

OLYMPUS[®]

Your Vision, Our Future



Mitsuaki Iwago wonders what message this polar bear has for the world.

In July 2006, photographer Mitsuaki Iwago traveled to Wager Bay in the Canadian Arctic to investigate for himself the effects of global warming on Arctic wildlife. According to the local Inuit, the sea ice had started melting about two weeks earlier both that year and the year before. Until about 40 years ago, there was ice even at the end of August. Female polar bears usually deliver two cubs, but the one Iwago encountered had only one cub. Using his Olympus E-1 digital SLR camera, Iwago shot this brilliant image hoping to remind us all that these precious creatures must be preserved and passed on to the future.

The effects of global warming are already apparent in Canada's Hudson Bay. Representing the southern limit of the polar bears' habitat, Hudson Bay has been experiencing increasingly shorter winters, leading to earlier ice melt and forcing the bears onshore before they can fully replenish their reserves of fat by feeding on the seals which live on the ice. Typically, a polar bear will stake out a seal's breathing hole, attacking the animal when it sticks its head up for air. A shorter hunting season limits the ability of females to feed their cubs, reducing their survival rate. As of 2006, polar bears have been designated a vulnerable species.

Shot in Wager Bay in Arctic Canada on July 6, 2006, at 5:38 p.m., with the Olympus E-1, Zuiko Digital ED 300mm, f8.0, 1/1000 sec.

Digital SLR Camera OLYMPUS E-1



OLYMPUS CORPORATION Olympus website: <http://www.olympus.com/>



For updated photos and special movies, visit the "Global Warming Witness — Mitsuaki Iwago special website" at:

<http://www.olympus.co.jp/gww>