. We further amplified our social media reach and impact by providing online toolkits with pre-made social content and partnering with photography ambassadors. [Visit our Instagram.](#)



CONSERVATION HAPPY HOURS

In 2023, we hosted **3 live Conservation Happy Hours** for our Polar Bear Patrons, major donors, and partners, giving them first-hand access to the latest stories and developments in polar bear conservation. Each was recorded and later shared widely via our social media channels. [See sample archive.](#)

ARCTIC INSPIRATION

Because of your generosity, we touched hearts and minds through our live Polar Bear, Northern Lights, and Beluga Cams in partnership with explore.org, highlighting the Arctic and its wildlife and inspiring people to care. In 2023, these windows into the Arctic received over **1.8 million views** from around the world, including over 54,500 views on archived YouTube videos! [See our cams.](#)

Left: © Alysa McCall / Polar Bears International, Top Right: © Bruce Silverstein, Bottom Right: © Shervin Hess / Oregon Zoo

OUTREACH BY THE NUMBERS

489K+

FOLLOWERS ON
SOCIAL MEDIA

Reached

3,530

UNIQUE MEDIA ARTICLES

Reached

5.4 BILLION

PEOPLE THROUGH MEDIA STORIES

Hosted

3

CONSERVATION
HAPPY HOURS

Created

121 VIDEOS

FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

1.4M+

VIEWS ON OUR TED TALK

2023 Financials

A Look Into Our Work

Your generosity makes so much possible for polar bears—now and in the future. Every dollar you give is used thoughtfully and strategically to maximize impact for polar bears, people, and our planet.



REVENUE

Contributions – unrestricted: \$3,542,775
Contributions – with donor restrictions: \$600,825
Grants: \$838,031
In-kind support: \$853,092
Special events: \$31,350
Other Revenue: \$46,708

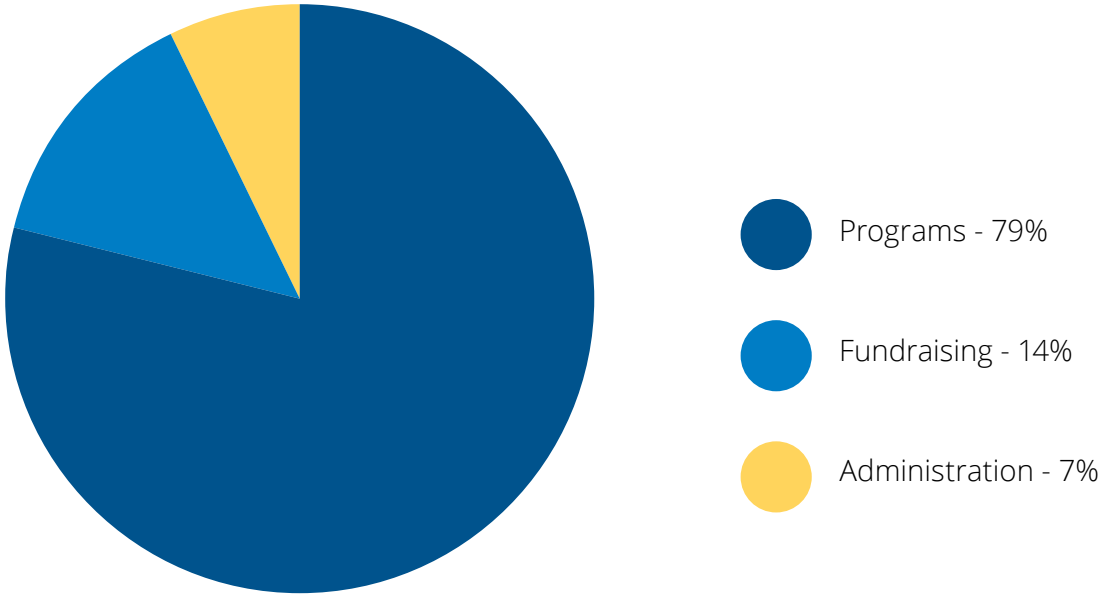
Total Revenue: \$5,912,781

EXPENSES

Programs: \$4,364,815
General and Administrative: \$379,231
Fundraising: \$750,072

Total Expenses: \$5,494,118

Other Income – foreign currency gain: \$89,349
Changes in net assets: \$508,012
Net assets at the end of the year: \$6,558,909



For any research projects that Polar Bears International helps fund, we do not pay overhead costs, a policy that ensures funds go directly to the research of polar bear conservation.



2023 Board of Directors

Leading by Example

We could not do the work we do without those that guide Polar Bears International. Our Board of Directors help guide our strategic direction, work with management, and represent the best of us.

EMERITUS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dani Reiss

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Amy Moore
Patrick Keeley
Steven Dolman
Kristin Biniek
Valerie Beck
John Kelleher
Jean-Pierre Parenty
Stephanie Sluka
Penny Brook
Gavin Thompson
Andrew Cyr
Peggie Pelosi
Sarah Street

BOARD ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Richard P. Beck
Frederica Gamble
Dr. Don Moore
Sylvia Palka Melo
Carlton Williams
Georgina Berg
Katie de Muelles



Sponsors & Donors

Making Our Work Possible

Recognizing champions for polar bears—honoring those who make our work possible. We are deeply grateful to all our donors, including our Polar Bear Patrons, Arctic Circle Legacy Society members, Arctic Ambassador Centers, corporate sponsors, foundations, fundraisers, zoos, and partner organizations, who powered our work in 2023. Your generosity sustains a lasting impact for polar bears and the Arctic they call home.



DIAMOND

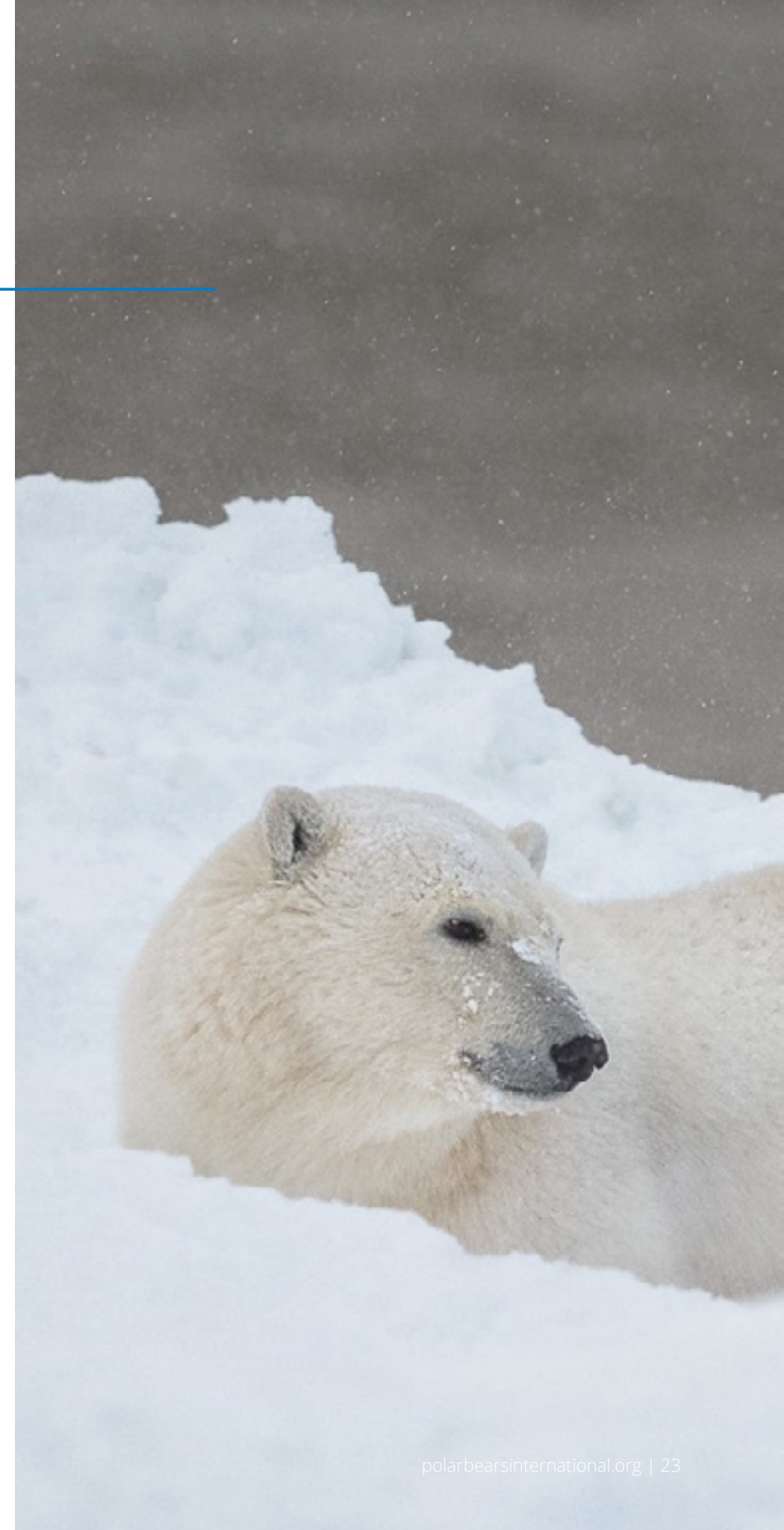
CANADA GOOSE®

PLATINUM

fabrik



HANDCRAFT.
creative

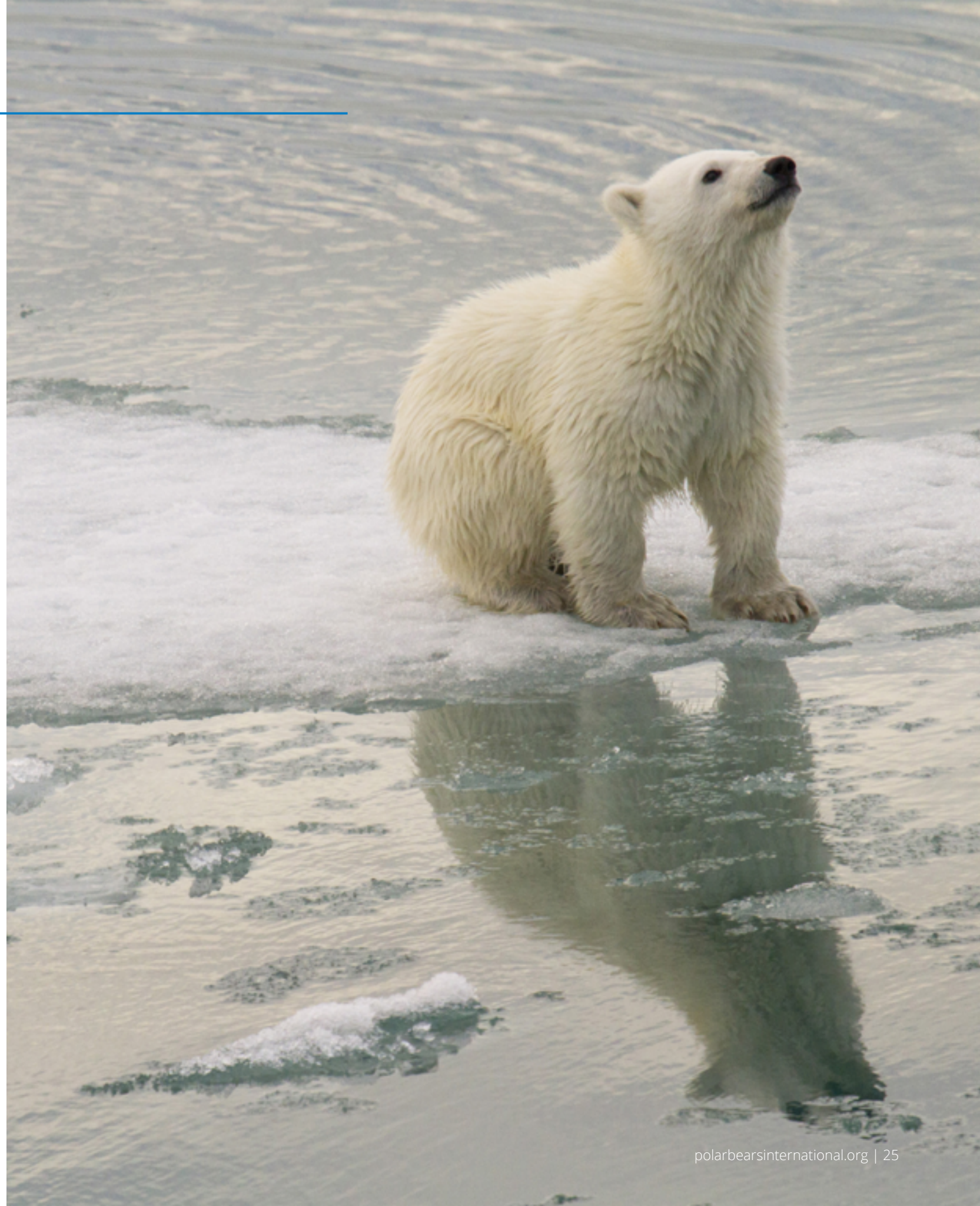


FIELD SUPPORT

3M Company
Assiniboine Park Zoo
Brigham Young University
Calm Air International Ltd.
Canada Goose Inc.
CHC Helicopter
Churchill Northern Studies Centre
Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden
Cochrane Polar Bear Habitat
Columbus Zoo and Aquarium
Cornell University (Dr. Flavio Lehner)
Courtyard Marriott
Custom Churchill Tours
Discover Churchill Tours
Discovery Education
Environment and Climate Change Canada
explore.org
Frontiers North Adventures Hearts In the
Ice Holtz Constructors Inc. Hudson Bay
Helicopters Hudson Bay Port Co. Kansas
City Zoo and Aquarium The LEGO Group
Manitoba Sustainable Development MTS
Allstream Nanuk Operations National
Network for Ocean and Climate Change
Interpretation (NNOCCI)
Norwegian Polar Institute
Old Dominion University (Dr. John
Whiteman)
Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources
and Forestry
Oregon Zoo
Peppermint Narwhal
Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium
San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance
Scandinavian Wildlife Park
Sea North Tours
Spotter Global
Svalbard Museum
Town of Churchill
Tundra Inn
The University Centre in Svalbard
University of Alberta
University of Manitoba
University of Toronto
Utah's Hogle Zoo
Wapusk Adventures
Wapusk National Park Wa'tchee Lodge
York University

TORONTO GALA SUPPORTERS

Barclays Capital Canada Inc.
Brettler Mintz Foundation
Burns Foundation Fund – The Winnipeg
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Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce
(CIBC)
Credit Suisse Securities (Canada) Inc.
Harry Rosen Inc.
Highness Capital iGan Partners
Inukshuk Capital Management Inc.
Kruzel and Partners
Loopstra Nixon LLP
Maple Leafs Sports & Entertainment
MNP
No Fixed Address LLC
Northwood Family Office
Smythe Inc.
Torkin Manes LLP
Toronto-Dominion Bank (TD Bank Group)





polarbearsinternational.org

Thank you for all that you do for polar bears.

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