

**Orphaned Polar Bear Cub Arrives at Assiniboine Park Zoo's
Leatherdale International Polar Bear Conservation Centre**

For immediate release: Winnipeg, August 21, 2026 – An orphaned polar bear cub from the Churchill area has arrived at the Assiniboine Park Zoo. The cub, whose mother was found deceased, was identified by Conservation Officers as a candidate for transfer to the Leatherdale International Polar Bear Conservation Centre under the Polar Bear Protection Act.

In consultation with the Province, members of the Assiniboine Park Conservancy's Polar Bear Rescue & Care Team mobilized equipment and resources to support the cub's initial care needs in Churchill. Zoo Veterinary staff then travelled north to assess the bear and oversee its transfer to Winnipeg, where it arrived safely late yesterday evening.

Research has shown that polar bear cubs orphaned in their first year of life cannot survive in the wild. Following the decision to bring this bear into human care, the cub will now receive specialized care from veterinary professionals, animal care experts, and conservation scientists at the Leatherdale International Polar Bear Conservation Centre, a facility established with provincial support under the Polar Bear Protection Act to provide refuge for select polar bears.

"We're fortunate to have a world class polar bear care facility at Assiniboine Park Zoo and grateful to be able to give this cub a safe home and new opportunity to thrive," said Dr. Chris Enright, Senior Director, Zoological Operations. "Our veterinary and animal care teams will be focused on providing a safe, supportive environment as the cub gets comfortable in its new surroundings."

The cub will now undergo a quarantine period and remain behind the scenes while veterinary and animal care teams assess its health and care needs. Every rescued cub adapts to a Zoo environment at its own pace, and the transition process is carefully managed to support animal comfort and welfare. The cub will not be visible to Zoo visitors at this time.

"It is always a sad day when there is an orphaned cub, particularly as polar bears face increasing pressures related to climate change," said Dr. Stephen Petersen, Director, Conservation & Research. "Our centre was created to care for polar bears that cannot survive in the wild, and this cub will serve as an ambassador for its species, Churchill, and the Arctic, helping connect people to the challenges polar bears face in the wild and inspiring conservation action."

Assiniboine Park Zoo is currently home to six rescued polar bears: Storm, Nanuq, York, Kaska, Willow, and Star. Together, these bears help connect hundreds of thousands of visitors from Manitoba and around the world with Churchill and the Arctic each year, fostering greater understanding of the region and inspiring action to protect the environment. The last polar bear cubs transferred to Assiniboine Park Zoo arrived in 2017. The Assiniboine Park Conservancy will continue to share updates on this cub as it transitions to its new home.

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