



http://www.wired.com/images_blogs/wiredscience/2011/07/polarbear7.jpg

POLAR BEARS

AN ENDANGERED MARINE MAMMAL

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[.panda.org/img/polarbearandcubs_412887.jpg](https://panda.org/img/polarbearandcubs_412887.jpg)

Introduction

Imagine, just for a minute, that you're a polar bear, the top of the food chain. You are the *Ursus maritimus*, the sea bear, and you are always warm, even in the frigid Arctic. Wait, there is just one more thing that you might want to know. You, the amazing polar bear, are endangered! People from all over the world come to hunt polar bears for sport, and the Eskimos hunt them for food and other useful things. Moreover, global warming is melting the ice faster than ever. Can people help the polar bear out of its crisis? Maybe so, but it might be up to you.

Names

Some people call the polar bear the sea bear. This surprising name is really quite fitting, because they are marine mammals. Polar bears have been known to swim 100 miles in one day! Their nostrils can close when they are swimming so they don't

breathe in water. They also use only their front limbs for swimming. Polar bears live on shores close to the ocean or on sea ice. As you can imagine, polar bears are very good swimmers. Polar bears have many different names. In addition to the sea bear, the female polar bear is called a sow, and the male is called a boar. Their scientific name is the *Ursus maritimus*. These are only a few of the names that polar bears go by.



http://farm5.static.flickr.com/4027/5149896481_273013315e.jpg

Description

The polar bear has many unusual traits. Their heartbeat is only 27 times per minute! They can walk on ice so thin that we would fall through, even though we're much lighter than them. Adult polar bears don't live together in families like humans; they only get together to hunt. In fact, the males sometimes eat the young if there is a shortage of food. As you can see, polar bears are not like many other animals.

Polar bears have many unique abilities that help them survive in their environment. For example their fur is actually clear. The fur looks white because the light from the snow reflects onto it, making it look white. Underneath the fur, their skin is black, which allows them to soak up the sun's rays more easily. They also have a longer neck than other bears. Polar bears have two layers of fur; the first layer is built to keep the body warm, and the second layer is made out of stiff, hollow hair. They can be almost as tall as a man or as tall as a one story building (10 feet!). These are only a few of the many attributes of the polar bear.

Did you know that polar bears can see color even when it's dark? Well, that's just one of the many attributes of the polar bear. They also have thin layers of skin over their eyes that help protect their eyes from

light reflected off of the snow. It's not a myth that polar bears are big. Their feet are about 12 inches wide!
With feet like that, no wonder they're top of the food chain!



http://assets.worldwildlife.org/photos/294/images/story_full_width/Polar_Bear_Threats_Image3_202798.jpg?1345518967

Hunting

Even though polar bears eat primarily one food, the ringed seal, their hunting techniques vary. When females hunt with their cubs, they look for the seal by finding its scent, then when they find it, they crash through the ice. Males, however, stalk their prey when it's just lying on the ice when they hunt. They both hunt by “still



hunting,” which means that they lie and wait at a breathing hole while their prey is underwater until the prey comes up to breath. Even though their hunting techniques seem very effective , the Polar bear doesn't always get the seal.

Cubs

Raising cubs is hard work for a mother polar bear .A female polar bear gives birth every three years. Even though polar bears are enormous when they grow up, when they are just born, they are about as big as a



<http://3.bp.blogspot>

guinea pig! When the mother polar bear is pregnant, she gains as many as 350 pounds! If she thinks that her cubs could be in danger, the mother sometimes makes a noise called a chuff to warn the cubs. It's a good thing that mother Polar bears take such good care of their young, because if they didn't, there would be even fewer than there are now.

Threats

Even though global warming is one of the main reasons threatening polar bear extinction, human over-hunting is also a serious problem. When they are hunted by Eskimos, every part of the polar bear is used for food, bone tools, needles, and thread made from bone and sinew. The only part of the polar bear that the Eskimo's don't use is the liver; because it contains so much vitamin A that it would make humans sick if eaten. In addition to food, polar bears are also hunted for sport, which is the main reason that they have been over hunted. Luckily, hunting polar bears for sport is now illegal, but its damage still remains.

Some of the main reasons that polar bears are becoming extinct are humans, pollution, and global warming. Global warming is a big problem for the polar bears because it is melting the ice that they hunt on. They also eat garbage that people put in their habitat and choke, or get sick. When there is an oil spill, that can also be dangerous because the polar bears swim in the oil-filled water which is not good for their bodies

and skin. These are only some of the threats that polar bears have to suffer through. With all of these threats going on around them, it's amazing that there are still 20,000–25,000 left in the wild.

Solutions

Scientists are helping the polar bear by traveling to the Arctic and looking for polar bear. When they find a polar

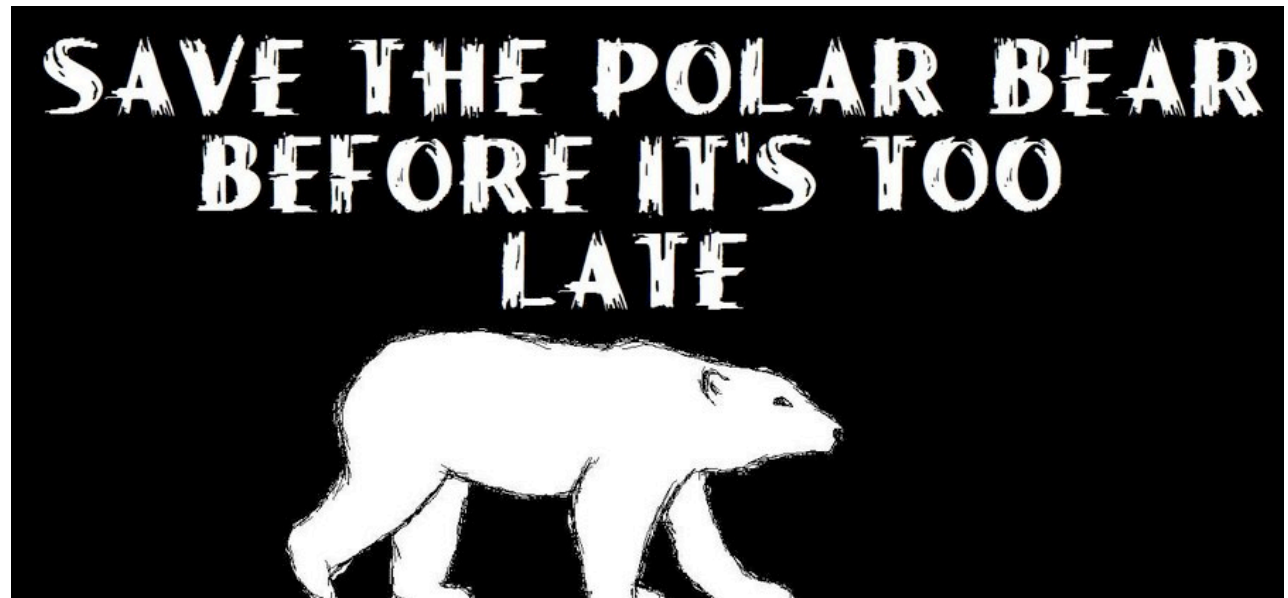


<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/6948643.bin>

bear, if they do, they put a collar on it so they can track it to see what it is doing. They will then track the polar bear after a little while to see whether it is alright. This way, after a period of time, the scientists can figure out what is making the polar bears endangered and how they can help the polar bears survive.

Conclusion

Even though you may think that the polar bear is way out in the Arctic and that there is not much that you can do to help, that is not true. The main problem for the falling population of the polar bear is global warming and there are many things you can do about global warming. All you need to do is take the smallest step, like trying to spread awareness about the endangered polar bear, and maybe your help will change the world.



http://fco1.deviantart.net/fs70/i/2012/188/5/7/save_the_polar_bear_poster_by_turtumy-d56cl8i.jpg

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