



The Arctic Institute of North America presents the 2018 – 2019

# Arctic Speaker Series

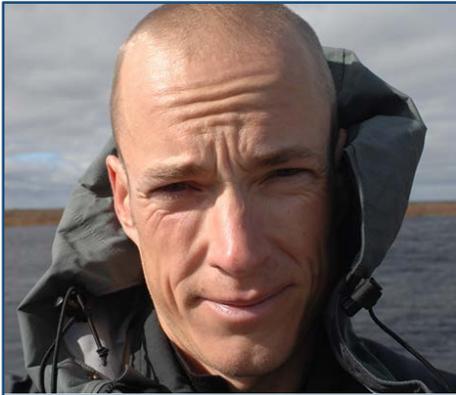
## Polar bears: the ecology of a threatened species

**Speaker:**  
Evan Richardson

**Date:**  
Thursday,  
February 21, 2019

**Time:**  
6:00 – 7:00 pm

**Location:**  
University of Calgary;  
ROOM TBD



Polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*) life history and ecology is intimately linked to the Arctic sea ice environment, with sea ice providing a platform on which polar bears travel, hunt, mate and in some areas den. As a species, polar bears evolved several hundred thousand years ago from brown bear ancestors to become highly adapted predators in the Arctic marine environment. Subsisting on the fat of marine mammal prey, polar bears have occupied and thrived in one of the harshest environments on the planet for thousands of years. Their unique adaptations to the Arctic marine

environment make them a fascinating species to study, but also make them vulnerable to the global threat of anthropogenic climate change. Long-term reductions in the seasonal availability of Arctic sea ice are already impacting polar bears throughout their range. From shifts in foraging ecology to increases in long distance open water swims, polar bears are adapting and modifying their behavior in response to climate change. The question that now faces scientists and conservationists is will it be enough to secure the long-term persistence of the species?

**Biography:** Dr. Evan Richardson is a polar bear research scientist in the Wildlife Research Division of Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC). He first started working on polar bears in 2001 as a graduate student at the University of Alberta where he studied polar bear maternity denning habitat in the Canadian subarctic. He has been involved in polar bear research across the Arctic from the Chukchi Sea to Baffin Bay and has spent much of his research career focused on polar bear ecology in western Hudson Bay. Dr. Richardson's research interests are broad and include understanding the evolutionary ecology of polar bears, their mating systems, population genetics, foraging ecology, habitat selection and the influence of stressors (e.g. contaminants, climate, industrial development) on polar bear populations. When not working Evan enjoys spending time with his family and introducing his two young boy's to the wonders of the natural world.

This event is **free and open to the public**

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