



Peter Lourie is the author of many nonfiction adventure books for young readers, including *Whaling Season: A Year in the Life of an Arctic Whale Scientist*. Peter lives with his family in Vermont when he isn't traveling across the globe.

While researching and shooting photos for *The Polar Bear Scientists*, Peter spent time in Barrow, Alaska. Once, while out on the ice, the field biologists darted a thousand-pound male polar bear with enough sedative to keep it calm for an hour. Before the biologists gathered their data, they asked if Peter would like a photo of himself taken with the bear. Says Peter, "They lifted the head onto my lap, as heavy as a cannon, and it pinned me to the ice of the southern Beaufort Sea. It was thirty-five degrees below zero and diamond dust was falling from the sky. After they took a few shots, I said, 'Ah, can you please get the polar bear off my lap?' It was so eerie to be that close to such a magnificent creature. His eyes were open and I could hear him breathe." A few hours later the bear was carrying on with his life and Peter continued work on his book.

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Praise for *The Manatee Scientists: Saving Vulnerable Species*  
also by Peter Lourie

★ "This latest addition to an always-intriguing series describes the work of Fernando Rosas, John Reynolds and Lucy Keith studying manatees in different parts of the world. Gentle, slow-moving vegetarians, these curious aquatic mammals are distant relatives of elephants and live in the Amazon, in Florida and nearby ocean waters and in West African rivers. Like other books in this series, this is distinguished by clear, realistic explanations of scientific fieldwork and well-reproduced photographs, many taken by the author. Overall, it lives up to the standards set by others in this stellar series." —*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

"[Lourie] presents nontechnical overviews of manatee behavior and ancestry, along with human and natural hazards to the health of these gentle creatures, and closes with pages of summary facts as well as generous resource lists. A sturdy addition to a standard-setting nonfiction series." —*Booklist*

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LOURIE

THE POLAR BEAR SCIENTISTS

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SCIENTISTS IN THE FIELD



# The Polar Bear Scientists



By Peter Lourie

\$18.99/Higher in Canada

A government research team flying far out over the ocean ice spots a big male polar bear in search of seal prey. The helicopter swoops low over the running bear, and a biologist leans out the window, takes aim, and fires a tranquilizer dart. It is springtime on the southern Beaufort Sea on the North Slope of Alaska, and the U.S. Geological Survey team is gearing up for a new season of polar bear capturing.

All the needed biological information is collected right on the sea ice and later entered into a large database for analysis by scientists at the USGS Polar Bear Project office in Anchorage, Alaska. The scientists first hunt for bears, tranquilize them, give them unique numbered tattoos and ear tags, collect data on their length and weight, and take samples of body fat, blood, hair, and feces, and even a tooth.

What does this information tell us? Scientists believe that polar bear populations will drastically drop over the next several decades because of the ever-increasing impact of global warming. As the climate gets warmer, the melting of the polar bears' Arctic sea ice habitat will continue to accelerate and the seal prey that bears depend on may largely disappear. In 2008, polar bears were listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. "It's important," says the Polar Bear Project leader George Durner, "that we take the data we collect out there on the ice and turn it into useful information to address conservation questions."

In *The Polar Bear Scientists*, Peter Lourie joins dedicated scientists Dr. Steven Amstrup, Dr. George Durner, and other researchers as they make their first exciting polar bear captures of the season.

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