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Arctic Circle Student Briefing

Arctic Circle Student Briefing Netherlands Polar Programme

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Netherlands Polar Programme

500 words briefing about the Arctic Circle

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Netherlands Polar Programme (NPP) and the Arctic Circle Conference

The Arctic Circle Conference is an event where people from for example nature and climate organizations, ministers and energy companies gather to network and promote their opinions on the Arctic. During this conference, I ran into some team members of the Netherlands Polar Programme. They were here to visit sessions and learn more about what is happening in the Arctic and about the new innovations for a better Arctic. The Netherlands Polar Programme is present at the Arctic Circle Conference every year together with the Dutch Embassy and a member/members from the Dutch ministry of Foreign Affairs.

What does the Netherlands Polar Programme evolve around?

The NPP is a part of the Earth and Life Sciences Department of the Dutch Research Council NWO. It funds scientific research into and in the polar regions. The NPP started in 2004 and has 4 mobile laboratories on the Antarctica Peninsula and 1 polar station on Spitsbergen. The current programme runs from 2021 to 2025 and focuses on 4 different themes:

-  1. Climate Change
-  2. Ecosystem Dynamics
-  3. Social Sciences and Humanities
-  4. Sustainable Development

Why is there a Dutch Polar Programme?

The Netherlands is certainly not in the Arctic, however whatever happens in the Arctic doesn't stay in the Arctic. As the ice melts, the temperatures rise and this has already led to more extreme weather patterns in the Netherlands. So polar research is important of behalf of the country. The Netherlands is also signed to the Antarctica treaty and is thus obliged to do scientific research in Antarctica.

Projects

Within the Netherlands Polar Programme some projects have already been carried out or are still running. The role of the NPP within these projects involves the funding of the projects. The NPP is financed by the NWO and 4 ministries within the Dutch parliament. Below are 2 examples of the projects that the NPP (has) funded.

The role of sea ice in the life cycle of polar cod (*Boreogadus saida*) and its prey (Franeker, 2018)

This project focused on the dependency on sea ice of the polar cod and its prey. As a result of climate change, the sea ice has been melting. The Arctic cod and its prey use the sea ice as source of food and a place of residence. The research on this matter was carried out to predict the consequences of decreasing sea ice and was done by Dr. J.A. van Franeker from Wageningen Marine Research.

Proactive management of Antarctic tourism: exploring the role of Antarctic Treaty System principles and values and best practices beyond the ATS (Bastmeijer, 2020)

This main focus of this project was to manage the increasing amount of Antarctic tourism. Though there is already a 1991 Environmental Protocol along with other regulations, there is not enough protection for nature, safety and science against tourists. The NPP has funded this project with 1.3 million euros and the project is a collaboration between Tilburg University, Utrecht University and Wageningen University and Research. This project will run for a period of 5 years.



Member of Netherlands Polar Programme in the field