

## Polar Bear Pal: Virginia girl helps protect Arctic animals.

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Mollie Passacantando has never met a polar bear, but that hasn't stopped her from lending a paw to the giant animals.

Polar bears live in the Arctic, but the sea ice they rely on for hunting is melting. Many people blame the changes in the Arctic on **global warming**. That is the slow rise of Earth's temperature..

When Mollie, now 10, read about the bears' big problem a few years ago, she decided to take a stand. The Alexandria, Va., girl started a **blog** and a letter campaign to encourage people to speak out in support of polar bears. A blog is an Internet page where people share thoughts and opinions. Mollie's efforts recently earned her a Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes.

Mollie's campaign got about 170 people to write letters in just a few months. The notes urged the government to protect polar bears. At the time, U.S. officials were deciding whether polar bears should be on the **endangered species list**. That is a government list that helps protect certain animals from being harmed.

The letters spell out success for the polar bears. Government officials decided to add the animals to the endangered species list last spring.

"After the announcement came out, I felt so good that ... my friends and people from all over the country had taken part in doing this," Mollie explained to *WR News*. "It just felt really, really great that after all that work, I'd accomplished something."