



**POLAR BEARS
INTERNATIONAL**

**Annual Report
Fiscal Year 2009**



Who We Are and What We Do

Overview

Polar Bears International® (PBI) is dedicated to the worldwide conservation of the polar bear and its habitat through programs involving research, stewardship, and education. We focus on three main areas:

SCIENCE. We strive to disseminate only fact-based, scientifically gathered information. Our Advisory Council scientists are among the leading experts in the world of polar bear research. We help underwrite studies that document polar bear well-being—for example, population size, behavior, and birth rates, as well as the effects of climate, industry, and human contact—and other information that we share with policy-makers and the general public. As an example of the studies' effectiveness, the U.S. decision to list the polar bear as a threatened species is based largely on PBI-supported research findings.

STEWARDSHIP. We have assembled a front-line sustainability team of individuals who are developing plans to help polar bears struggling to survive in a rapidly deteriorating Arctic habitat—from orphaned cubs to injured or starving adults. Our goal is to ensure that enough bears representing a diverse gene pool remain to repopulate the Arctic.

EDUCATION. We invest heavily in programs that inform people about how each of us can and must make a difference. Ultimately, to save polar bears we must save their habitat—and that means creating awareness of their plight, changing human behavior, and investing in and using green technology.

Mission Statement

Polar Bears International is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the worldwide conservation of the polar bear and its habitat through research, stewardship, and education. We provide scientific resources and information on polar bears and their habitat to institutions and the general public worldwide.

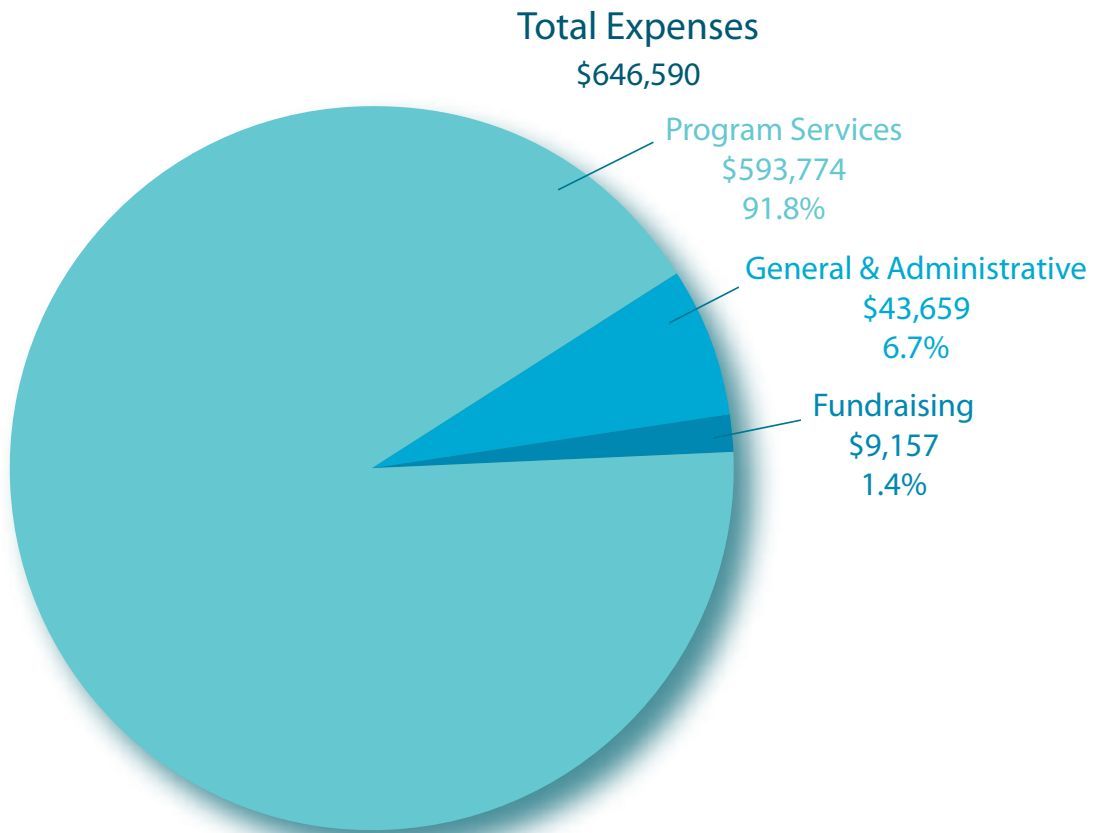
Vision Statement

To be recognized globally as the preeminent resource for polar bear information and education, and to have had a measurable impact on the preservation of polar bear habitat by 2014.

This organization is tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. It is eligible to receive contributions deductible as charitable donations for federal income tax purposes.

Financial Picture

Fiscal Year 2009



Total Support & Revenue
\$478,542

Ending Year Net Assets
\$223,113

Polar Bears International Programs 2009

SCIENCE. PBI's research initiatives are directed by our scientific Advisory Council, comprised of leading polar bear scientists from around the world. These dedicated individuals provide guidance on the most urgently needed projects in a warming Arctic. Our 2009 research focused on:

Polar Population Project. Some climate experts now predict that the Arctic could be ice-free in summer within ten years, decades earlier than the previous forecast of 2040. Yet scientists have only educated guesses for the size and condition of many of the world's polar bear populations. This project is an all-out push to take a census of the 19 polar bear populations and to understand how they are responding to sea-ice changes. The data helps guide management decisions and government policies. This year we:

- Continued to support long-term studies of the polar bears in the Southern Beaufort Sea and Western Hudson Bay. Only through such long-term studies can scientists obtain the data needed to document change. Because of these studies, we now know that the two best-studied populations—Western Hudson Bay and the Southern Beaufort Sea—are being negatively impacted by climate change. The Western Hudson Bay polar bear population has dropped by 22% since 1987; the Southern Beaufort Sea population is showing signs of stress, with smaller bears and fewer cubs.
- We took part in a mark-and-recapture effort in the Chukchi Sea to see if that population is on a path of change similar to that of the Southern Beaufort Sea population. The Chukchi Sea is experiencing some of the most dramatic sea ice losses in the Arctic and scientists are documenting how the bears are adapting to these changes.
- Funded the development of a new aerial survey method for counting polar bears. The method is needed for census efforts in parts of the Arctic that are too difficult and expensive for traditional capture-recapture approaches.

Maternal Den Study. Our maternal den study team once again studied denning mother polar bears and cubs on the North Slope of Alaska. With the help of battery-powered video cameras mounted inside white boxes, the team monitored when polar bear families emerge from the den, how long they remain at the den site before heading for the sea ice, and their physical condition. The knowledge obtained from this ongoing study will help protect the bears from industrial disturbances and document cub survival rates, which have been declining.

Satellite Collaring. Every year, we participate in collaring about a dozen bears. This allows us to track their movement patterns in response to sea ice changes. Visitors to our website can follow the bears at www.polarbearsinternational.org.

PBI Programs 2009, continued

Hearing Study. PBI has facilitated several scientific studies with zoo bears that would be impossible to conduct on bears in the wild. The hearing study is one such collaboration. A team comprised of researchers from the San Diego Zoo, SeaWorld San Diego, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service tested the hearing range of captive polar bears. Ultimately, this data will enable wildlife managers to set guidelines to protect wild denning bears from human disturbances.

Olfactory Study. Scientists believe that a solitary and wide-ranging species like the polar bear uses chemical signaling to communicate with other polar bears and find potential mates. They theorize that these scented trails are deposited by foot pads as the bears wander across the sea ice. This ongoing zoo-based study is assessing the ability of polar bears to distinguish between the sex, age, and reproductive condition of other bears based on olfactory clues. Scent samples collected from the footpads of wild polar bears were presented to their captive counterparts at a variety of North American zoos. The study will add to our understanding of the polar bear's behavioral and ecological needs and may be important in the management of wild polar bears.

STEWARDSHIP. PBI Polar Bear Sustainability Alliance team focuses on polar bear conservation concerns. It builds on PBI's reputation as a nimble, apolitical organization that brings together stakeholders from all perspectives to facilitate discussion and understanding. Team members and advisors represent a wide range of professional expertise from zoo professionals to nonprofits, government agencies, wildlife managers, and field biologists. These individuals are developing plans to help polar bears that are struggling to survive in a rapidly deteriorating Arctic habitat—from orphaned cubs to injured or starving adults. The goal is to ensure that enough bears representing a diverse gene pool remain to repopulate the Arctic.

Sustainability Alliance. This unique team of experts have identified five key conservation challenges that the global community will face as it prepares to respond to the accelerating loss of polar bear habitat. In 2009, they drafted a menu of options for meeting these challenges and began fine-tuning program details. Their work focused on developing a set of possible programs from which decision-makers could choose and to have those programs advanced enough in development that they could be implemented with minimal delay.

PBI Programs 2009, continued

The five challenges include:

1. *Education.* The team recognizes that, ultimately, humans must change their behavior in order to help reverse the global climate crisis and save the polar bears' sea ice habitat.
2. *Human-Polar Bear Conflicts.* Encounters between humans and polar bears are expected to increase as the sea ice melts and the bears are driven ashore. Team members held an international workshop for wildlife managers to share information on how they manage human-polar bear conflicts. They are now developing training programs and identifying needed resources to help communities live safely with polar bears.
3. *Industrial Disturbances.* As the oil and gas industry expands into previously untouched polar bear habitat and Arctic shipping increases, polar bears will increasingly face disturbances. Team members are developing strategies to minimize potential disturbances and to help compromised bears. This could include, for example, rehabilitation efforts if bears are affected by oil spills and guidelines that shield denning bears from industrial disturbances. In fiscal year 2009, team members strengthened their global network of contacts in the Far North, took part in informational meetings that brought stakeholders together to find common ground, and took part in assessments to determine the equipment and supplies needed for rescue and rehab efforts.
4. *Orphaned Cubs or Compromised Bears.* As the sea ice retreats, scientists expect an increase in orphaned cubs and starving or otherwise compromised bears.
5. *Husbandry Standards.* The team is developing a set of global husbandry standards for polar bears living in zoos or managed environments to ensure the well-being of the bears.

EDUCATION. Scientists believe that we have just five years in which to reverse the build-up of greenhouse gases before we reach the tipping point with global climate change—although it will take 30 to 40 years for significant changes to show. To communicate this message and rally the public, PBI has developed effective education programs and outreach efforts that touch millions of people every year. Some aspects of the programs are directed at students, the leaders of tomorrow. Others are geared towards adults, including teachers, zoo professionals, and community leaders.

PBI Programs 2009, continued

PBI Leadership Camp. The PBI Teen Leadership Camp provides top students from around the world with the opportunity to live for a week on the tundra near Churchill, Manitoba, to witness the annual migration of polar bears. Camp is designed to help educate the teens about polar bears and the issues they face—and to inspire them to return to their communities to make a difference. Graduates of the program reach hundreds of thousands of people through media interviews and presentations. In addition, the teens become passionate advocates for conservation, launching recycling programs, awareness campaigns, tree-planting initiatives, and other carbon-reducing efforts. In 2009, PBI expanded the camp to two groups of teens.

PBI Project Polar Bear®. Teams of teens across the U.S. and Canada enthusiastically embraced this binational contest, first held in 2008. Project Polar Bear invites teams of students to develop community projects that reduce the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere—a concept that reflects PBI's belief in the power of kids motivating other kids. The top 12 finalists in this year's contest reduced the annual carbon footprint in their communities by nearly 17 million pounds!

PBI Arctic Ambassador Centers. PBI has established a network of Arctic Ambassador Centers in zoos around the world. AACs focus on animal well-being and enrichment, take a leadership role in carbon reduction in their communities, and participate in PBI polar bear research efforts. Many also support polar bear conservation through the PBI Polar Bear Sustainability Alliance. PBI develops educational programs for these zoos, which connect with millions of people.

PBI Tundra Connections®. Every fall, PBI assembles a team of leading scientists and educators in Churchill, Manitoba, to lead live video conferences and webcasts from the tundra that link to students, universities, and businesses. Webcasts are led by Julene Reed, an Apple Distinguished Educator and PBI Advisory Council member. They help the public understand the problems facing polar bears, raise awareness of how each of us can help, and motivate action.

Churchill Field Ambassadors. During the fall polar bear migration, PBI arranges in-field talks by top zoo professionals at no charge to tour operators. These zoologists board the tundra buggies that serve as polar bear watching platforms for Churchill visitors, educating them about polar bears, climate change, and the role that PBI plays in helping the bears.

Social Media. PBI's presence on social media sites including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Flickr helps keep polar bears and climate change top-of-mind with PBI members and those who care about wildlife and the planet. The daily tidbits create a sense of community and involve fans in taking action to help the bears.

PBI Programs 2009, continued

PBI Website. For more than a decade, our website, www.polarbearsinternational.org, has served as *polar bear central* for all individuals and organizations with an interest in polar bears and their environment. The site features extensive information pertaining to research and education, including bear facts, news reports, conference summaries, teachers curriculums, photos, maps, conservation issues, video clips, and green tips. The site generates millions of visitors every year from all over the world and regularly is in the top three sites listed by search engines.

PBI Newsletters. PBI's quarterly publication is both fun and informative. It keeps members apprised of the ever-changing and complex issues that surround polar bears and the Far North. In addition to printed copies, the newsletter is posted on our website, where it reaches hundreds of thousands of people. In fiscal year 2010, PBI will make the transition from a quarterly printed newsletter to a monthly eNewsletter, PbiNews. The new, online newsletter is all part of our effort to be as *green* as we can be in our work.

Interpretive Kits and Educational Materials. Through its Arctic Ambassador Center program, PBI distributes educational materials to zoos with polar bears. Each kit includes a polar bear skull replica, a claw replica, a sample of polar bear fur, a satellite collar, ear tags, plus images, maps, and mini posters. To meet the needs of school children and zoo educators, PBI created posters with a powerful polar bear image on the front and *Bear Facts* on the back, including information on climate change and what each of us can do to help. These handouts are widely used by zoos during *Bear Awareness Week* and in classrooms.

Our People

Founder

DAN GURAVICH. In 1992, Canadian native and wildlife photographer Dan Guravich, internationally known for his work with polar bears, founded Polar Bears Alive, now known as Polar Bears International. Dan served as our first president. He resigned in 1995 for health reasons, but was chairman of the board until his death in 1997.

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Dr. Nikita Ovsyanikov, Wrangel Island Nature Reserve, Russia

Scott Schliebe, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, United States

Dr. Thomas S. Smith, Brigham Young University, United States

Dr. Ian Stirling, Canadian Wildlife Service, Canada

Dr. Ronald R. Swaisgood, San Diego Zoo, Center for Reproduction of Endangered Species, U.S.

Dr. Jane Waterman, University of Central Florida, studies based in Canada

Geoff York, climate change, human-bear conflicts

Zoo Professionals Advisory Council

Amy Cutting, Oregon Zoo, Chair of PBI's Sustainability Alliance
Shane Good, Cleveland Metroparks Zoo, Keeper Outreach
Kerrie Haynes-Lovell, Sea World Australia, Polar Bear Curator, PBI Australia
Dr. Lydia Kolter, Cologne Zoo, Germany, Co-Chair of EAZA Bear TAG
Dr. Randi Meyerson, Toledo Zoo, Chair Polar Bear Species Survival Plan (SSP)
Dr. Don Moore, Smithsonian Institution, Animal Enrichment
Megan Owen, San Diego Zoo, Institute for Conservation Research, Science
Carmi Penny, San Diego Zoo, Co-chair PBI's Sustainability Alliance
Dr. Holly Reed, Point Defiance Zoo, Veterinary Issues
Dr. David Shepherdson, Oregon Zoo, Animal Welfare
JoAnne Simerson, San Diego Zoo, Behavior Management
Diana Weinhardt, Minnesota Zoo, Biology
Bill Winhall, SeaWorld San Diego Assistant Curator of Mammals

Educational and Field Support Advisory Council

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Merv Gunter, Frontiers North, Churchill Bears
Parker Fitzpatrick, L & D Cable, Churchill, In-Field
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Irene Merie, Partners in the Park, Parks & Culture
Pat Murphy, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Reforestation
Kathy Myers, San Diego Zoo, Subadults
Julene Reed, Apple Distinguished Educator, Online Curriculum & Distance Learning
Norbert Rosing, Europe, Wildlife Photography
Mike Spence, Mayor of Churchill, Wat'Chee Lodge Proprietor
Robert Taylor, Canada, Wildlife Photography
Bill Watkins, Manitoba Conservation, Biology
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