



WWF

FACTSHEET



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# KEEPING PEOPLE AND POLAR BEARS SAFE

WWF works to reduce conflict between humans and polar bears, helping communities live safely alongside the Arctic's top predator.

As Arctic sea ice thins and retreats, increasing numbers of polar bears are spending longer periods in the summer open-water season resting along Arctic coastlines. Here, their powerful sense of smell attracts them to human waste, stored food, dog teams, and animal carcasses—bringing them into greater conflict with Arctic people.

As powerful predators, polar bears pose a major risk to human life and property. Throughout the polar bear's range, attacks on humans and property continue to rise. In recent years, more than 20 direct attacks on humans have been reported within the polar bear's range.

Along with local communities, governments, industry and other NGOs, WWF develops innovative methods to reduce and mitigate the effects of human-polar bear conflicts such as:

1. Improved waste management and food storage to make communities less attractive to polar bears
2. Non-lethal defense measures to reduce the number of bears killed to protect human life and property

# WHAT WE'RE DOING



## BE ALERT for Polar Bears

As return with the pack ice the North Slope of Alaska. and to communities as they may be moving along by travel. These are cubs and juvenile bears.

Bears roaming long pack ice in search of food, cages, remote sites, or ring their travels. Daylight bears travel under the



### WHAT YOU CAN DO TO PREVENT PROBLEMS

- Be aware of your surroundings to allow early detection
- Reduce attractants around your residence such as food and garbage left in the open
- Be careful around open water leads or animal carcasses
- Do not approach bears - it is illegal to harass polar bears
- If a bear is sighted, contact NSB Police Dept or NSB-DWM



## ALASKA

Along the northern coast of Alaska, WWF supports several active polar bear patrols and education programs. Food storage containers and diversionary feeding stations are being tested. The Alaska Nanuq Commission, which is the primary Native organization to advance the conservation of polar bears, is drafting conflict deterrence plans with northern Alaska communities.

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## RUSSIA

Along the Russian Arctic coast, several polar bear patrol units have been operating with help from WWF since 2006. These patrols are not only protecting villages from polar bears, but are also conducting polar bear monitoring and research. We have mapped conflict hotspots to better understand where to focus resources.

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## CANADA

In the community of Arviat in Western Hudson Bay, WWF supports a polar bear patrol, active in the peak fall migration season. We also support pilot projects with food storage containers, solar-powered electric fencing and diversionary feeding stations. In the long term, we're working towards a coordinated approach across Nunavut and Manitoba.

© HAMLET OF ARVIAT



## GREENLAND

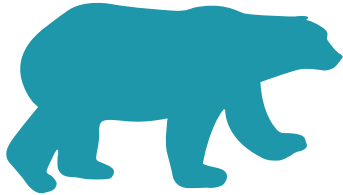
In 2015, Greenland's first polar bear patrol launched in the village of Ittoqqortoormiit. In addition to supporting the patrol, WWF provides feedback on how the village could improve polar bear safety. We will help improve and expand this work in Ittoqqortoormiit and other villages in the coming years.

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# HOW YOUR SUPPORT HELPS

With your help, WWF is able to support local organizations to reduce conflicts between people and polar bears.



**7 DEADLY CONFLICTS  
AVERTED EACH YEAR**  
ON AVERAGE, 7 FEWER POLAR BEARS  
ARE KILLED EACH YEAR IN DEFENSE  
OF LIFE AND PROPERTY IN ARVIAT,  
CANADA, THANKS TO A SUCCESSFUL  
PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN WWF AND  
THE HAMLET OF ARVIAT.

*“What the community needs is additional freezers for dog food since the community freezer is full with people food. Freezers in big shipping containers, powered by solar or something would be useful.”*

Leo Ikakhik & Michael Aragalak,  
polar bear monitors, Arviat, Canada

## Education

We share information with local communities, scientists and commercial sectors (tourism, mineral extraction) on preventing conflicts and dealing with polar bears.

## Food storage and waste management

We work with communities to improve waste management, safely store food for people and dogs, and to remove animal carcasses from towns.

## Polar bear patrols

We fund training and salaries for local people who deter polar bears from villages and safeguard communities.

## Sharing knowledge across the Arctic

We organize workshops and exchange visits between Arctic communities facing polar bear conflict. For example, members of the Russian polar bear patrols traveled to Alaska with WWF's support to help communities there launch their own patrols.

## Tracking conflict

We promote the Polar Bear Human Interaction Management System (PB-HIMS), a database that will inform management decisions to reduce human-polar bear conflicts. This system captures data on bear sightings, polar bear natural history and management, and human-polar bear interactions.



WWF/ ELISABETH KRUGER



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*“I think there are few places like Ryrkaypy, where every year we meet walrus and polar bears. We’re proud of it, and want to keep what we have.”*

**Tatiana Mineko, Polar Bear Patrol, Ryrkaypy, Russia**

In 2006, WWF worked with the community of Vankarem, Russia to develop the Umky Patrol, the first Polar Bear Patrol. Since then, the patrol has preserved walrus haulouts and protected people from the polar bears attracted to the haulouts, so all can co-exist harmoniously. Today, WWF supports polar bear patrols across Russia’s Arctic coast, as well as in Greenland, Canada and Alaska.



**Why we are here**

To stop the degradation of the planet’s natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

[panda.org/arctic](http://panda.org/arctic)

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