

**Zoocheck
Canada Inc.**
3266 Yonge Street
Suite 1729
Toronto, Ontario
M4N 3P6

Phone
(416) 696-0241
Fax
(416) 696-0370
E-mail
Zoocheck@idirect.com



**Protecting
wildlife in
captivity and
in the wild**

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE IN POLAR BEAR INVESTIGATION

Zoocheck Canada is conducting an investigation into the export of live polar bears by the Canadian government to zoos around the world.

According to the provincial government of Manitoba, approximately 30 bears have been shipped out of the country through their program of capturing and relocating "problem" and/or "orphaned" wild bears. Most of these bears are removed from the Churchill, Manitoba area. Additional bears have been removed from the Yukon Territory, Northwest Territories and the Province of Quebec.

Requests for polar bears are received by the Canadian government from zoos. If bears are available, the province or territory will determine if the recipient is qualified to receive polar bears. The recipient is required to pay shipping and associated costs. There is no cost for the bears themselves.

According to Zoocheck's research, little effort is made to check the facilities which receive the bears. According to the Manitoba Wildlife Branch, before polar bears are sent to a zoo, the department requires a written description of the facility in which the bear will be kept. A Freedom of Information request for "copies of all written documents, drawings, photographs and other materials of cages and enclosures in zoological facilities which have requested or received live polar bears" revealed sketchy information about only two zoos - Safari World in Bangkok, Thailand and Aso Bear Park, Japan.

As far as we can tell, the government conducts virtually no follow-up to determine if the exported polar bears are adjusting to their new environment; if the recipient has transferred, traded or sold the bears to someone else; or if the bears have died.

Zoocheck Canada is seeking assistance in checking the conditions in which Canada's exported polar bears are now living. We hope the information obtained will allow us to assess the humaneness of the export program and whether or not it should be continued.

We are looking for individuals and/or organizations to visit zoos which have received Canadian bears to videotape the on-exhibit cages and enclosures, and anything else to which the public has access. The video should preferably be Hi 8 format and 30 minutes in length.