

Polar Bear

DOMAIN
Eukarya

KINGDOM
Animalia

PHYLUM
Chordata

CLASS
Mammalia

ORDER
Carnivora

FAMILY
Ursidae

GENUS
Ursus

SPECIES
U. maritimus

WHERE DO THEY HANG OUT?

Polar bears roam the Arctic Circle, spanning the coastal sea-ice of Alaska, Canada, Russia, Greenland, and Norway (Svalbard).



BUILT DIFFERENT: THEIR SPECIAL TRAIT

Think of them as the ultimate Arctic athlete—massive, muscular, and wrapped in two thick layers of fur over a dense fat pad for insulation. Their black skin helps absorb sunlight, while their wide, furry paws act like snowshoes for icy travel. Polar bears are also strong swimmers, using their front paws like paddles to cover long distances between ice floes: sometimes over 60 miles (100 km) without rest!



WHAT'S ON THE MENU?



Polar bears are apex predators, feasting mainly on ringed and bearded seals for their blubber-rich meat. When food is scarce, they'll scavenge whale carcasses, bird eggs, or even kelp. Cubs learn early by watching their mothers hunt and conserve energy between meals during lean ice-free months.



Extinct
EX EW CR EN VU NT LC
Threatened
Least Concern

FAMILY LIFE

Mother bears give birth to one to three cubs inside snow dens during the Arctic winter. Cubs stay with their mothers for about two and a half years, learning how to hunt, swim, and survive harsh conditions. During this time, the mother rarely eats, living off stored fat to protect and nurse her young.

COMMUNICATION

Polar bears communicate through body language, scent, and sound. They sniff to recognize each other, chuff softly as friendly greetings, and growl or roar when threatened. Mothers use gentle grunts to signal their cubs, while males rely on scent trails to track females during mating season. Every sound and movement has meaning in the vast, silent Arctic.



THREATS TO THEIR SURVIVAL



Habitat Loss



Pollution



Food Scarcity



Though the species has made an incredible comeback, several threats remain:

- **Habitat Loss:** Melting sea ice from climate change limits their ability to hunt and rest.
- **Pollution:** Industrial pollutants and oil spills threaten the Arctic food chain. Persistent chemicals like PCBs and mercury accumulate in seal blubber – the bear's main diet – leading to hormonal imbalance, organ damage, and reduced fertility.
- **Food Scarcity:** Shorter ice seasons reduce access to seals, their main energy source.
- **Human-wildlife conflict:** Bears searching for food near settlements risk being shot or relocated.



Did you know?

5 FUN FACTS ABOUT THE POLAR BEAR

- Their fur isn't white, it's actually translucent and reflects visible light!
- They can smell seals nearly a mile (1.6 km) away, even through thick snow.
- Polar bears can weigh up to 1,500 lbs (700 kg). That's heavier than a grand piano!
- They're officially classified as marine mammals, like whales and seals.
- Despite their size, they can run up to 25 mph (40 km/h) on land and swim gracefully for hours.

