

EXTRA EXTRA!

READ ALL ABOUT IT

The polar bears living far from home

This is an edited version of a story from
© The Guardian (29/10/2024)

Although polar bears belong in the frozen Arctic, they have long been kept in captivity far from home. In the 20th Century, screaming crowds admired them in city zoos, and 800 years ago, King Henry III even housed one in the Tower of London.

By the 1990s, though, campaigners were insisting that they could not be happy in small enclosures, thousands of miles from their natural home. By 2000, just one polar bear remained in Britain.

Now, the polar bears are back. In the last year, Jimmy's Farm, the wildlife park run by TV presenter Jimmy Doherty, has taken in four. A further 12 bears live in three other British parks.

Doherty says that his mission is to champion conservation, farming and rewilding, and reconnect children with nature. His first polar bears came from Sweden in 2022. He built a large enclosure, including a pool, two dens and a large woodland area, for them to live in.

But can an Arctic species really cope with sunny Suffolk? "If they want to regulate their temperature they can go

in the woodland," Doherty explains.

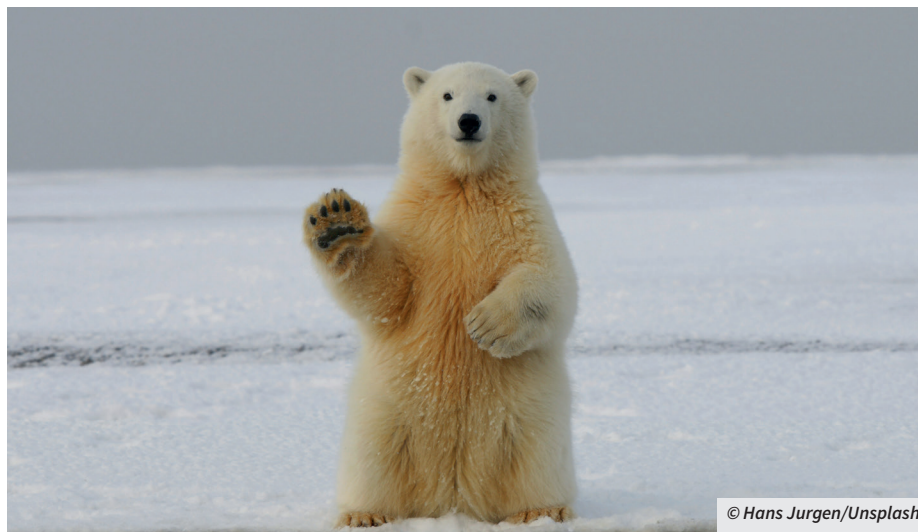
The enclosures at Jimmy's Farm are much larger than traditional zoo pens. For critics, however, they are still a much smaller space than polar bears enjoy in the world.

The Born Free Foundation, a charity, insists that no polar bears should be kept in captivity. "There's no meaningful or direct conservation benefit to keeping polar bears in captivity," says Chris Lewis.

Bringing polar bears to Jimmy's Farm was clearly a decision of the heart for Doherty — but he had his financial head on too. They had a 50% increase in visitors over summer half-term.

One expert, Douglas Richardson, predicts that global heating will lead to more climate change refugee polar bears requiring rescue. He hopes that new, massive fenced reserves similar to polar bears' natural habitat may be established, just as many African safari animals live in fenced reserves.

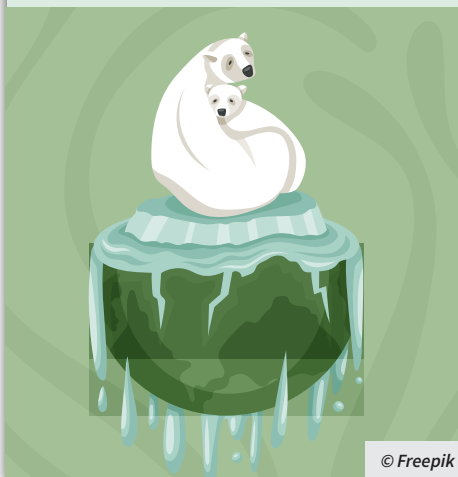
Meanwhile, Doherty does not rule out breeding polar bears... but only if "we need more paws on the ground".



TRUE OR FALSE?

Not all news is based on truth. Do you think this story is based on true or false news?

There are just 26,000 polar bears left in the world.



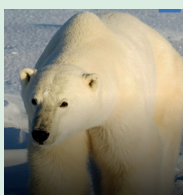
READ MORE



The Last Bear by
Hannah Gold

HarperCollins
Children's Books

LEARN MORE



Learn

Watch [this report](#) on polar bears in the frozen Arctic.



CHECK YOUR FACTS

1

WHAT	WHO	WHERE	WHEN	WHY	HOW
are Jimmy's aims?	kept a polar bear in the Tower of London?	were polar bears kept in the 20th Century?	did Jimmy get his first polar bears?	do some people think more polar bears will need to be rescued?	many polar bears are there in Britain?
ANSWER: Conservation, farming, rewilding, and reconnecting kids with nature	ANSWER: King Henry III	ANSWER: Zoos	ANSWER: 2022	ANSWER: Climate change	ANSWER: 16



© Elsemargriet/Pixabay