

2022



# Annual Impact Report





# Together, we’re working to ensure their future.

As the only nonprofit with a sole focus on polar bears, Polar Bears International is passionate about polar bear conservation. Guided by leading scientists, we work to address both long- and short-term threats to the bears. In our Annual Report to members, we’re excited to share a snapshot of what we accomplished together last year, all made possible thanks to your generous support and involvement. Join us to dive in deeper.

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# Science & Research

## *Unveiling Secrets of the Arctic*

Polar Bears International is known for its science-based approach to conservation, with research projects and tech innovations that span the circumpolar Arctic. Here's what you made possible in 2022.

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## BETTER TRACKING DEVICES

Because of you, we moved closer to completing work on an innovative new “Burr on Fur” tracking device for polar bears, narrowing the designs from **4 prototypes to 2**. So far, we’ve tested **11 tags** on zoo bears and 21 tags on wild bears, working with **11 Arctic Ambassador Center zoos** and **2 government agencies**. [Watch our video.](#)



## STRENGTHENING OUR TEAM

In 2022, we added **2 new scientists and 1 vice president of conservation**, bringing our scientific team to 10 people in 4 countries (the U.S., Canada, Denmark, and Norway). This includes our **1st Norwegian-based scientist**, who is leading our analysis of den-monitoring data in Svalbard. [Meet our team.](#)

## NUTURING THE NEXT GENERATION

Your commitment allows us to support projects and provide opportunities for polar bear scientists. This includes leveraging media opportunities for established scientists, mentoring early career scientists on how to communicate with the public by serving as ambassadors in our Churchill interpretive center, and providing opportunities for both through our Tundra Connections webcasts and live chats. [Learn about our interpretive center.](#)

## PROTECTING DEN SITES

To shield denning families from disturbances, we must be able to pinpoint den locations. Your generosity allowed us to conduct flights over **2 known den** sites to test whether remote-sensing radar can find dens under the snow, building on earlier promising results. The work is continuing in 2023, with units mounted on drones flown high above the bears. [Learn 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 population studies, working with a range of partners across the circumpolar Arctic. [Explore our range of studies.](#)

## MATERNAL DEN STUDY

Last year, thanks to your support, we deployed 2 remote cameras at polar bear den sites in Svalbard, Norway, to record the behavior of moms and cubs when they emerge in spring. The 10-year study is providing foundational information on the den emergence period, while also providing valuable information on the health and condition of polar bear families. [Watch our video.](#)



# STAFF SPOTLIGHT

From her home base in Svalbard, biologist Joanna Sulich helps us each year with our Maternal Den Study, setting up den cameras in subzero weather on challenging mountain terrain. Tune in to learn about her work and the incredible respect she has for polar bear moms and cubs. [Watch a day in her life.](#)





# Global Education

© Kt Miller

## *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 2022.







## TUNDRA CONNECTIONS® WEBCASTS

Because of you, we reached over **200,000 people** around the world in 2022 with **18 Tundra Connections webcasts and live chats**, giving viewers the chance to engage with scientists and other experts. The broadcasts included one-on-one webcasts to classrooms in Canada's North. [Watch our](#)

## INNOVATIVE WEBSITE

People from **215 countries** visited our website in 2022, with conservation information on polar bears among the top content. Thanks to your generosity, we added **3 new units and lesson plans** to our educational offerings, including "Paws Up for Polar Bears," which focuses on climate change and climate action. [Visit our Education Center.](#)

## STORYTELLING BEARS

Your support allows us to create innovative tools like our Polar Bear Tracker, which consistently ranks as **one of the 5** most popular pages on our website. Visitors use the tracker to follow the movements of **15 wild polar bears** in Western and Southern Hudson Bay in relation to changing sea ice coverage. [Explore our Bear Tracker.](#)

## EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

In 2022, we partnered with organizations like Discovery Education, Students on Ice, Microsoft Flip, and Connected North on educational projects, **amplifying our reach and impact**. In 2023, we plan to launch a summer program for students in the town of Churchill. [Explore our partnership with Discovery Education.](#)



## DISNEY NATURE'S POLAR BEAR

We teamed up with Disney Nature on their new film, Polar Bear, **which premiered on Earth Day, 2022** and reached a global audience. The film tells the story of a mother bear whose memories of her own youth illustrate the increasing challenges of survival in a warming Arctic. [Learn more about the film.](#)







“Polar Bears International is an amazing outfit for outreach, education, and scientific support. I’m honored to be affiliated with them. More people know about polar bears through their efforts than other NGOs.”

*- Dr. Andrew Derocher, University of Alberta professor of biological sciences and a scientific advisor to Polar Bears International*



# 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 2022.





## POLAR BEAR SAFE COMMUNITIES

Polar Bear Safe Communities - We continue to support the efforts of the town of Churchill, Manitoba, in becoming the world's **1st Polar Bear Smart community** and are expanding from there to the neighboring province of Ontario—with plans to reach additional polar bear regions in 2023. The goal is to help polar bears and people coexist. [Learn more.](#)

## BEAR-SAFE TOOLS

From bear-safe waste bins to deterrence tools like bear spray, cracker shells, and modern bear traps, your support helps us share information on **bear-safe practices** and work with frontline Arctic communities on identifying the tools they need to stay safe. [Discover more.](#)



## EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS

Thanks to your generosity, we tested **3 “Detect to Protect” radar systems** on wild polar bears in 2022 and are now training the AI software of the two top performers to recognize them. Further testing will continue in 2023, with a goal to alert communities of approaching bears. [Read our Q&A.](#)

## SAFETY MESSAGING

Because of you, we were able to create standardized messaging on staying safe around polar bears, information being shared through posters, website-ready language, and videos tailored to unique situations in different communities. This outreach includes **3 unique coloring books** on staying safe around polar bears, in **3 languages**, with more in the works. [Learn more.](#)

## WORLD RANGER DAY AWARD

Every year we present our award to an individual or team working to help polar bears and people coexist. In 2022, we were pleased to honor the **8 men and women** of the Watchman Crew in Ny-Alesund, a remote community in Svalbard. [Meet the team.](#)





# PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Working with partners, we developed polar bear safety posters in English and in Cree, based on the unique needs and situations of northern Ontario communities.





A large, jagged iceberg with a prominent peak and various smaller ice chunks, floating in a dark blue sea. The sky is overcast and grey. The ice has a light blue/white color with some brownish streaks.

# Policy & Advocacy

## *Speaking for the Bears*

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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 advocates for polar bears and climate action. Here's what you made possible in 2022.



## INTERNATIONAL PRESENCE

As a leading voice for polar bears, your generosity allowed us to send **2 representatives** to the U.N. climate talks (COP 27) to communicate what is at stake for polar bears as the world warms. You also made it possible for us to help a diverse group of voices attend—from Indigenous leaders to climate communicators, young people, and experts in climate action plans. [Learn more.](#)

## ADVOCACY TOOLKIT

Thanks to your support, we created a **new online Action Center** and an online Advocacy Toolkit in 2022—complete with a legislative lookup feature and guidelines for having conversations about climate change. The kit empowers people to advocate for polar bears and a healthy Arctic ecosystem, plugging into their own skill sets and interests. [Explore our Advocacy Toolkit.](#)

## AWARENESS EVENTS

Our **3 annual awareness events** draw attention to 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.](#)



## CHURCHILL SYMPOSIUM

Your generosity allowed us to support the Churchill Bear Smart Working Group's efforts to map a healthy future for polar bears, from helping to draft position papers for policymakers to supporting the production of a science-sharing symposium. [Discover more.](#)

## VOTE FOR POLAR BEARS CAMPAIGN

Every time we step into the ballot box, we have an opportunity to put a healthy and just planet first. 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. [Discover more.](#)



## CLIMATE ALLIANCE

In 2022, we trained **21 zoo professionals** from **3 different countries** on the most effective ways to communicate about polar bears, sea ice, and climate change, bringing the total to **186 graduates**. The **7-month course** empowers graduates to communicate with confidence on climate change, helping to move the dial in their communities. [Discover more.](#)

Top: © Emily Ringer / Polar Bears International, Bottom Left: Neil Ever Osborne, Bottom Right: ©Meril Darees



# PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

During our live Tundra Connections webcast from the COP27 climate talks in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, viewers had the chance to learn about the summit, engage with our representatives, and ask questions.

[How did we protect polar bears in Egypt?](#)





# Outreach

## *Sharing the Story of the Arctic*

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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 2022.





## MEDIA COVERAGE

In a world of misinformation and digital clutter, you helped us cut through the noise and serve as a trusted source on polar bears, sea ice, and climate change—through our website, social media, and other outreach. In 2022, we were featured in **3,243 unique media articles** with an estimated reach of **5 billion people**. [Explore more.](#)

## PHOTOGRAPHY AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

Thanks to the generosity of the photography community, we continued to grow our Photography Ambassador program in 2022. Currently, about **25 wildlife photographers** actively participate in our annual awareness events, amplifying our message and providing inspiration. [See our Q&A with Ambassador Jenny Wong.](#)



## VIDEOS AND PHOTOS

In 2022, we produced **79 videos**, ranging from short social media clips to longer educational videos like “Polar Bears and Arctic Sea Ice” and “Emerging From the Den.” We **translated 3 videos** into French and German and added more than **30,000 images** to our photo library, including media donations from wildlife photographers. [Visit our YouTube channel.](#)



## SOCIAL MEDIA

Because of you, in 2022 we reached a global audience of **463,578 followers** through our social media networks, where we shared videos, 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. [Check out our Polar Bear Week Toolkit.](#)

## 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

Thanks to your generosity, we touched hearts and minds through our live Polar Bear, Northern Lights, and Beluga Cams in partnership with explore.org, inspiring people to care. In 2022, we reached over **4 million people** around the world with these windows into the Arctic, including over **3 million views** on archived YouTube videos alone! [See our cams.](#)

Left: © Kirean McIver / Polar Bears International, Top Right: © Simon Gee, Bottom Right: © Polar Bears International



"I really feel deeply that we have an ethical commitment to see that polar bears live to see another day, and Polar Bears International is playing a crucial, pivotal role in making that happen."

- *Dr. Tom Smith, Brigham Young University associate professor of wildlife biology and scientific advisor to Polar Bears International*







# 2022 Financials

## *A Look Into Our Work*

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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: \$3,147,344  
Contributions – with donor restrictions: \$727,446  
Grants: \$329,803  
In-kind support: \$660,674  
Special events: \$32,162

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**Total Revenue: \$4,897,429**

## EXPENSES

Programs: \$3,855,014  
General and Administrative: \$289,479  
Fundraising: \$600,686

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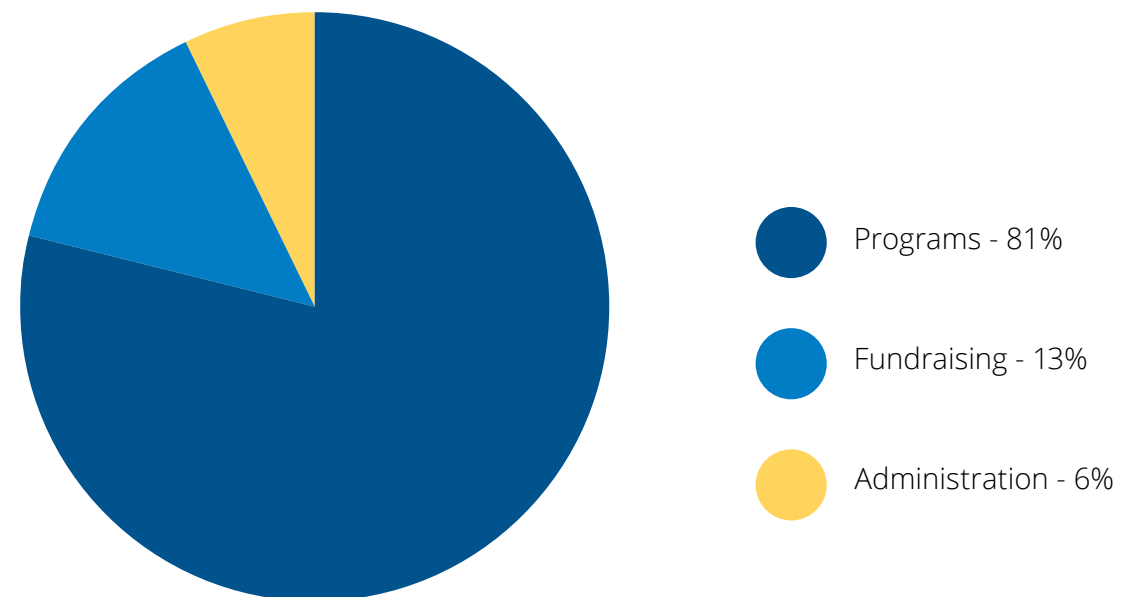
**Total Expenses: \$4,745,179**

Other Expense – Loss on Currency Translation: <\$294,599>

Other Income: \$8,672

Changes in net assets: <\$133,677>

Net assets at the end of the year: \$6,050,897



*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.*



# 2022 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.





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## EMERITUS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

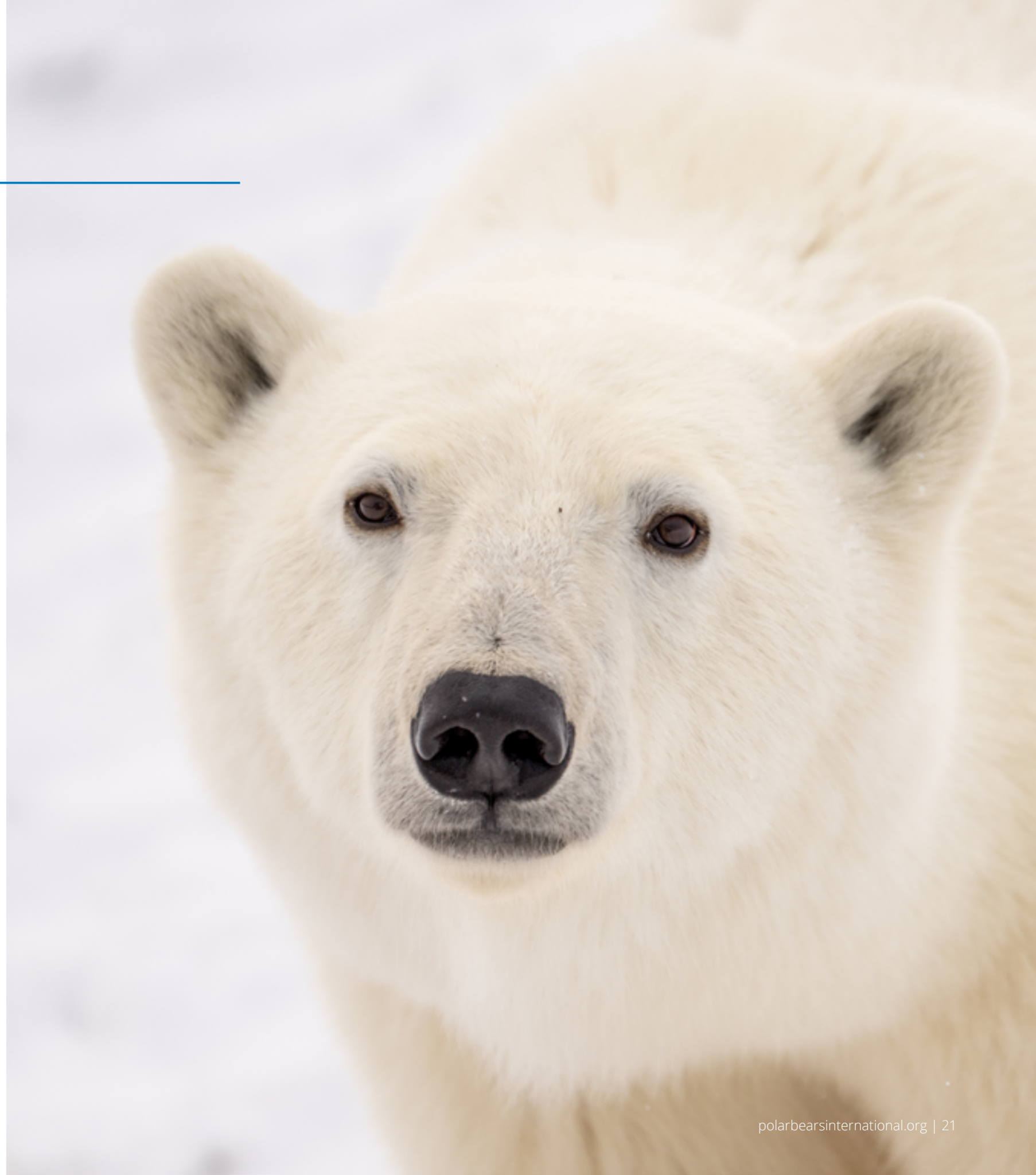
Dani Reiss

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## BOARD ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Richard P. Beck  
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Dr. Don Moore  
Sylvia Palka Melo  
Carlton Williams





# 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 2022. Your generosity sustains a lasting impact for polar bears and the Arctic they call home.





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## FIELD SUPPORT

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\* Polar Bear Patron







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

Thank you for all that you do for polar bears.

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