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**DANIEL J. COX** <[www.naturalexposures.com](http://www.naturalexposures.com)>

**PROJECT:** Volunteer work in the Arctic for Polar Bears International to document their Polar Population Project.

**D**ocumentary nature photographer Daniel J. Cox volunteers his time and expertise to accompany a cutting-edge team researching the effects of climate change on Arctic polar bears. Often underwriting his own expenses with help from Polar Bears International, Cox has traveled with leading scientists to remote northern locations, to photograph, assist in data collection and take part in the first ever polar bear census. His willingness to give back has provided him with rare access to convey a powerful message about our threatened environment.

**ASMP:** *What are the physical challenges of working in arctic conditions?*

**DJC:** The biggest challenge is the cold, however another physical issue

is trying to stay in shape. The food is often not very healthy and exercise facilities are scarce. But most arctic community schools are very welcoming to visitors and have some sort of exercise equipment.

**ASMP:** *What kind of safety concerns have you encountered in the field?*

**DJC:** I do everything possible to make sure I don't have exciting bear stories. If I do then it means I've done something wrong that has put my life, and in turn the bears' life, in jeopardy. A larger concern for me is helicopters. They scare the heck out of me. Flying in the arctic is much more dangerous than being among the inhabitants on the ground.

**ASMP:** *Do you have any advice for photographers about doing volunteer work?*

**DJC:** There are really no secrets when it comes to establishing good working relationships. One piece of advice I really believe in is, "Life is a contact sport. Get out and play the game." My philosophy is this—first be a good person and second to do great work in something you're passionate about. One final thought—be prepared to work a lot of years to be successful in this business. Nothing good happens overnight.

