

# Polar Animals

## Polar Bears

Polar bears are very large, meat-eating mammals that can be found in the Arctic. Mammals are animals with fur and warm blood. Fully-grown polar bears can measure over 2.5m long and weigh around 700kg. They are not like other bears because they spend most of their lives swimming and hunting on ice for food. They only come onto land to have babies.

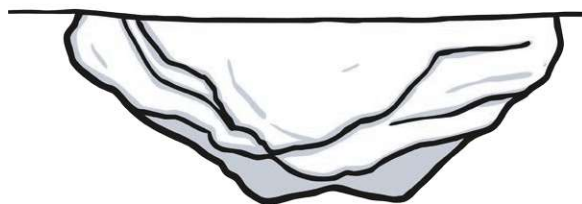
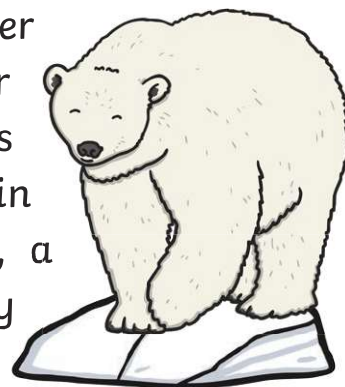
Polar bear cubs stay in their dens for up to five months after they are born and stay with their mums for up to 2 years after that.



### Wow!

Polar bears are strong swimmers, using their huge feet like paddles to push through the water. They can swim for hours to get from one piece of ice to another.

Polar bears live at the very top of our planet, and it is bitterly cold there. Water and steam will freeze almost instantly in the Arctic in winter. Thankfully, polar bears are adapted for this environment. They have a thick layer of fat which keeps heat trapped inside their bodies. They also have a thick coat that keeps them warm and also helps them to blend in with the snow. Despite how it might look, a polar bear's fur isn't really white. It's actually transparent (see-through) and it reflects light to look white.

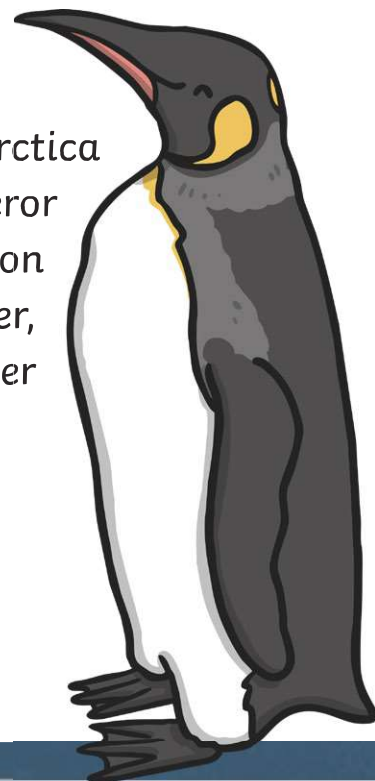
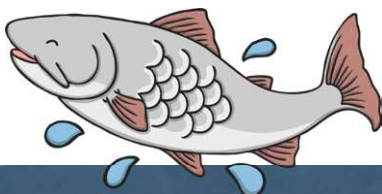


## Penguins

Penguins are birds that spend much of their lives in the water and unlike most other birds, they cannot fly. Penguins do have wings but they are more like flippers to help them swim. As they live in water, their bodies have adapted so that they can swim brilliantly to catch food. Their bodies are smooth and dart-shaped so they glide easily through the water. They have dark feathers with light patches which help them to blend in so they are difficult to spot. This is a very useful way to trick predators and avoid being eaten!

Penguins don't have to swim in deep water as the fish they catch are found near to the surface. Their feathers make their bodies waterproof.

Penguins are found on every continent in the southern hemisphere (the bottom half of the world). Most people think that penguins only live in the ice and snow but there are some species that live in warmer climates. The hottest penguin habitat is the Galapagos Islands, where temperatures can reach as high as 32°C. Emperor and Adélie penguins live in Antarctica in temperatures as low as -60°C. Emperor penguins are the only animals to stay on the open ice during an Antarctic winter, huddling together to survive the worst weather conditions on earth.



# Questions

1. What is a mammal?

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2. How long are adult polar bears?

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3. What happens to steam and water in an Arctic winter?

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4. What colour is a polar bear's fur?

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5. What does 'adapted' mean?

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6. Why do penguins have dark feathers with light patches?

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7. Where are emperor penguins found?

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8. Which is your favourite: a polar bear or penguin? Why?

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