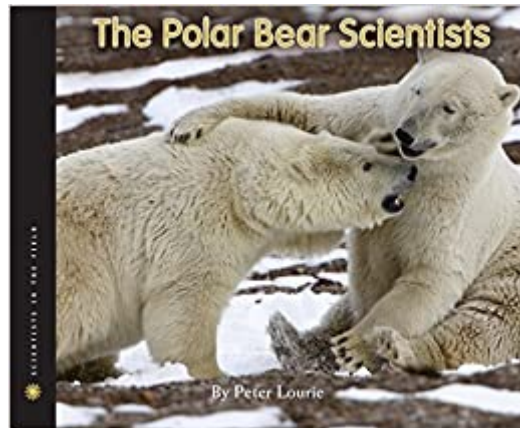




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The Polar Bear Scientists (Scientists In The Field Series)



Synopsis

Follow scientists as they scan the Alaskan wilderness for these magnificent creatures. It is springtime on the North Slope of Alaska, and the U.S. Geological Survey team—the polar bear biologists Kristin Simac and Mike Lockhart—is gearing up for polar bear capturing. During a capture, all information is collected on the sea ice. The scientists locate bears from a helicopter, tranquilize them, give them tattoo ID numbers and tags, and collect data such as height, weight, and body fat measurements and samples such as blood, hair, feces, and even teeth. All this information goes into a large database studied by scientists such as Drs. Steven Amstrup and George Durner, the former and current leaders of the Polar Bear Research Project. For more than forty-five years, scientists have been capturing bears in order to get information. What has this information been telling scientists about polar bears and global warming?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"The full-color photographs are nothing short of stunning."--School Library Journal
"An informative, vicarious trip to the Arctic for polar bear enthusiasts and future scientists."--Booklist

Peter Lourie is the author and photographer of *Whaling Season*, which received two starred reviews, and *The Manatee Scientists*. Peter lives in Vermont with his family and he is an avid traveler. He visited Alaska numerous times to write and shoot photos for *The Polar Bear*

Scientists and has been traveling to Africa to work on his next book about the Leakey family. Visit Peter Lourie's website at <http://www.peterlourie.com/>.

An excellent resource with a great deal of information about Polar bears.

love!

The life of a polar bear scientist. The polar bears themselves. Alaska. In his recent presentation about adventure writing, Peter Laurie emphasized that appeal of his career lies in the information he learns, the people he meet, and the places he visits. The same holds true for me in my reading of his nonfiction text, *Polar Bear Scientists*. What most fascinates and impresses me about the life of a polar bear scientist is the capture. First, the scientists travel by helicopter along the coast, following the land-fast ice, until polar bear tracks are spotted. Only new tracks are followed, but scientists will still some days cover hundreds of miles without seeing polar bears. Once a bear is spotted, and the team determines that they can safely attempt a capture run, the size of the bear is estimated so that the scientists can decide the amount of tranquilizer to use. Next, the helicopter will descend to twenty-five feet above the polar bear and the designated scientist will dart the bear. Then the scientists land and begin to gather information about the drugged bear. Throughout the entire process, including the work on the ground, scientists ensure that the polar bear remains out of danger from the elements and from other predators. This often involves repositioning the polar bear, keeping its body at the right temperature, and circling the area to check for the presence of other bears. Most of what we know about polar bears comes from these captures. What do we know about polar bears? These top predators in the food chain are exquisitely adapted to the Arctic marine environment. For food, they depend on seals, which also make their home in the Arctic. Scientists think there may be between 20,000 and 25,000 polar bears in the whole Arctic, with 1500 of those in the Beaufort Sea area. The Beaufort Sea population is one of nineteen polar bear populations over the entire Arctic. Eight of these are considered to be on the decline, while the rest of them scientists still need more data to determine their conservation status, but there is no question that the loss of sea ice has impacted the polar bears. A combination of text, photos, and even a mini-guide in the back pages of *Polar Bear Scientists* show how magnificent these solitary and stealthy hunters are. The world will lose an incredible species, along with a glorious paradise, if we don't halt and/or reverse the global warming trend. The final topic I'll cover in my write-up about *Polar Bear Scientists* is the glorious setting. Peter Laurie focuses on Barrow, Alaska,

the northernmost city in the United States. To reach Barrow, scientists flew over miles of snow-covered and swampy coniferous forest of Alaska's interior, as well as the chaotic mountains of the Brook Range, and finally miles of flat, white, coastal plain tundra. Once in Barrow, scientists took a truck and drove on unpaved roads to the Naval Arctic Research Lab. Scientists from all over the world come to NARL study all things Arctic: the air, the wildlife, the tundra, the ice, and more. As for Barrow itself, on some days, a fog bank five miles off the coast will descend to five hundred feet. Other days, diamond dust (tiny flecks of glittering snow crystals) falls out of a clear blue sky. Either way, Barrow is a land of ice and cold, but also of rainbows on the horizon. *Polar Bear Scientists* is a highly visual and informative narrative about the adventure of scientists, polar bears, and life in the Arctic. The back pages are also a treasure trove, with a glossary, field guide, and suggested readings. All quotes and photos receive credit. Peter Laurie has a passion for research and exploration, both of which shine in his nonfiction texts.

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