



In The News

Current Events in Earth & Space Science

Summaries for the Classroom

Polar Bears, Brown Bears, and Ireland

New DNA evidence shows that polar bears carry genetic material that came from Ireland, where grizzlies (brown bears) once roamed around 30,000 years ago. The finding could change our view not only of polar bear evolution but of the role of cross-species breeding more generally in shaping the living world.

Articles to Share with Students

Penn State Live - Ancestry of Polar Bears Traced to Ireland
<http://live.psu.edu/story/54015>

Science News – DNA Hints at Polar Bears’ Irish Ancestry
http://www.sciencenews.org/view/generic/id/332192/title/DNA_hints_at_polar_bears%E2%80%99_Irish_ancestry__

EarthSky – Ancestral mother of polar bears traced to Ireland
<http://earthsky.org/biodiversity/ancestral-mother-of-polar-bears-traced-to-ireland>

General Polar Bear Information

Polar Bears – New York Times Topics
http://topics.nytimes.com/topics/reference/timestopics/subjects/p/polar_bears/index.html

ARKive Polar Bears
<http://www.arkive.org/polar-bear/ursus-maritimus/>

WWF Polar Bear Tracker
http://wwf.panda.org/what_we_do/where_we_work/arctic/area/species/polarbear/polar_bear/

Questions for Classroom Discussion

What data did the scientists study to achieve their results?
What is the significance of this discovery?
How could cross-species breeding shape our living world?
How might this new information alter conservation efforts?