

POLAR BEAR REPORT NOV2002

By Carol Petersen

Take 2 Aussies (most of which we only saw their eyes due to hats and scarves), 6 Calgarians who laughed a lot, 2 Torontonians with swacks of camera gear and one really rugged guy from Churchill – mix with some cool weather, some really great accommodation, a few bears and arctic fox and you have a magical combination of fun on the Tundra! Mother Nature did her job in cooling things off early this year – actually, right on time but earlier than in the past 10 years!



Our bear sightings were scarce – we worked very hard for them! Peering across the tundra with binos – scouring the horizon! Fresh tracks – lets follow them! And we did! We went everywhere! And classic to this northern town, our best viewings were the ones at the Churchill dump where, much to our chagrin, the bears congregated and checked out what was available for their next meal.



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Only a few were left behind as most of the bears had already gone north on the frozen Hudson Bay to hunt for seals (which every good bear SHOULD have been doing). We were also treated to lots of Arctic Fox – prancing and playing all night by the Tundra Lodge, Arctic Hare – keeping an eye out for the foxes, Red Fox in pursuit of a hare – something even our

guide hadn't seen and tons of ptarmigan. Our accommodation was fabulous, our guide magnificent (oh how he would hate that description) and the team of polar bear lovers – outstanding. A visit to the research centre and a bit of dog sledding added to the highlights as well! I have been so lucky with my sightings no matter where I go – this trip was a wake up call that we are all need to be respectful of Mother Nature and thank our lucky stars when we come across even one of the marvels she has created!



Ok – the lasting image – one BIG male bear coming across the white tundra – nose to the air – black eyes sharp – silently walks within feet of our vehicle. As in Garth's group on the front page – there was a major lack of breathing, including me!

Photographs by Carol Petersen

