

From the institute's Photo Library

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For centuries, polar bears and other species were hunted and trapped in Svalbard for their fur, meat and other products. Renowned as one of the very few female hunters in Svalbard, Wanny Woldstad (1895–1959), pictured here (unknown photographer), caught her share of bears during the heyday of hunting in Svalbard. Wanny, who worked as a taxi driver in Tromsø, spent five winters in Hyttevika, on the fjord Hornsund in southern Spitsbergen, during the 1930s. Her sons Alf and Bjørvik overwintered with her twice. Norwegian hunting activity in Svalbard peaked around the middle of 20th century: between 1945 and 1969, Norwegian hunters took 7807 polar bears in Svalbard. The hunting of polar bears in Svalbard was prohibited in 1973.



The Norwegian Polar Institute's Photo Library preserves some 90 000 polar-related images captured during the last 135 years, including glass plates and slides, stereo images, print photographs and modern digital photographs. Images documenting Norwegian activities in the Arctic and Antarctic comprise the bulk of the collection. Scanning the older images and registering newer digital ones is an ongoing endeavour. To date, digital versions of over 30 000 pictures are available in a searchable online database at <http://sivert.npolar.no/fotoweb/>. Search words associated with the online images are mostly in the Norwegian language; please send an e-mail to bildearkiv@npolar.no for assistance in searching the database.