

Polar Bear

Quick facts

Diet: Carnivore

Life span in the wild: 25 - 30 years

Size: 2.2 – 2.5 m

Weight: 400 – 720 kg

Status: Vulnerable



The large, powerful polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*) is covered in thick, water repelling fur. It is the largest land carnivore in the world and is found in the Arctic Circle. Their wide front paws are slightly webbed and help them swim. They paddle with their front legs and use their hind legs to steer. The pads of their paws have a rough surface to stop them from slipping on the ice. Polar bears have very sharp claws for gripping prey and digging in the ice. Their diet consists mainly of seals but they will also eat walruses and even whales.

A polar bear's fur is not white, it is transparent and hollow. The hollow hair reflects the light and makes the polar bear look white. The skin underneath the fur is black which is good for absorbing the warmth of the sun's rays.

Polar bears have an excellent sense of smell for locating prey and can find seals in dens beneath the snow.

A female polar bear gives birth in winter and usually has two cubs. She digs a den in deep snowdrifts to provide warmth and protection for her young. Polar bear cubs are born blind and deaf. They stay with their mother for over 2 years to learn the skills they need to survive in the Arctic.

Polar Bear

Answer the following questions:

1. What is the scientific name for a polar bear?

2. Do polar bears eat meat or plants?

3. Where do polar bears live?

4. A polar bear's fur is....

a White

c Transparent

b Grey

d Brown

5. What colour is a polar bear's skin?

6. When do female polar bears give birth?

7. How many cubs are usually in a litter?

8. How long do the cubs stay with their mother?
