



Polar Bear Profiles

Canadian Polar Bear Habitat

Ganuk

Age: 10

Date of birth: November 30, 2009

Place of birth: Zoo Sauvage de Saint-Félicien, Quebec

Arrival at the Habitat: June 2012

Name: *Ganuk* is an Inuktitut word that means *snowflake*, and he is certainly one-of-a-kind

Ganuk, the son of Inukshuk, was born at Zoo Sauvage de Saint-Félicien with his twin sister Taiga in 2009. There, he met Eddy for the first time, though the two did not have direct contact and did not seem to enjoy each other's company. Ganuk arrived at the Habitat in 2012 after having been separated from his mother and sister in 2011.

In 2016, Ganuk and Henry were introduced, and their relationship has developed well since. The time he spends with Henry encourages him to be more active – something he isn't always motivated to do on his own.

As Ganuk is the longest resident at the Habitat, he is also the most familiar with the procedures involved in his care, and he has been known to use his knowledge to his advantage.

Ganuk responds well to voluntary training and is often the first of the bears to learn a new behaviour or participate in a new aspect of medical care. He was the first to voluntarily give blood, the first to participate in ultrasound exams, and remains the only bear to roll over in the training crate.

Ganuk expects his food to be prepared just-so. He happily eats seal meat and moose meat, but he avoids highly nutritious seal blubber and fish heads unless they are ground up with other food – a task that is time-consuming for the personnel at the Habitat. And if his food is presented in a container that is not to his liking, he will simply walk away. Ganuk tends to lumber along at his own pace, and he avoids being outside when it's raining.

While the bears' weights fluctuate seasonally, Ganuk is usually our heaviest bear at between 1,000 and 1,100lbs (450 to 500kg). Even so, he is the least likely to initiate a sparring match with the others.

Ganuk and Eddy still seem not to enjoy each other's' company.

Henry

Age: 7

Date of birth: May 9, 2013

Place of birth: Sea World Gold Coast, Australia

Arrival at the Habitat: October 2015

Name: Henry was named after sea explorer Henry Hudson, who was the first European to see the Hudson Bay.

At the time of his birth, Henry was the first polar bear born in Australia in 30 years. He stayed with his mother until he was two, and then she started showing signs of wanting to separate from him, as would happen in the wild.

Henry moved from Australia to the Habitat in October of 2015, but he still has a dedicated following from his birthplace.

Between separating from his mother, relocating, changing hemispheres, and being introduced to a new environment complete with new people, new foods, and more variable seasons, it was a challenging time for him.

Henry took an instant liking to Canadian snow. It took him a bit longer to warm up to moose meat, seal meat, and seal blubber, although now seal blubber is among his favourite things.

His introduction to Ganuk in 2016 represented a turning point for Henry, as he seemed to finally settle in at the Habitat. His progress continued after his introduction to Inukshuk in 2018.

He enters pools bum first, he enjoys crushing ice that forms on the pools or the lake, and he actively chases the ravens that try to steal his food. Henry is most likely to swim in the winter and interact with the ice that forms in the pool.

Henry can be counted on to poop in his room and stink up bear holding as everyone is settling in for the night.

Although Henry is sexually mature and a healthy 850lbs (385kg), he will continue to grow for a few more years. He is expected to top 1,000lbs (450kg).

Inukshuk

Age: 17

Date of birth: Winter of 2002/2003

Place of birth: In the wild near Fort Severn, Ontario

Arrival at the Habitat: 2016 full-time (2012 initial)

Name: Inukshuk is an Inuktitut word for the marker stones or cairns which are built in the Arctic tundra, probably as landmarks. The literal meaning of the word is “that which acts in the capacity of a human.”

Inukshuk was orphaned near Fort Severn when he was about two months old, in early 2003. He was kept overnight at the local police station then moved to the Toronto Zoo, since young bears need at least two years with their mothers to learn how to hunt in the Arctic.

Since 2012, he has spent most of his time at the Habitat, returning to the Toronto Zoo occasionally. He has been at the Habitat permanently since 2016. In his time at other facilities, he fathered five cubs: Ganuk, Taiga, Hudson, Humphrey, and Juno.

When care staff at the Habitat first met Inukshuk, he was a bit misunderstood. However, with lots of time and dedication from both care staff and Inukshuk, they were able to connect with him and better understand his needs.

Now, he is the most likely to spend time in the company of people, and he is comfortable enough that he often falls asleep near animal care staff.

He is the bear most likely to nap in a pool – or anywhere, for that matter. Inukshuk tends to dig himself daybeds in the snow, grass, dirt, or other substrate in his environment. He also has a unique napping position, with his arms back and his rear end in the air, although Ganuk is now starting to learn this technique.

When Inukshuk was introduced to Henry and Ganuk in 2018, it was the first time he had direct contact with any other males. It quickly became clear that he would be the one to set the rules (Henry sometimes forgets this). His time with Henry in particular has been positive for Inukshuk’s muscle development and has enhanced his ability to communicate with other bears.

Inukshuk seems the most excited by food, and seal blubber is his favourite.

After four years of training, Inukshuk voluntarily gave blood for the first time in 2020. He was the last of the bears to do so.

Inukshuk usually weighs around 1,000lbs (450kg) and is the polar bear at the Habitat who is most like the characteristic full-grown male.

Eddy

Age: 20

Date of birth: December 10, 1999

Place of birth: Zoo Sauvage de Saint-Félicien, Quebec

Arrival at the Habitat: February 2019

Eddy is visiting from the Quebec Aquarium, where he has been since 2002, while his enclosure is updated back home. When he returns to Quebec sometime later this year, he will be joined by two male bears, Humphrey and Hudson.

Eddy was living at the Quebec Aquarium when Ganuk was born, and at the time, his care staff reported that he did not like being around Ganuk. This remains true today.

Since having access to the lake enclosure at the Habitat, Eddy has spent a great deal of time swimming and exploring the water and surrounding shores. He eats cattails that he pulls from the water and he has taken to interacting with enrichments in the water, too. In the winter, he used the lake's ice platform a few times, but was much more interested in rolling around in the slush when the lake started to melt in the spring.

He also enjoys rolling around in snow, and during the spring thaw, manages to find the smallest patches of snow.

He also likes to find deciduous trees or branches to gnaw on the bark, much to the chagrin of his animal care staff, who are responsible for cleaning his bark-filled feces.

Eddy is considered the pickiest eater of the bears at the Habitat. It took him some time to adjust to his diet at the Habitat, but now seems rather fond of seal blubber and moose meat.

Eddy enjoys a nap as much as Inukshuk, but he is less inclined to dig a daybed for himself and instead uses Inukshuk's daybeds. Inukshuk doesn't seem to mind.

Eddy is very responsive to training and listens well when his care staff asks him for certain behaviours. He was a helpful patient when he required eye drops earlier this year.

Because Eddy is familiar with many behaviours in French but has also learned a number of behaviours in English in his time at the Habitat, Eddy could be considered a bilingual polar bear.