



Annual Report to Members

2015

**Your impact on
polar bear
conservation**





Our mission is to conserve polar bears and the sea ice they depend on. We also work to inspire people to care about the Arctic and its connection to our global climate.

2015

Your Impact: A Year of Hope

2015 may go down in the history books as the turning point for polar bears, the Arctic, and all of us.

World leaders came together at the Paris Climate Talks on a shared ambition to limit climate warming to 1.5° Celsius—a bold and historic step that offers hope for polar bears and their melting sea ice habitat.

Your voice and your support contributed to this global, people-powered milestone. And for that we thank you.

But sustaining a future for polar bears didn’t end in Paris. To limit climate warming to safe levels, world leaders must honor the pledges made and then go beyond them—and we’re grateful we can count on you to help to make this happen.

In fact, we’re thankful for all you do for polar bears and the Arctic. Thanks to your generosity, we’re able to fund critical scientific research related to polar bear conservation, from den and sensory studies to census counts.

Your donations make it possible for us to step up efforts related to reducing human-polar bear conflicts in a warming world, keeping bears and people safe. And your support helps us develop key polar bear conservation and management plans, working with our Arctic partners.

And, finally, your belief in us makes our global education and outreach efforts possible—from our Climate Alliance training to our top-ranked website, iTunes U channel, and Tundra Connections webcasts.

All these efforts, together, are making a difference for polar bears and their threatened ecosystem. And for that we’re grateful to you every single day.

Sincerely,

Krista Wright
Executive Director

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Winter for PBI is a busy time. It's a season of snow and cold. But it's also a time of heartfelt gratitude—inspired by **your commitment** to stand with us in the year ahead.

You make it possible for PBI field crews to repair, clean, and pack equipment before leaving for the **maternal den study** in Alaska.

You support **staff scientists** as they analyze data, write papers, and talk about their **findings** with the press and the public. And you enable us to take part in meetings on **polar bear conservation** and ways to reduce **human-polar bear conflicts**.

Your contributions also lend a helping hand to our communications and education teams as they prepare for the year ahead—beginning with our **International Polar Bear Day** celebration on February 27th. Together, we've grown awareness about this day and our **Thermostat Challenge** into an event with worldwide press and participation.

This is also the time of year when your support allows us to develop **training sessions** for outreach educators. These courses focus on polar bears, climate change, and the community and policy-level solutions needed to conserve polar bears and their sea ice home.

WINTER

Highlights

Polar Bear Protection

President Obama recommends protection for the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, a key polar bear denning area.

Maternal Den Study

PBI heads to Alaska's North Slope for the Maternal Den Study, part of an ongoing research project on den emergence behavior.

Climate Change Training

PBI educators begin a year-long training course on climate change messaging and the impacts on ocean ecosystems through NNOCCI, integrating new strategies learned into our community action campaigns.

International Polar Bear Day

PBI's February 27th awareness day attracts worldwide press. It also generates numerous outreach events and global participation in our Thermostat Challenge.

Polar Bear Recovery Team

Our senior director of conservation joins this U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service task force, embarking on a year-long effort to develop a recovery plan for Alaska's polar bears.

Reducing Human-Polar Bear Conflicts

PBI is invited to chair the Polar Bear Range States Conflict Working Group, an ongoing effort to keep bears and people safe.

“You are the reason we can work in the polar bear's world. Our hands feel the cold, but yours are doing the work, supporting our den studies and other crucial projects.”

*~ BJ Kirschhoffer,
Director of Field Operations*



photo @ BJ Kirschhoffer/polarbearsinternational.org

photo © Daniel J. Cox/NaturalExposures.com

“Polar bears on the sea ice don’t realize how much you’re helping them. But we know. And we’re grateful every day.”

~ Alysa McCall, Director of Conservation Outreach and Staff Scientist



photo @ KT Miller/polarbearsinternational.org

Highlights

Terrestrial Feeding Paper

Our chief scientist, Dr. Steven Amstrup, co-authors this research paper, showing that land-based foods are not the answer for polar bears. The findings are featured in media stories around the world.

Arctic Ambassador Centers

Working with zoo leaders and biologists, we co-host training and special events throughout the year focused on education outreach, animal well-being, and how zoos can further support field-based conservation.

Earth Day Transportation Challenge

PBI’s partners join us in promoting the Transportation Challenge on Earth Day and every day, calling for community solutions to reduce transportation-related emissions.

Project Polar Bear Winners

Year after year, young people who take part in our CO₂-reducing Project Polar Bear contest make impressive strides in igniting community change. Our 2015 teams continue that tradition.

Bear Safety Training

PBI staff take part in a polar bear safety and deterrents training session in preparation for fieldwork and the polar bear season in Churchill.

Climate Hope

Pope Francis issues an encyclical on the environment and climate change, calling action to reduce carbon emissions a moral issue—and providing hope for success at the Paris Climate Talks.

Outreach

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Longer daylight hours return to the Arctic in spring, bringing the **seal pupping season**—a time of plenty for polar bears.

Your support at this time of year includes **field research** focused on polar bear families as they emerge from their snow dens, along with **population studies** that track changes over time.

It includes **scientific papers** that add to our understanding of polar bears in a warming world, and a packed schedule of **lectures, workshops**, and speaking engagements to diverse audiences.

And it means **conferences** of polar bear and conservation experts, along with special climate-focused projects like our CO₂-reducing **Project Polar Bear contest** and our Earth Day Transportation Challenge.

You make PBI’s spring **outreach** possible, too, as we stay focused on our goal of conserving polar bears and the sea ice they depend on by achieving the reductions needed in greenhouse gas emissions.

An Arctic summer brings with it warmer temperatures and retreating ice. At PBI, we closely track the **sea ice extent** during the summer months, sharing this information with the press and public.

In this season, you make our **Arctic Sea Ice Day** celebration possible—an annual event that draws worldwide attention to summer **sea ice losses**, why they matter to polar bears, and how we each can help.

You also allow us to take part in **solutions-oriented conferences** and workshops focused on polar bears, the Arctic, and climate change. These meetings help with problems like human-polar bear conflicts and conserving polar bears in a warming world.

And, finally, you make it possible for us to **train teachers and zoo professionals** on the basics of polar bear science, the warming Arctic, and what classrooms and communities can do to combat climate change. Our zoo partners also help us with vital projects that aid **wild polar bear research**.

Thanks to you, we are **having an impact together**—even in the summer months, when most people don’t think about polar bears.

SUMMER

Highlights

Online Education

PBI continues its online mini-courses for teachers, providing STEM accreditation on polar bears, the Arctic, and climate science. We also begin work on our free iTunes U content on polar bears and a French version of our website, rolling them out in the fall.

Arctic Sea Ice Day

Our partners join us in celebrating this annual awareness day and its Greenhouse Grocery List Challenge. Our info graphics on polar bears, sea ice, and climate change are widely shared on social media and as event handouts.

Body Condition Scorecard

Our new scorecard allows scientists and people working in polar bear country to quickly and accurately assess a polar bear’s body condition on a 1 to 5 scale, from thin to obese. A version for the general public also includes information on bear safety.

Public Speaking Engagements

Through talks and presentations, PBI scientists call on wildlife supporters to take action on behalf of polar bears, including contacting their representatives in support of meaningful climate change action.

Polar Bear Range States Meeting

As ice floes melt outside the meeting room window, PBI takes part in a meeting in Greenland to assess the current status of polar bears and identify ways the polar bear nations can work together.

Polar Bear Recovery Plan

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service releases its draft recovery plan for Alaska’s polar bears, inviting comments and feedback from the public.

photo © Daniel J. Cox/
NaturalExposures.com

“You make it possible for us to work on solutions with colleagues across the polar bear nations—be they in Ilulissat, Greenland or Svalbard, Norway.”

~ Geoff York, Senior Director of Conservation



photo @ BJ Kirschhoffer/polarbearsinternational.org

“We asked, and you spoke up for meaningful action on climate change at the Paris talks—for polar bears, the Arctic, and all of us. And for that, we’re deeply grateful.”

~ Krista Wright,
Executive Director



photo @ KT Miller/polarbearsinternational.org

Highlights

Climate Alliance Training

More than a dozen zoo and aquarium professionals join us in Churchill for a week of training—capping off a months-long online course on polar bears, climate change, and how to develop community solutions.

Wildlife Society Meeting

PBI helps organize this international symposium and takes part in several sessions related to polar bear conservation and management in a warming Arctic.

Live from the Tundra!

During the annual gathering of Churchill’s polar bears, we connect people around the globe with polar bears, sea ice, and scientists via our Tundra Connections webcasts and the Polar Bear Cam.

Polar Bear Week

People around the world take PBI’s Energy Challenge and sign our Petition for Polar Bears during a week focused on polar bear conservation. CBS Sunday Morning visits, too, filming a session that airs on Valentine’s Day 2016.

Paris Climate Talks

PBI teams up with TakingITGlobal to send three members of the Youth Arctic Coalition to the summit, where they represent Arctic wildlife and indigenous people. Nearly 200 nations pledge to limit climate warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Den Detection Study

In late December, a PBI team launches a pilot project in northern Alaska to test the possibility of using Satellite Aperture Radar for detecting polar bear dens. PBI also supports population studies in Western and Southern Hudson Bay and a cortisol study involving wild and captive bears.

AUTUMN

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Polar bears in seasonal ice areas begin anticipating freeze-up as the air turns colder in autumn. This is the season when **Churchill’s polar bears** begin gathering along the coast, offering unparalleled **outreach opportunities**.

As a PBI member, your loyalty helps bring the story of Churchill’s bears to the world—through **Tundra Connections** webcasts with scientists and educators, through the **Polar Bear Cam** aired each year with partners explore.org and Frontiers North Adventures, and through **major media** from the BBC to CBS Sunday Morning.

You also make research possible at this time of year, including **den detection studies**, a new **body condition study**, and ongoing **population counts**.

Your dedication supports the development of new educational tools like videos and **iTunes U** content, used by teachers and students around the world. You also make it possible for us to train our **Climate Alliance** participants. And you speak up and make your voice heard in support of polar bears by signing **petitions**, contacting your representatives, and social media shares.

Your IMPACT

“I feel the love from PBI supporters for our outreach programs— thanks to you, we’re harnessing the power of community solutions.”

~ Janet Stringer, Development Associate

“Your support of Arctic Sea Ice Day gives us a way to reach people in the summer time, drawing attention to sea ice losses and their impact on polar bears.”

~ Barbara Nielsen, Director of Communications

“Our zoo and aquarium partners greatly expand our reach. Collectively, they reach millions of people every year who care about wildlife and conservation.”

~ Marissa Krouse, Programs Manager

“Your steadfast belief in our critical research adds to our understanding of polar bears and how we can help them. Together, we can assure a future for polar bears and people, too.”

~ Dr. Steven Amstrup, Chief Scientist



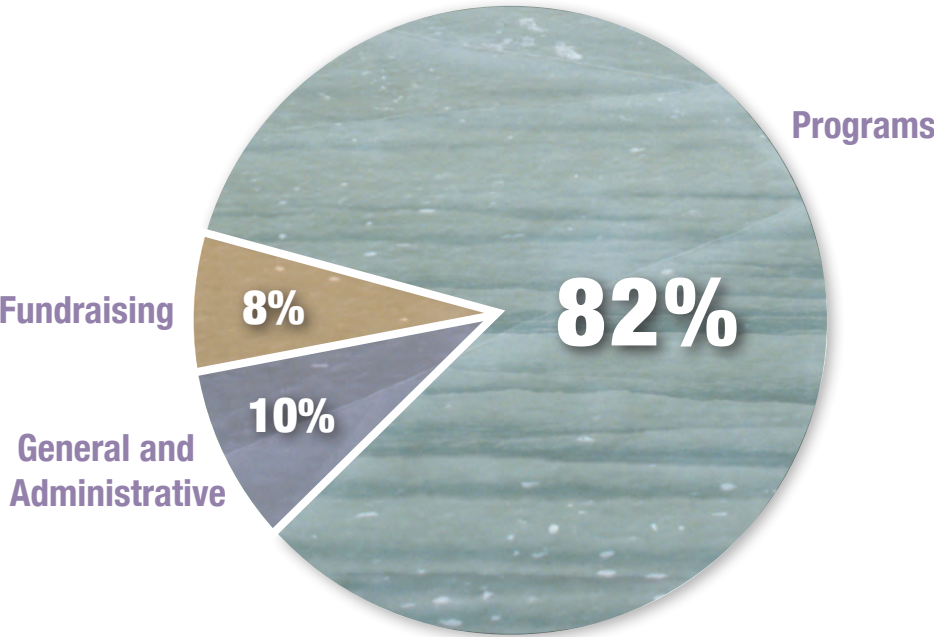
2015 SOURCE OF FUNDS

Contributions	\$	1,090,110
In-kind		581,210
Restricted contributions		521,119
Sales, net of costs of goods		14,839
Bad debt loss		(6,264)
TOTAL SUPPORT & REVENUES	\$	2,201,014

2015 USES OF FUNDS

Programs	\$	1,674,628
General and Administrative		200,501
Fundraising		167,359
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$	2,042,488

END OF THE YEAR NET ASSETS	\$	363,938
CHANGES IN NET ASSETS	\$	84,715



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- 1 Serve as *the* global resource for information regarding polar bears and their habitat.
- 2 Be the leading voice on climate warming impacts to polar bears and their Arctic home while actively seeking solutions through education, advocacy, and action.
- 3 Conduct, support, and share scientific research that informs polar bear conservation.
- 4 Educate an international audience about polar bear conservation and provide mentorship for the actions that will help ensure their survival.
- 5 Pro-actively and effectively communicate science-based information on polar bears and their conservation.
- 6 Maintain transparency in fiscal management and sound business policies and practices.
- 7 Follow best environmental practices as an organization, including minimizing our greenhouse gas footprint.



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POLAR BEARS INTERNATIONAL
PO BOX 3008
BOZEMAN, MT 59772
polarbearsinternational.org

*Sustaining a future for polar bears
across the Arctic.*

