

# Polar Bears • *Ursus maritimus* • sea bear

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## Designed for Cold

Polar bears are adapted to the Arctic's fiercely cold weather. Two layers of fur provide insulation, compact ears and a small tail prevent heat loss, and fat protects them from cold and gives them buoyancy.

## Built for Predation

The arctic food chain starts with algae on the underside of sea ice and ends with polar bears who eat seals. From beginning to end, sea ice is key. But in a warming world, it's melting away.



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## Instilled with Patience

Polar bears spend a lot of time just waiting. They wait at breathing holes to catch seals. And some wait for sea ice to refreeze in autumn because they can't catch seals on land or in open water. Some will even snack on goose eggs and berries, but these foods can't meet their nutritional needs.

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## Fitted for Survival

Female polar bears reproduce in one of the harshest places on Earth. In years when they don't put on enough fat, they fail to give birth. This is because they need a lot of energy to nurse cubs. Cubs remain with their moms for about 2.5 years.



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## Threatened by Loss of Habitat

Scientists see a direct relationship between the amount of sea ice and global temperature. The higher the temperature, the more sea ice disappears. The less sea ice, the less polar bear habitat.



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## Destined for Extinction?

Not if we ACT NOW! Each of us must act to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gases. Begin by saving energy and producing zero garbage! And demand that governments and businesses change their policies and practices to reduce dependence on a carbon-based economy.



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