

Mercedes the Polar Bear has died

☒ Mercedes the Polar Bear has had to be put to sleep overnight.

Douglas Robertson, Animal Collection Manager at the Highland Wildlife Park,. has written:-

It was with a great deal of sadness that early this morning, April 15 2011, Mercedes was put painlessly to sleep due to age related health problems and a rapid deterioration in her welfare.

Mercedes was born in the wild in the western Hudson Bay region of Manitoba Canada in late 1980 or 1981. When she naturally separated from her wild mother, she developed the habit of wandering into the local town of Churchill looking for food and needed to be captured and moved a good distance in an effort to curtail her "shopping sprees". The polar bear policy in Churchill, also known as the polar bear capital of the world, was three strikes and you're out. Twice she had been caught and moved out of town and a third offence would result in her being shot due to the risks she presented to the townspeople. Luckily a concerned member of the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland with Canadian connections helped save Mercedes from certain death and, following her third offence, she was caught and moved to Edinburgh Zoo on 19 January 1984. Whilst at Edinburgh she reared 2 cubs: Minty, a male, born on 18 November 1988, and Ohoto, a female, born 15 November 1991. Both were sired by her partner Barney, who was born at Whipsnade Zoo, but he died on 19 November 1996. After Barney's death, Mercedes lived by herself at Edinburgh Zoo; a solitary lifestyle, especially for an adult female polar bear, is normal as they are not overly social creatures.

