

Polar Bears of Churchill



A Joint Trip between the Philadelphia Zoo, Saint Louis Zoo and Toledo Zoo

Experience the thrill of seeing polar bears living freely in their own natural habitat! Every fall, the tundra surrounding Churchill, Manitoba, becomes a stopover for more than 1,000 polar bears on their annual migration to hunt for food on the ice floes of Hudson Bay. Our northern adventure will allow plenty of opportunity to view bears at close range from the warmth and comfort of special tundra vehicles. We often see mothers and cubs, as well as young adult males play fighting. (This experience is even more timely because the polar bear faces a growing threat to survival within its fragile sea ice habitat because of global warming.)

We'll also look for gyrfalcons, snowy owls, ptarmigans, Arctic foxes and other tundra wildlife. Experienced naturalists will help interpret the animals' behavior and their adaptations to the hostile Arctic environment, both during our field excursions and in their



evening presentations. Other trip offerings include a night-time trip to the tundra, an opportunity to explore the remote and intriguing town of Churchill, and the possibility of seeing the Northern Lights.

Be sure to sign up early for this special 6-day trip. It is being offered through three zoos – the Saint Louis Zoo, the Philadelphia Zoo and the Toledo Zoo – and will fill up quickly. The trip is limited to 15 participants.

Escorted by Dr. David Schaffer, polar bear researcher at the Philadelphia Zoo.

ITINERARY

Polar Bears of Churchill

**\$3,795 pp. double occupancy (plus airfare to Winnipeg)
November 8 – 13, 2007**

- › **Thursday, November 8**
St. Louis / Winnipeg, Manitoba
- › **Friday November 9**
Winnipeg / Churchill
- › **Saturday, November 10**
Churchill
- › **Sunday, November 11**
Churchill
- › **Monday, November 12**
Churchill / Winnipeg
- › **Tuesday, November 13**
Winnipeg / St. Louis



For more information, contact the Zoo's Travel Department at (314) 768-5408



Saint Louis Zoo
Animals Always®

DAY 1 THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8 > ST. LOUIS / WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

Upon arrival at Winnipeg Airport, our Natural Habitat Adventures' representative will pick you up and transfer you downtown to Hotel Fort Garry for your night's stay. After checking in, you are free to relax or explore Winnipeg until we gather for an informal dinner orientation in our hotel. *D*



DAY 2 FRIDAY NOVEMBER 9 > WINNIPEG / CHURCHILL / EVENING ON THE TUNDRA

After breakfast, we fly to Churchill (about a 3-hour flight, with a possible stop or a change of aircraft). Upon arrival in Churchill, we will have a brief tour of the town and settle into our hotel.

This evening we head out for our first visit to the tundra. We view this harsh landscape from the comfort of our specially designed polar buggies, where everyone has a window seat for optimal viewing. We will have dinner in our buggy and see the animals late in the day, an entirely different atmosphere, one rarely experienced by most visitors. On clear nights, the Northern Lights may appear to brighten the entire sky. We return late in the evening. *B, L, D*



DAYS 3 AND 4 SATURDAY & SUNDAY NOVEMBER 10 & 11 > CHURCHILL / BEAR VIEWING

We will spend the next two days exploring the Arctic environment in our tundra vehicles as our guides interpret the polar bear's natural history, behavior and conservation issues as well as tundra ecology. After a hearty breakfast, we travel outside of town by bus to a special boarding site at the edge of the tundra to find our polar buggies. Our journey takes us along glacially-formed natural roadways to the icy coastline of the Hudson Bay where the bears tend to gather.

This is the only time of year that the bears tolerate each other's presence, and their interactions are intriguing. We may encounter young bears mock-fighting. Although ferocious looking, this play activity actually helps prepare the bears for the hostile environment of the pack ice. An adult male may turn his attention towards us, sometimes approaching within feet, and even lift his massive paws on the side of our vehicle to peer inside. (Don't worry – we're quite safe inside the buggy!)

While on the tundra, we may also see a variety of other northern wildlife, including Arctic fox, snowy owl, ptarmigan and gyrfalcon. On one of these days, we may depart either in the early morning or afternoon with plans to catch the sunrise or sunset. Optional dog sled rides are available. Depending on the activities of the day, our free evenings will include wildlife or cultural presentations, slide shows or time to relax at your leisure. *B, L, D*

DAY 5 MONDAY NOVEMBER 12 > CHURCHILL / WINNIPEG

Depending on flight schedules, we may have some free time this morning to explore Churchill and shop for Arctic souvenirs, or to participate in an optional helicopter excursion before returning to Winnipeg. Today we will have either a farewell lunch in Churchill or dinner in Winnipeg. Our final night will be at the Hotel Fort Garry. *B, L or D*

DAY 6 TUESDAY NOVEMBER 13 > WINNIPEG / ST. LOUIS

After breakfast, we will transfer to the airport for the return flight home. *B*

