

Assiniboine Park Zoo Marks International Polar Bear Day with Awareness and Activities in Support of Polar Bear Conservation

For immediate release: Winnipeg, February 24, 2022 – International Polar Bear Day (February 27) is an annual day of awareness created by Polar Bears International that coincides with the time period when polar bear moms and cubs are in their dens. The survival of cubs is critical for the species, making denning season a particularly vulnerable time for polar bears.

“International Polar Bear Day brings awareness to how polar bears in our province are being impacted by climate change,” said Grant Furniss, Senior Director of Animal Care and Conservation. “This is a great opportunity for Zoo visitors to connect with our bears and learn about polar bear conservation and how they can help polar bears in the wild.”

The Assiniboine Park Zoo is actively engaged in a number of conservation science projects at the Zoo and in the field that are enhancing our understanding of polar bears and contributing to the conservation of polar bears in the wild. This includes:

- testing of non-invasive burr-on-fur tracking tags,
- researching polar bear hair growth to validate studies of wild polar bears,
- using thermal imaging to study polar bear energy expenditure from a distance,
- tracking hormone changes in polar bears (using glitter poo), and
- mapping important polar bear denning habitats in Manitoba that may be at risk from wildfires.

The Zoo has planned special activities to mark International Polar Bear Day and raise awareness about the important role modern zoos play in the conservation and protection of the species.

Polar Bear Paw Print Artwork Auction (February 26 – March 31)

Bid on a one-of-a-kind piece of paw print artwork created by Star the polar bear specially for International Polar Bear Day. This *pawsitively* unique 27.5” x 19.5” piece of art is framed and matted and will be on display at Wild Things Unique Gifts at the Zoo entrance. Bids open on Saturday, February 26 and close on Thursday, March 31.

Polar Bear Handprint Craft Kits (Sunday, February 27)

Stop in at the Gateway to the Arctic building on Sunday, February 27 and pick up a polar bear handprint craft kit to complete at home. The kit comes with the materials you need to create your own little work of art. *Kits are free and available while quantities last. Donations are welcome.*

Polar Bear Scavenger Hunt (Sunday, February 27)

I spy a polar bear! Which one is it? What are they doing? When you visit the Zoo, you might see polar bears swimming, eating, playing, or having a nap. Explore the Journey to Churchill exhibit, watch the polar bears and what they’re doing, and check off as many boxes as you can! Activity sheets can be downloaded from our website or picked up at the Gateway to the Arctic building.

-2-

Proceeds of the art auction and donations support the work of the Assiniboine Park Conservancy's Polar Bear Rescue & Care Team.

The Zoo is open daily from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Proof of vaccination is required for all guests 12 years of age and older. Masks are mandatory indoors and encouraged outdoors when physical distancing is not possible. Guests are encouraged to purchase tickets online to facilitate contactless entry and reduce interaction with staff.

Please visit assiniboinepark.ca for more information.

- 30 -

For interviews and information requests, please contact:
Laura Cabak, Director, Communications & Public Relations
E: lcabak@assiniboinepark.ca C: 204-795-0091