

# **Polar bears at Doncaster's Yorkshire Wildlife Park mark tenth anniversary**

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**Section:** EMERGENCY INCIDENT

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**Highlight:** The tenth annivesary of ***polar bears*** at Doncaster’s Yorkshire Wildlife Park has been marked with a spotlight on helping to save the impressive creatures.

**Body**

Marking the 10th anniversary of Project ***Polar*** at the park, the world’s largest collection of ***polar bears*** is helping focus attention on the fight to save the iconic Arctic species.

***Polar bears*** are classified by the IUCN as Vulnerable (VU) on the basis of a projected reduction in global population size due to loss of sea ice habitat and are often used as a symbol of the impact of climate change.

***Polar bear*** mum Flocke and daughter Tala enjoyed being in the spotlight in their reserve as the park welcomed International ***Polar Bear*** Day earlier this week, a date chosen to coincide with the time that mums and cubs come out of their dens after winter hibernation.

The award-winning Yorkshire Wildlife Park, home to eight ***polar bears***, recently hosted the International ***Polar Bear*** Conference where experts in conservation met to agree strategies to protect species numbers and share knowledge about the ***bears*** both in zoos and wildlife parks and in the wild.

The conference, was boosted by the Wildlife Foundation, a charity based at the park, announcing an annual £10,000 donation to the ***Polar Bears*** International (PBI), an organisation dedicated to the conservation of the species.

The Foundation has also supported a study of ***polar bear*** mums and cubs in Svalbard, Norway, looking at the various impacts on maternal denning.

‘A couple years ago we welcomed our mum Flocke and her three cubs, Tala, Indy and Yuma,’ says Senior Carnivore Ranger Amy Bowden.

‘The Wildlife Foundation supports Polars ***Bears*** International, whose mission is to protect the wild ***polar bears***.’

‘This year we are celebrating 10 years being an arctic ambassador for PBI. The reduction in sea ice is causing our ***polar bears*** to have to swim for further and longer. This is reducing their fat stores and making it harder for ***Polar Bears*** to survive.'

Scientists predict that ***Polar Bears*** may become extinct by the end of the century unless action is taken to mitigate man-made climate change but collaborators are stepping up efforts to protect the vulnerable species.

‘International ***Polar Bear*** Day is an incredibly important reminder of the vulnerability of this wonderful species,’ says Yorkshire Wildlife Park’s Director of Animals Charlotte McDonald. “The ***Polar Bear*** Conference showed us how effective collaborative work can be and how global leaders and experts need to come together to protect these animals

‘We were very proud of the Foundation’s £10,000 donation to PBI, a symbol of the contribution to research and conservation. Much of the monies will have been donated by visitors to the park. I am excited to see where this takes us and what we can do to continue to care for this species.’”

***Polar Bears*** are the largest living land carnivore on the planet but several of the 19 subpopulations of the native Arctic ***Bear*** are at risk of extinction due to climate change.

YWP’s world-class Project ***Polar*** is at the forefront of efforts to save the species. Spanning 12 acres, its meticulous design replicates the Arctic tundra found in North Canada during the summer and has several lakes one of which is an acre in size and contains over 25.5 million gallons of water.

**Graphic**

The event marked the tenth annivesary of Project ***Polar*** at the Yorkshire Wildlife Park.

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