

2024



# Annual Impact Report





# Your impact on polar bear conservation

Science, research, safe coexistence, global inspiration, policy, education...that's just some of the expertise we use every day at Polar Bears International to weave a brighter future for polar bears. And you, our supporters, play a vital role.

In this Annual Impact Report, we're proud to share highlights of the progress we made together on behalf of polar bears in 2024 — all thanks to your generous support and passion.

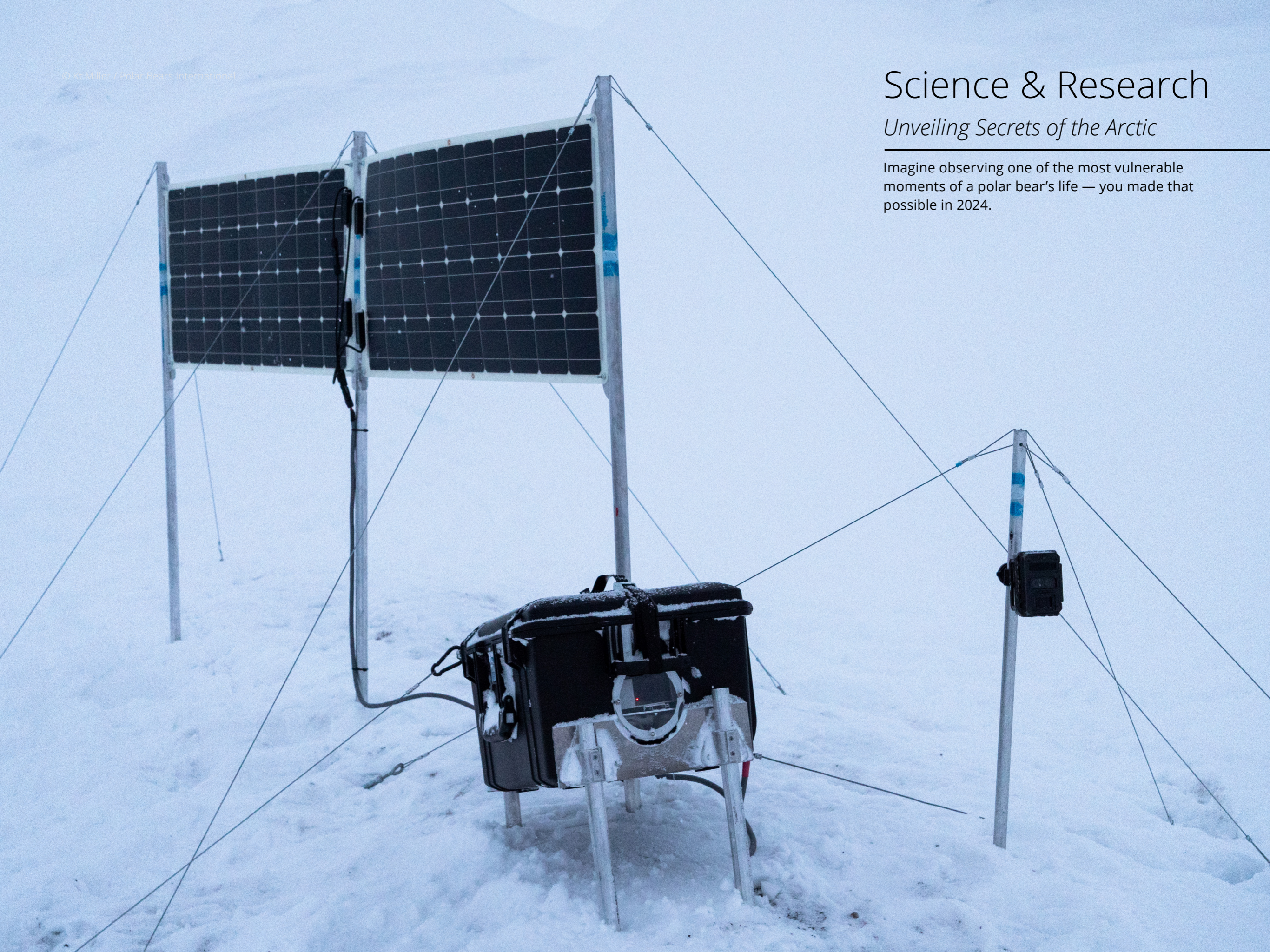
## Contents

Science & Research	3
Global Education	6
Coexistence	9
Policy & Advocacy	12
Outreach	15
2024 Financials	18
2024 Board of Directors	20
Sponsors & Donors	22

# Science & Research

## *Unveiling Secrets of the Arctic*

Imagine observing one of the most vulnerable moments of a polar bear's life — you made that possible in 2024.





## MATERNAL DEN STUDY

We placed five remote cameras at den sites in Svalbard, Norway. What we witnessed was profound, tender moments between mothers and cubs, as well as the quiet strength of survival in harsh conditions. This footage wasn't just heartwarming; it led to a ground-breaking paper with fresh insights into polar bears' behavior. [Watch our video.](#)

## GROUNDBREAKING RESEARCH

Think about the headlines you've seen about climate change. At Polar Bears International, we're not just reading them; we're rewriting the story. Your support has enabled our scientists to publish five peer-reviewed papers, including one that sounded the alarm on the future of Hudson Bay bears if we fail to meet the Paris Agreement goals. We're also uncovering genetic insights that reveal which populations are most at risk. [Learn more.](#)

## FOUNDATIONAL SCIENCE

To protect polar bears, we must understand them deeply. Thanks to you, we funded six studies that explore everything from polar bear genetics to their energy use and long-term [population trends](#). Together with partners across the Arctic, we're assembling a clearer picture of what it truly means to be a polar bear in a rapidly changing world—and using that knowledge to guide conservation.

## TECH INNOVATIONS

We're not afraid to think outside the box. Your generosity enabled three tech research projects this year. These include finalizing field research on the use of "Bear-dar" to detect approaching bears and working with partners to fine-tune the AI component of this radar system. We also published a paper on our "Burr on Fur" tracking tags, a valuable new tool to monitor polar bears, including two groups that so far have been unable to be tracked until now: adult males and young polar bears. [See the tags in action.](#)



## NEXT GENERATION RESEARCHERS

Securing the future of conservation requires investing in the next generation of leaders. Your support helped us fund three postdoctoral researchers and mentor early-career scientists, equipping them with the tools to lead, communicate, and inspire. Whether serving as ambassadors in our [interpretive centers](#), contributing articles to our website, or joining outreach efforts, these rising scientists are helping bring polar bear conservation to new audiences around the globe.

*Today, Polar Bears International is made up of a passionate team of conservationists, scientists, and volunteers—working to secure a future for polar bears across the Arctic.*

— Krista Wright, Executive Director

# RESEARCH BY THE NUMBERS

deployed

**5**

den cameras

funded

**3**

postdoctoral researchers

funded

**6**

additional studies  
by partners

supported

**3**

tech research  
projects

published

**5**

peer-reviewed  
papers

## A MIGHTY CREATURE, FRAGILE FUTURE

Polar Bears International is made up of a passionate team of conservationists, scientists, and volunteers—working to secure a future for polar bears across the Arctic.

Together, we can make sure that polar bears roam the sea ice for generations to come and improve conditions for people, too.

After all, the polar bear's future is not separate from our own. Their story is our story. As a visitor to Svalbard, and a citizen of the world, you, too, are part of that story.

## IN SVALBARD

Our projects here focus on protecting polar bear moms and cubs during the denning period, working with partners.



POLAR BEARS INTERNATIONAL

## EN MEKTIG SKAPNING MED EN SKJØR FREMTID

Polar Bears International består av en lidenskapelig gruppe naturvernere, forskere og frivillige – som arbeider for å sikre en fremtid for isbjørner over hele Arktis.

Sammen kan vi sørge for at isbjørnene utforske havisen i kommende generasjoner samt forbedre leveforholdene til menneskene.

Isbjørnens fremtid er tross alt ikke uavhengig av vår egen. Historien deres er også vår historie. Som besøkende på Svalbard og verdensborger er du også en del av den historien.

## PÅ SVALBARD

De lokale prosjekter på Svalbard fokuserer på å beskytte isbjørnmødre og unger under deres mens de er i denne perioden, samarbeidspartnere.

Sea ice is as important to the Arctic as soil is to the forest.

### Arctic ecosystem

Sea ice is much more than a frozen platform for polar bears to hunt on. It supports the Arctic food chain. When ocean water gets cold enough to freeze, it expands and, creating channels to form inside the ice. As sunlight filters through, algae grow within these channels, creating an underwater garden that forms the base of the food chain.

Havisen er like viktig for Arktis som jordsmonnet er for skogen.

### Det arktiske økosystemet

Havisen er mye mer enn en frosten platform for isbjørner som jager på. Den støtter den arktiske matkjeden. Når sjøen blir kald nok til å fryse, utvider den seg og skaper kanaler som lar sollys filtere gjennom. Algae vokser innenfor disse kanalene, skaper en underjordisk hage som danner grunnlaget for næringskjeden.

### A life tied to sea ice

#### Ursus maritimus means "sea bear"

Polar bears are marine mammals—they evolved to live on top of the frozen ocean. They have two layers of fat, curved claws for grabbing seals, and the pads of their paws are covered with tiny bumps, or papillae, that give them better traction on slippery ice.

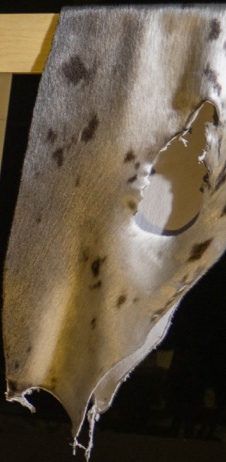
In a cold ocean, polar bears require constant paths to survive. Seals are their main prey and their preferred high-fat food. Polar bears hunt seals from the surface of the sea ice—seals are difficult to catch in open water.

### Et liv knyttet til havisen

#### Ursus maritimus betyr «havbjørn»

Isbjørner er sjøpattedyr – de har utviklet seg til å leve på toppen av den frosten havet. De har to fettlag, buede klør for å fange seg, og de har papiller på paws som gir dem bedre grep på den glatte isen.

I kalde Arktis trenger isbjørnene konstante stier for å overleve. Seiler er deres hovedmat og deres foretrukne høyt fettmat. Isbjørner jakter seiler fra overflaten av sjøisen – seiler er vanskelig å fange i åpent vann.



Global Education  
*Igniting Curiosity, Inspiring Action*

Our highly ranked website, Tundra Connections® broadcasts, and engaging content are not just resources—they are immersive gateways to the Arctic.



## TUNDRA CONNECTIONS® WEBCASTS

Imagine classrooms all around the world connecting directly with our scientists. This is more than education. It's planting seeds of understanding and action in the hearts of the next generation. You helped us reach nearly 114,000 people worldwide through [Tundra Connections®](#) webcasts and live chats!



## INTERPRETIVE CENTERS

For the second consecutive year, our [Polar Bears International Ice House](#) welcomed visitors to the bustling community of Longyearbyen, Svalbard, during the summer Arctic cruise season. This project builds on the success of our flagship interpretive center, which has been open for five seasons in Churchill, Manitoba, Canada—a town famous for its polar bears and a base for many of our research and outreach efforts. These interpretive spaces are more than physical places—they are where stories are shared, curiosity is sparked, and life-changing connections to the Arctic are made.



## SUMMER CAMPS

Imagine kids exploring Churchill, learning about Indigenous Knowledge, making traditional Indigenous treats like fireweed lemonade and bannock, and riding on a Tundra Buggy. You made [two week-long summer camps for kids](#) possible, creating memories and fostering a love for this special landscape.

## STRONG PARTNERS

Our educational partners help amplify our message and worldwide impact. Our biggest partners included Discovery Education, TakingITGlobal, Connected North, SubjectToClimate, and explore.org. Together, we developed innovative [new curriculum](#) and delivered educator training across three distinct networks, emphasizing polar bear conservation and Polar Bears International's educational materials. With your support, we are reaching learners across the globe.

## ARCTIC AMBASSADOR CENTERS

We celebrated the [20th anniversary](#) of this network of zoo and aquarium partners across the United States, Canada, and Europe. This powerful network reaches 49 million visitors and 360 million through social media. Together, we share the story of polar bears and climate change with audiences of all ages, inspiring action for a better future.

## TOP RANKED WEBSITE

Our website welcomed more than 666,000 visitors from nearly every country in 2024. From updated polar bear subpopulation pages to new advocacy toolkits, we are not just educating—we're building a global movement of informed, empowered advocates for climate.



Top: © Handcraft Creative, Middle: © Larissa Thelin / Polar Bears International,  
Bottom: © Hayden Moran / Polar Bears International

# GLOBAL EDUCATION BY THE NUMBERS

reached

**100k+**

people through  
Tundra Connections®  
broadcasts

educational  
content reached

**195**

countries

our Arctic Ambassador  
Centers reached

**hundreds of  
millions globally**

created

**new polar bear and climate  
change curriculum**

with SubjectToClimate

**666k+**

website visits

collaborated with

**13**

educational partners

held

**2**

summer camps,  
and 1 winter camp  
in Churchill, Manitoba

**22**

virtual  
outreach events

staffed

**2**

interpretive centers

# Coexistence

## *Sharing the Arctic Home*

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As polar bears spend more time ashore due to melting sea ice, coexistence has become essential. With your support, we are working hand-in-hand with communities across the Arctic to ensure people and polar bears can live safely together.

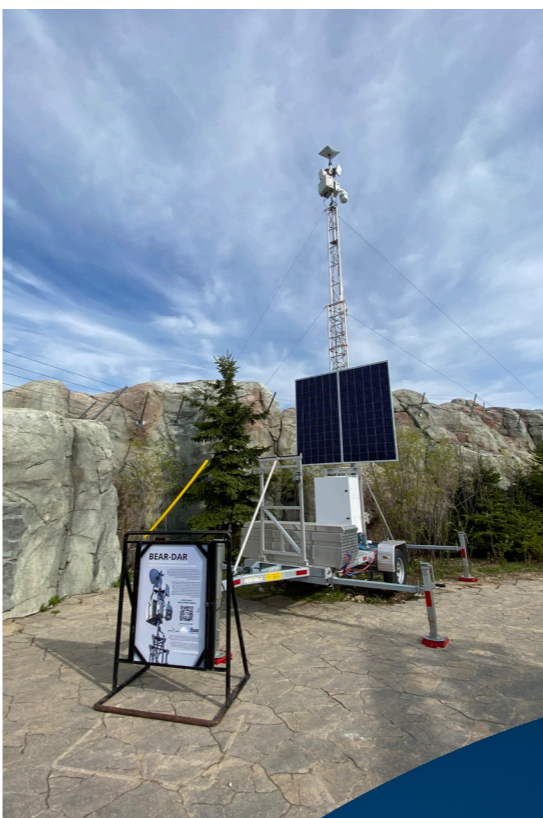


## CHURCHILL BEAR SMART GROUP

We continue to support Churchill in becoming the world's first Polar Bear Smart Community, building on the town's [already robust efforts](#). Thanks to your generosity, we provided six bear-resistant waste bins, enhanced protections around the landfill, and initiated work on designing a more effective electric fence system adapted for Arctic conditions.

## SAFER DETERRENTS

Your support powered the first phase of testing for various non-lethal polar bear deterrents. Our findings will help identify the safest, most effective tools for use in Arctic communities, reducing conflict and helping bears stay wild.



## EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS

[“Bear-dar” is ready for deployment](#), thanks to your support. We successfully completed the on-site testing of the bear-detecting radar with the assistance of partners at SpotterGlobal, the Assiniboine Park Zoo, and Frontiers North Adventures. This groundbreaking system will provide communities with real-time alerts about approaching bears, keeping both wildlife and people safe.

Top Left: © Mike Spence, Bottom Left: © Esther Horvath, Right Photo & Globe: © Handcraft Creative

## SVALBARD, NORWAY

You helped us collaborate on safety measures, distribute flares and safer deterrent options, and develop educational materials. With your support, we sent three local representatives from Svalbard to our Polar Bear Safe Community Exchange workshop in Churchill.

## SOUTHERN HUDSON BAY

We partnered with four Cree communities, supporting knowledge sharing, training, and providing one new bear trap for relocations. Together, we are building respectful, community-driven solutions grounded in both science and Indigenous Knowledge.

## INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

We hosted the first-ever [Polar Bear Safe Community Exchange](#) in Churchill, Manitoba, bringing together residents from Manitoba, Ontario, and Svalbard. The result? A vibrant exchange of ideas and experiences on living safely with polar bears. Participants are already applying what they learned, inspiring safer practices and stronger community connections.



# COEXISTENCE BY THE NUMBERS

shipped

**6**

bear-resistant waste bins  
to Churchill, Manitoba

convened the

**1<sup>ST</sup>**

Polar Bear Safe  
Community Exchange

provided

**1**

new bear trap in Ontario





## Policy & Advocacy

### *Speaking for the Bears*

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Government decisions have lasting impacts on polar bears, and thanks to you, Polar Bears International is at the table, ensuring those decisions are informed by science and shaped by compassion. When we speak, we speak on your behalf, amplifying your commitment to protecting these iconic animals.

POLICY MEETINGS

You made it possible for us to be in the room where key decisions affecting the future of polar bears are determined. Your support allowed us to be present at two pivotal international policy spaces: the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Polar Bear Specialist Group meeting, where scientists from all five polar bear nations convened, and the International Association for Bear Research and Management conference, where we shared groundbreaking research. You also enabled us to share six accreditation badges for the U.N. Climate Talks with Indigenous and youth leaders, and sponsor a young Inuit leader’s attendance, ensuring these essential voices were represented on the global stage.

EXPERT COMMENTARY

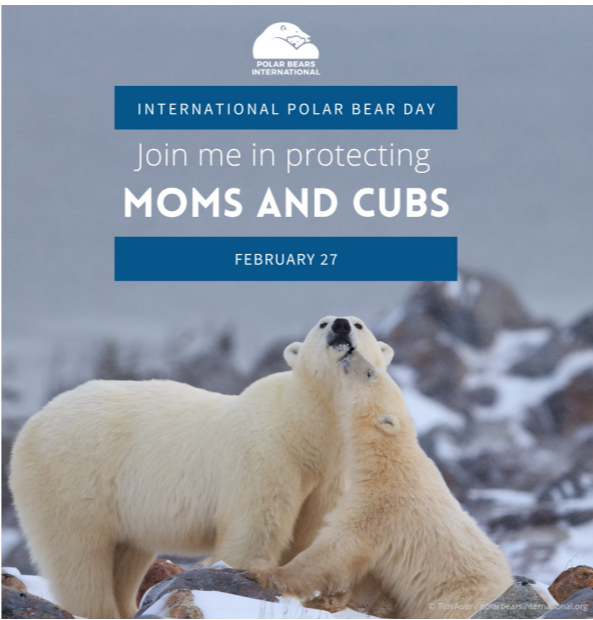
Policymakers and the media rely on our scientific expertise. Your support allowed us to provide in-depth expert commentary, grounded in the latest scientific data, on a range of topics—from implementing an international polar bear conservation plan to advocating for stronger protections in the United States and vital coexistence measures in Canada. Together, we’re ensuring polar bears stay at the forefront of conservation conversations.

FOSTERING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

We believe everyone has the power to make a difference in climate action. This year, we launched our “Take Action Center,” a hub filled with tools to help people speak up, engage with policymakers, and lead change. Two new video series guide supporters in having effective conversations about climate and becoming active participants in shaping a more sustainable future. You’re not just a supporter; you’re part of a movement.

AWARENESS EVENTS

Year after year, you help us shine a global spotlight on the challenges polar bears face. Our three annual awareness events—International Polar Bear Day, Arctic Sea Ice Day, and Polar Bear Week—are more than just dates on a calendar. They’re reminders that we all have a role to play in protecting the Arctic.



CLIMATE ALLIANCE TRAINING

You empowered 13 zoo professionals from four countries to become effective climate communicators through our Climate Alliance program, bringing our total graduates to 250. This seven-month course catalyzes change, enabling participants to effectively communicate about climate change within their own communities.

Top: © Kieran Mulvaney / Polar Bears International, Bottom Left: Photo by Tim Auer, Graphic design by Jenna Beckley / Polar Bears International, Bottom Right: © Shervin Hess / Oregon Zoo

# POLICY & ADVOCACY EFFORTS BY THE NUMBERS

trained  
**13**  
zoo professionals  
from  
**4**  
countries

held  
**3**  
global awareness  
events

participated in  
**2**  
international meetings related  
to polar bear conservation

shared  
**6**  
accreditation badges to  
the U.N. climate talks

provided expert  
commentary on  
**3**  
key conservation  
initiatives



# Outreach

## *Sharing the Story of the Arctic*

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Your support made 2024 a landmark year for outreach, helping us share the story of polar bears—and the changing Arctic—with a global audience. From guides on the tundra to educators in classrooms and citizens at home, you helped amplify our message in powerful, inspiring ways.



## GLOBAL MEDIA REACH

Because of you, science-based stories about polar bears, sea ice, and climate change [reached a global audience](#). We were featured in 3,085 media stories, including the New York Times, BBC News, National Geographic, and The Associated Press. Your support ensures polar bears stay in the headlines.

## POLAR BEAR HANDBOOK FOR GUIDES

Imagine a network of Arctic guides, sharing the latest polar bear research with visitors from around the world. You helped us lay the foundation for just that. Our new Polar Bear Handbook for Arctic Guides is a vital resource for guides from Svalbard to Churchill, ensuring accurate information is shared with everyone who visits the Arctic.

## CLIMATE COMMUNICATION COURSE

You helped us collaborate with NNOCCI (National Network of Ocean and Climate Change Interpretation) to create and deliver a customized seven-week climate communication course, specifically designed for informal educators living and working in Canada. Thirty-five participants gained valuable skills to discuss climate change in their communities.

## VIDEOS AND PHOTOS

You helped us produce two impactful educational video series in 2024: “Talking About Climate Change” and “Get Out the Vote.” Additionally, we produced a new “About Polar Bears International” video, as well as videos on the role of zoos in conservation, our peer-reviewed research, and many other educational and outreach films. We had over 165,000 video views on YouTube alone! You also helped us grow our photo library, with stunning images donated by generous wildlife photographers. [Visit our YouTube channel](#).



## SOCIAL MEDIA

Your support allowed us to reach a global audience of over 503,000 people through our social media networks in 2024. We shared field updates, expert Q&As, conservation videos, and action toolkits. Your support powered every post, every live chat, and every meaningful digital interaction.

## CONSERVATION HAPPY HOURS

You helped bring our supporters even closer to the mission through two live Conservation Happy Hours for our Polar Bear Patron community, major donors, and partners. [These special events](#) provided firsthand access to the latest stories and developments in polar bear conservation.

## ARCTIC INSPIRATION

Through our live [Polar Bear](#), [Northern Lights](#), and [Beluga Cams](#), in partnership with explore.org, you brought the Arctic into living rooms around the world. In 2024, these windows into the Arctic received over 1.7 million views, inspiring people to care about this fragile ecosystem.



Top: © Dave Sandford, Bottom: © Simon Gee / Polar Bears International

# OUTREACH BY THE NUMBERS

hosted

**2**

Conservation  
Happy Hours

reached

**503k+**

followers on social media

surpassed

**165k**

video views on  
YouTube

logged

**1.7 million+**

Arctic Cam views

featured in

**3,085**

media stories



# 2024 Financials

## *A Look Into Our Work*

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Your generosity fuels everything we do—from advancing science and protecting polar bear families to amplifying climate action and inspiring the next generation. Thanks to your support, we were able to meet urgent needs while investing in long-term solutions for polar bears and their sea ice home.

Every dollar you give is used thoughtfully and strategically to maximize impact for polar bears, people, and our planet.





## REVENUE

Contributions – unrestricted: \$2,899,516

Contributions – with donor restrictions: \$1,531,316

Grants: \$41,520

In-kind support: \$760,985

Special events: \$26,400

Other Revenue: \$56,105

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**Total Revenue: \$5,315,842**

## EXPENSES

Programs: \$4,468,431

General and Administrative: \$443,965

Fundraising: \$675,938

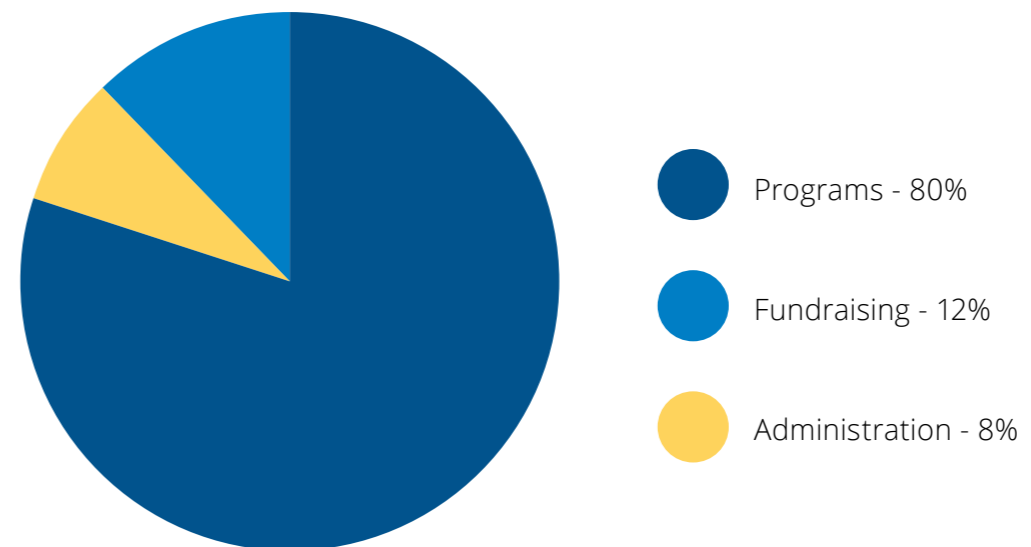
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**Total Expenses: \$5,588,334**

Other Income – foreign currency loss: (\$57,634)

Changes in net assets: (\$330,126)

Net assets at the end of the year: \$6,228,783



*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.*

# 2024 Board of Directors

## *Leading by Example*

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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  
Richard P. Beck (In Memoriam 1933 - 2024)

*The staff and Board of Directors at Polar Bears International express their deepest sorrow at the passing of Richard P. Beck, Director Emeritus and husband to Valerie Beck, in 2024. We are grateful for his lasting contributions and unwavering support.*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Patrick Keeley, Chairman  
Valerie Beck, Vice-Chairman  
Steven Dolman, Chief Financial Officer  
Kristin Biniek, Secretary  
Andrew Cyr  
John Kelleher  
Jean-Pierre Parenty  
Peggie Pelosi  
Stephanie Sluka  
Sarah Street

## BOARD ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Frederica Gamble  
Dr. Don Moore  
Sylvia Palka Melo  
Carlton Williams  
Penny Brook  
Georgina Berg  
Katie de Muelles



# Sponsors & Donors

## *Making Our Work Possible*

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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 2024. Your generosity sustains a lasting impact for polar bears and the Arctic they call home.



DIAMOND

# CANADA GOOSE®

PLATINUM







SILVER





FRIENDS OF THE BEARS

CloverSoft



## FIELD SUPPORT

Assiniboine Park Zoo  
Brigham Young University  
Canada Goose Inc.  
CHC Helicopter  
Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden (Polar Bear Research Council)  
Columbus Zoo and Aquarium  
Connected North  
Cornell University (Dr. Flavio Lehner)  
Courtyard Marriott  
Discover Churchill Tours  
Discovery Education  
Environment and Climate Change Canada  
explore.org  
Frontiers North Adventures  
Kansas City Zoo and Aquarium (Kelsea)  
Manitoba Sustainable Development  
McGill University  
National Network for Ocean and Climate Change Interpretation (NNOCCI)  
Natural Exposures Inc.  
Noble Northern  
Norwegian Polar Institute  
Old Dominion University (Dr. John Whiteman)  
Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry  
Wapusk National Park - Parks Canada  
Peppermint Narwhal  
Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium (Sheriden)  
San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance  
Spotter Global  
SubjectToClimate  
Svalbard Expeditions (Hilde Fållun Strøm)  
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 (Kimmy)  
York University





[polarbearsinternational.org](https://polarbearsinternational.org)

Thank you for all that you do for polar bears.

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