

2021



POLAR BEARS  
INTERNATIONAL

# Annual Impact Report





# Your impact on polar bear conservation.

From the steep, snowy mountains of Svalbard to the shores of Hudson Bay, you were with us every step of the way last year as we focused our efforts on sustaining a future for polar bears. In our annual report to members, we're pleased to share highlights of what we accomplished together in 2021 on behalf of polar bears and their sea ice home.

## Contents

Science & Research	3
Global Education	6
Conflict-Reduction	9
Policy & Advocacy	12
Outreach	15
2021 Financials	18
2021 Board of Directors	20
Sponsors & Donors	22

# Science & Research

## *Unveiling Secrets of the Arctic*

Polar Bears International has long been a leader in research that informs polar bear conservation.

**Here's what you made possible in 2021.**





## POLAR BEAR DEN STUDY

Thanks to your commitment, we continued our polar bear maternal den study in Svalbard in 2021, working with the Norwegian Polar Institute and the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance. Insights gained will help us better protect denning families during this vulnerable time. [Read more.](#)

## OTHER PROJECTS

From research on Russia's Wrangel Island to genetics studies and a long-term sea ice ecology project, we continued support for a number of key projects with partners from the University of Alberta to Environment and Climate Change Canada and Brigham Young University. [Learn more.](#)

## PROTECTING MOMS AND CUBS

Your generosity allowed us to begin developing new technology to find and map polar bear dens, which are hidden under the snow. This is critically important as more industry moves into the Arctic, threatening dens and putting moms and cubs in harm's way. [Learn more.](#)



## "DETECT TO PROTECT" RESEARCH

Being able to detect an approaching polar bear even in a heavy snowfall, fog, or the dead of night would make a real difference in keeping polar bears and people safe. Your support is allowing us to refine the use of motion-tracking radar as early warning systems. [Read our Q&A.](#)

## NEW TRACKING DEVICES

Because of you, we were able to test small, temporary "Burr on Fur" tags to track polar bears, developed through a partnership with 3M. In 2021, we tested the tags on both wild and zoo bears, and will continue to refine designs based on the results. [Watch here.](#)

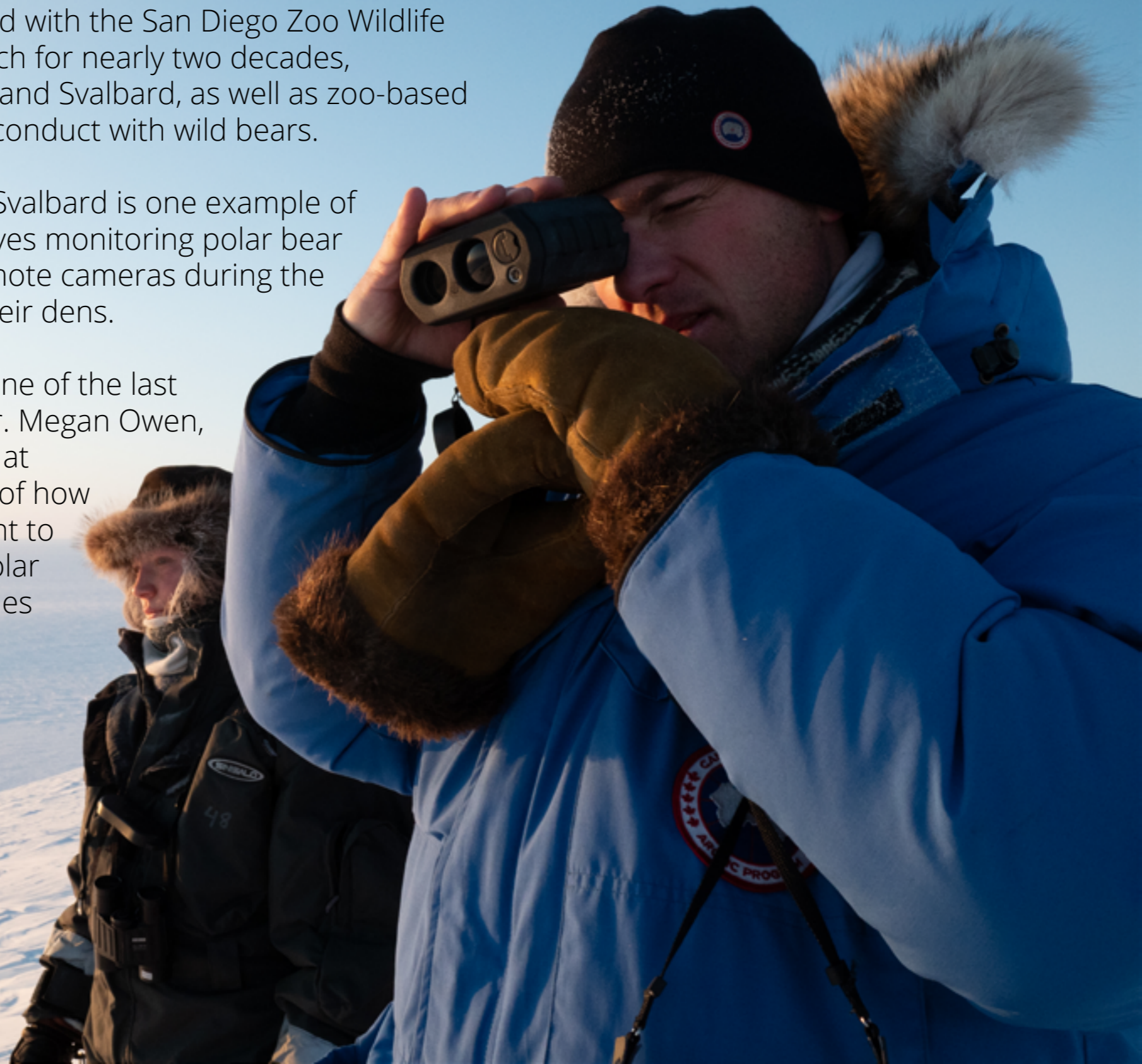
Left: © Kt Miller / Polar Bears International, Middle: © Kieran McIver / Polar Bears international, Right: © Max Lowe

# PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: SAN DIEGO ZOO WILDLIFE ALLIANCE

Polar Bears International has partnered with the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance (SDZWA) on polar bear research for nearly two decades, including field work in Alaska, Canada, and Svalbard, as well as zoo-based research that would be impossible to conduct with wild bears.

Our long-term Maternal Den Study in Svalbard is one example of our work together, a project that involves monitoring polar bear moms and cubs with non-invasive, remote cameras during the period when they first emerge from their dens.

“Polar bear maternal den research is one of the last frontiers of polar bear biology,” said Dr. Megan Owen, vice president of conservation science at SDZWA. “The study is a good example of how Polar Bears International brings us right to the front lines of polar bear habitat, polar bear management, and the communities that live with polar bears.”



# Global Education

*Igniting Curiosity, Inspiring Action*

---

Our digital outreach allows teachers, students, and life-long learners to follow their curiosity and become inspired to get involved. **Here's what you made possible in 2021.**



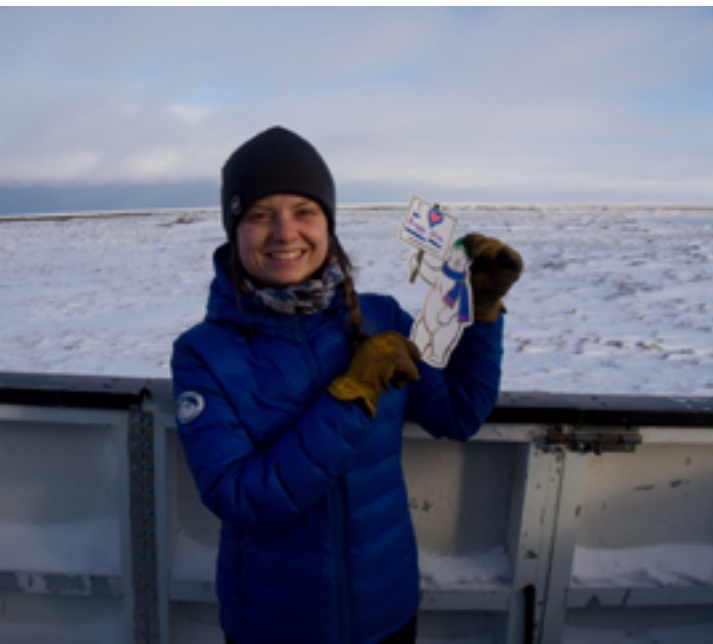
## TUNDRA CONNECTIONS® WEBCASTS

Thanks to your generosity, our live Tundra Connections webcasts and live chats reached over 200,000 people around the world in 2021, giving viewers a chance to see wild polar bears, engage with scientists, and ask questions. [Discover more.](#)



## POLAR BEAR TRACKER

Your support helps visitors understand the relationship between polar bears and sea ice as they follow real bears through the seasons on a map of Hudson Bay. The map also highlights our research projects across the Arctic. [View the Bear Tracker.](#)



## NEW WEBSITE

Because of you, we unveiled a beautiful new website in 2021, including an interactive education center with new unit and lesson plans, activities for teachers and students, fun polar bear facts, and ways to get involved. [Visit our Education Center.](#)

## EDUCATIONAL PARTNERS

From Discovery Education to Microsoft's Flipgrid, Connected North, and TakingITGlobal, your generosity supports teamwork with partners, amplifying our reach to classrooms worldwide, including students in Northern communities. [Explore our Flipgrid.](#)

## ARCTIC AMBASSADOR CENTERS

Your commitment to polar bear conservation helps sustain our network of 49 zoos and aquariums in the U.S., Canada, and Europe—greatly expanding our ability to tell the polar bears' story and motivate action while also facilitating research partnerships. [Learn more.](#)



Top: © Kt Miller / Polar Bears International, Middle: ©Simon Gee, Bottom: ©Kt Miller / Polar Bears International, Right: © Yorkshire Wildlife Park

# PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: PAWS UP FOR POLAR BEARS

Thanks to Emily Miller, a graduate student at Alaska Pacific University, we added powerful new curricula to our Education Center in 2021. Designed for grades 3-5, the engaging, solutions-based lesson plans help teach kids about polar bears and climate change.

Miller was inspired to create the Paws Up lessons as part of her master's thesis after graduating from Polar Bears International's Climate Alliance program—an experience she calls “a pivotal moment” for her as an educator. When she proposed the curricula to our education team, she mentioned the difficulty of finding simple, solutions-based lesson plans on climate change for this age group.

“This is such a great project that fits in so well with what we’re trying to do,” said Alysa McCall, our director of conservation outreach. “By reaching students and teachers, and by offering really great and interesting educational pieces about polar bears, we can help foster this new generation of conservationists.”

The lesson plans were downloaded by teachers more than 600 times in the first two months alone. A survey of those who used them overwhelmingly confirmed that the curricula made them feel more confident in teaching students about climate change.

“I am extremely proud to be working with PBI and grateful to team up on really challenging conservation issues,” she added. As long as we have the capacity to work together on solutions for polar bears, I have hope.”



# Conflict-Reduction

## *Sharing the Arctic Home*

With more polar bears coming ashore in more places as the sea ice melts, our conflict-reduction efforts are designed to keep polar bears and people safe. **Here's what you made possible in 2021.**



## POLAR SAFE COMMUNITIES

Polar bear-human conflict is a growing problem as the Arctic warms, which is why we're working with frontline communities to help them stay ahead of the curve. Your generosity has allowed us to expand the Polar Bear Safe Community concept. [Discover more.](#)

## BEAR-SAFE COMMUNITIES

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



## SAFETY MESSAGING

With polar bear encounters increasing in the North, we're working with partners to share safety messaging on how to avoid conflict. This includes polar bear safety coloring books in different languages tailored to different parts of the Arctic. [Learn more about the coloring books.](#)

## INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Professionals who work with brown bears can share insights that will help Arctic communities prepare for polar bear encounters. In 2021, your support allowed us to invite experts to Churchill to assess current practices and make recommendations. [Find out more.](#)

## WORLD RANGER DAY AWARD

Every year we help raise awareness about the courage and commitment of wildlife officers working in the Arctic to keep polar bears and people safe. Our World Ranger Day Award honors a team or an individual on the frontlines. [Meet our 2021 recipients.](#)



# PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: REDUCING ATTRACTANTS

Polar bears have a keen sense of smell and often follow their nose, which is why we know that reducing attractants is an important part of coexisting with wildlife. In 2021 we worked on a handful of projects with the waste transfer facility in Churchill, locally known as L5.

This work included supporting the first phase of a waste audit, bringing a specialist in to work with employees and community members. Additionally, we tested one of our “Bear-dar” radar systems on the roof of the building during the peak of the fall season. It was great to work with local employees at L5 and members of the community on both projects, and our team even saw two polar bears walk right in front of the radar in late October!

We feel fortunate to work with partners like the Town of Churchill on both low-tech and high-tech solutions to support ways to safely live with polar bears.





## Policy & Advocacy

*Speaking for the Bears*

---

Taking part in effecting change will not only help polar bears but people, too. **Here's what you made possible in 2021.**

## NEW DEPARTMENT

In 2021, your generosity enabled us to launch a new policy and advocacy department to complement our research, education, conflict-reduction, and outreach efforts. Building on existing programs like our Climate Alliance training, the goal is to empower each of us to help move the dial. [Take action.](#)

## U.N. CLIMATE TALKS

From representation at the COP26 climate talks to ongoing policy involvement, we're working to protect the polar bears' future. This year, you helped nine young leaders participate in COP26 and supported the BIPOC2COP initiative. [Read about COP26.](#)

## SCIENCE BASED

Our decades of peer-reviewed research on polar bears helps inform policies that impact their well-being. We strive to provide the best available science to governments, institutions, and policy makers, so they can act in the best interest of the bears. [Explore more.](#)



## POLAR BEAR SPECIALIST GROUP

Every 2 to 3 years, scientists from the 5 polar bear nations meet to set research and conservation priorities for the world's polar bears. As one of the few nonprofits invited to take part, our staff scientists regularly contribute to these high-level discussions. [Learn more.](#)

Top: © Emily Ringer / Polar Bears International, Bottom Left: © Kieran McIver / Polar Bears International, Bottom Right: © Kieran McIver / Polar Bears International

# PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: YOUNG LEADERS AT COP26

Climate action is urgently important for future generations of polar bears and people. At the U.N. Climate Conference in Glasgow, Scotland, the young generation sought to be heard amidst the commotion.

During a formal meeting between all 195 national governments and the U.N. president, Panama's negotiating team handed their precious floor time to a small group of young leaders. In this window, Panama's deputy lead negotiator, Mari Helena Castillo Mariscal, 25, delivered a speech co-written by dozens of young people at COP26, including Polar Bears International's delegation. Thanks to a strong social media push, over 21,000 young people from 140 nations co-signed the speech in less than a day. These climate negotiations are exclusive and difficult to attend so when Mari delivered the statement, she brought thousands of voices from all corners of the world into the room—reminding world leaders that limiting warming to “1.5 degrees is the simplest moral choice in all of history.” A Washington Post reporter [covered the story](#) of this intervention, and you can watch Mari deliver the statement [here](#).

# 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 2021.**



## POLAR BEAR CAMS

When people fall in love with polar bears, they're inspired to get involved with their conservation. Your support allows us to touch hearts and minds through our live Polar Bear Cams, as well as our Beluga and Northern Lights Cams, streamed in partnership with explore.org. [Watch our cams.](#)

## GLOBAL MEDIA COVERAGE

Global narratives help shape global policy, which is why we strive to share the polar bears' story with the world. In 2021, we had a global reach of 2.2 billion people, with stories in the AP, BBC, New York Times, Guardian, AFP, Smithsonian, and more. [See a video recap.](#)



## VIDEO PRODUCTION

Your support makes it possible for us to share the beauty of polar bears and the Arctic through our video outreach, educating the public and motivating action. In 2021, we had over 200,000 YouTube views and tens of thousands more on social media. [Visit our YouTube.](#)



## SOCIAL MEDIA

Because of you, we were able to add a media specialist to our team in 2021, growing our followers and deepening engagement through stories and reels. We also launched a Photography Ambassador Program, partnering with key nature influencers. [Follow us on Instagram.](#)

# PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: EXPLORE.ORG

More than 10 years ago, explore.org approached us with the idea of setting up a Polar Bear Cam in Churchill, Manitoba, the well-known polar bear gathering place. Guided by their motto of “Never Stop Learning,” explore.org’s goal is to inspire viewers to fall in love with the natural world.

The Polar Bear Cam was a huge success and we now live-stream not only polar bears from Churchill in partnership with explore.org, but also the gathering of beluga whales in late summer and the northern lights in winter.

“The cams help people experience the wonder of polar bears and the Arctic no matter where they live, which is a critical part of conservation,” said Krista Wright, executive director of Polar Bears International. “In addition, explore.org partners with us on our Tundra Connections webcasts and live chats, bringing an educational component to viewers who want to learn more about this incredible ecosystem.”

# 2021 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 – with donor restrictions: \$351,613

Contributions – unrestricted: \$3,103,309

In-kind support: \$428,946

Grants: \$296,341

---

**Total Revenue: \$4,180,209**

## EXPENSES

Programs: \$2,671,338

Management and General: \$278,816

Fundraising: \$382,268

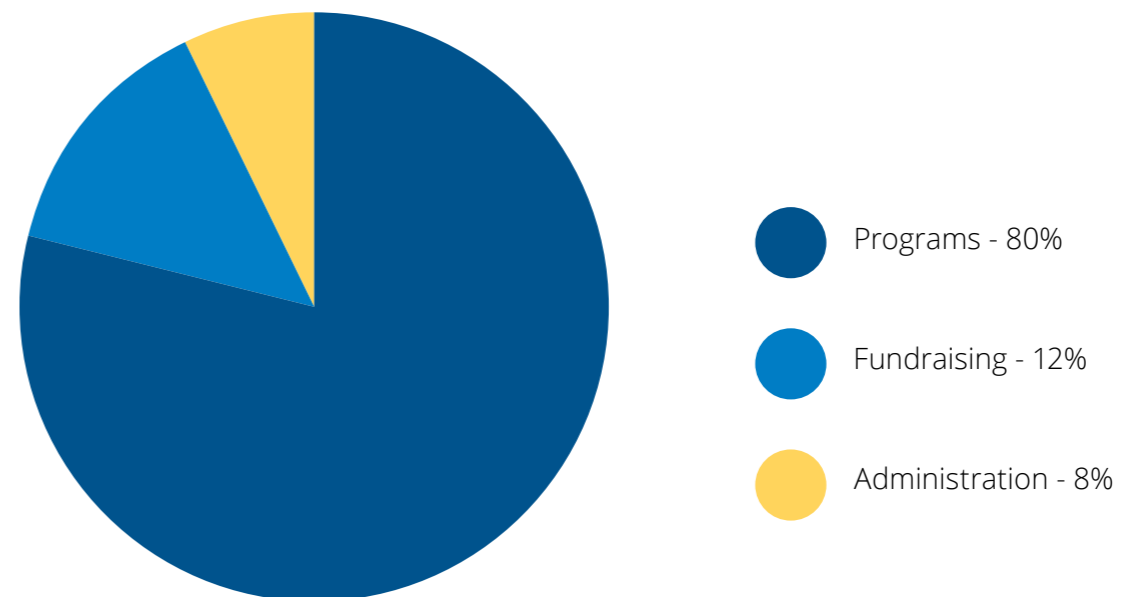
---

**Total Expenses: \$3,332,422**

Other Income (Expenses): \$22,782

Changes in net assets: \$870,569

Net assets at the end of the year: \$6,184,574



*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.*

# 2021 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

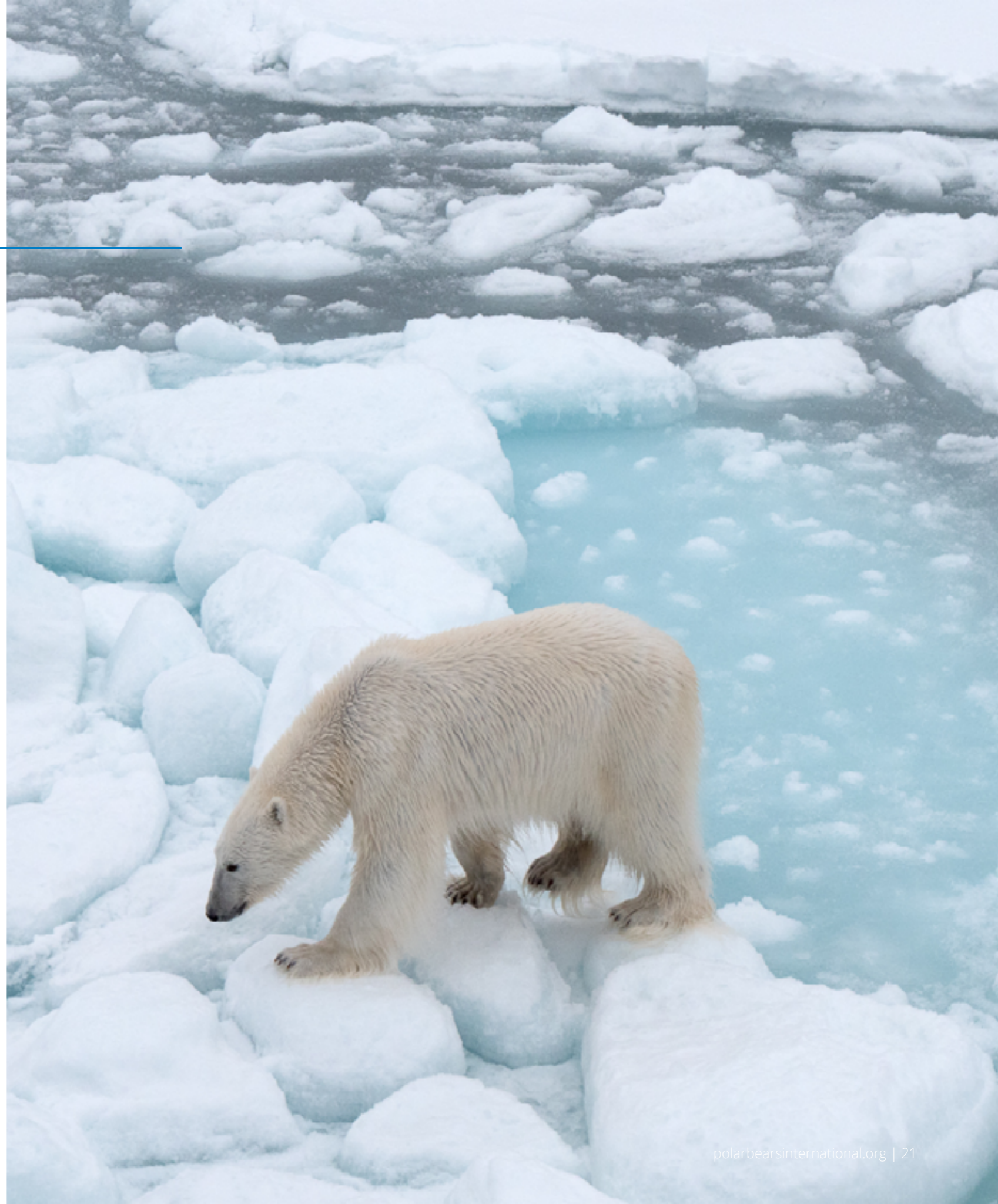
Dani Reiss

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Amy Moore, Chair  
Patrick Keeley, Vice-Chair  
Steen Dolman, Chief Financial Officer  
Kristin Biniek, Secretary  
Valerie Beck  
Penny Brook  
John Kelleher  
Jean-Pierre Parenty  
Stephanie Sluka

## BOARD ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Richard P. Beck  
Frederica Gamble  
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 Ambassador Centers, corporate sponsors, foundations, fundraisers, zoos, and partner organizations, who powered our work in 2021. Your generosity sustains a lasting impact for polar bears and the Arctic they call home.

PLATINUM

# CANADA GOOSE®



NORTHERN LIGHTS



## FIELD SUPPORT

Artemis Inc.  
Bear Safety & More Inc.  
Brigham Young University  
Calm Air International Ltd.  
Canada Goose Inc.  
Town of Churchill  
Churchill Northern Studies Centre  
Custom Churchill Tours  
Discover Churchill  
explore.org  
Frontiers North Adventures  
Holtz Construction  
Hudson Bay Helicopters  
Hudson Bay Port Co.  
Lakeview Signature, Trademark Collection  
by Wyndham  
Manitoba Sustainable Development  
MTS Allstream  
Nanuk Operations  
Norwegian Polar Institute  
San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance  
Sea North Tours  
Simon Fraser University  
Tamarack Rentals  
Tundra Inn  
The University Centre in Svalbard  
Wapusk Adventures  
Wapusk National Park  
Wa'tchee Lodge



## FOUNDATIONS & INDIVIDUALS (\$25,000+)

The Annenberg Foundation  
Burns Foundation Fund  
Environment and Climate Change Canada  
Anonymous  
Facebook Donors  
Ms. Federica Gamble  
Google Ad Grants  
The LaFetra Foundation  
Payworks Canada  
Royal Bank of Canada  
San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance  
Small Business Administration  
Utah's Hogle Zoo  
Wildlands Nature and Education Fund  
Zoologischer Garten Rostock



© Mike Lockhart



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

Thank you for all that you do for polar bears.

© 2021 Polar Bears International

