

A Polar Bear's Body

Nose

Your nose is one of the few areas of your body not covered in fur. You have a very keen sense of smell, which you use to track your prey.

Weight

Male polar bears weigh around 1,500 pounds (680.4 kilograms), while female polar bears (like you) weigh about half as much.

Front paws

You have small depressions on your front paws that provide a grip when you're walking on slippery ice.

Fur

Your fur is very oily and repels water, helping you to swim better.

Height

On average, all polar bears are 3.5 to 5 feet (1 to 1.5 meters) tall when standing on all four legs. On your hind legs, you reach a height of 7 feet (2.1 meters), while male polar bears can reach 10 feet (3 meters) in height.

Skin

Underneath your fur, your skin is black. This helps you absorb the heat of the Sun to stay warm in the cold climate.

Claws

Your claws are roughly 2 to 3 inches (5 to 7 centimeters) long. Ideal for tearing into prey!

Paws

Your paws are much bigger than those of other bear species—about 12 inches (30.5 centimeters) across. They work like snowshoes, spreading your weight across a wider surface area so that you don't sink into the snow as you walk across it.

The Arctic Circle

Your home, the Arctic Circle, is a very cold and inhospitable place to live. Polar bears roam the Arctic regions of the United States (Alaska), Canada, Russia, Norway, and Greenland. At the North Pole, the temperature can drop as low as -70°F (-56.7°C). Fortunately, you have a 4-inch-thick (10.2-centimeter) layer of fat underneath your skin that stops the cold from penetrating your body and killing you.

Other Animals of the Arctic:

Despite the difficult conditions, there are many other species of animal that live in the Arctic:



Arctic wolf



Reindeer



Puffin



Seal



Arctic fox



Narwhal

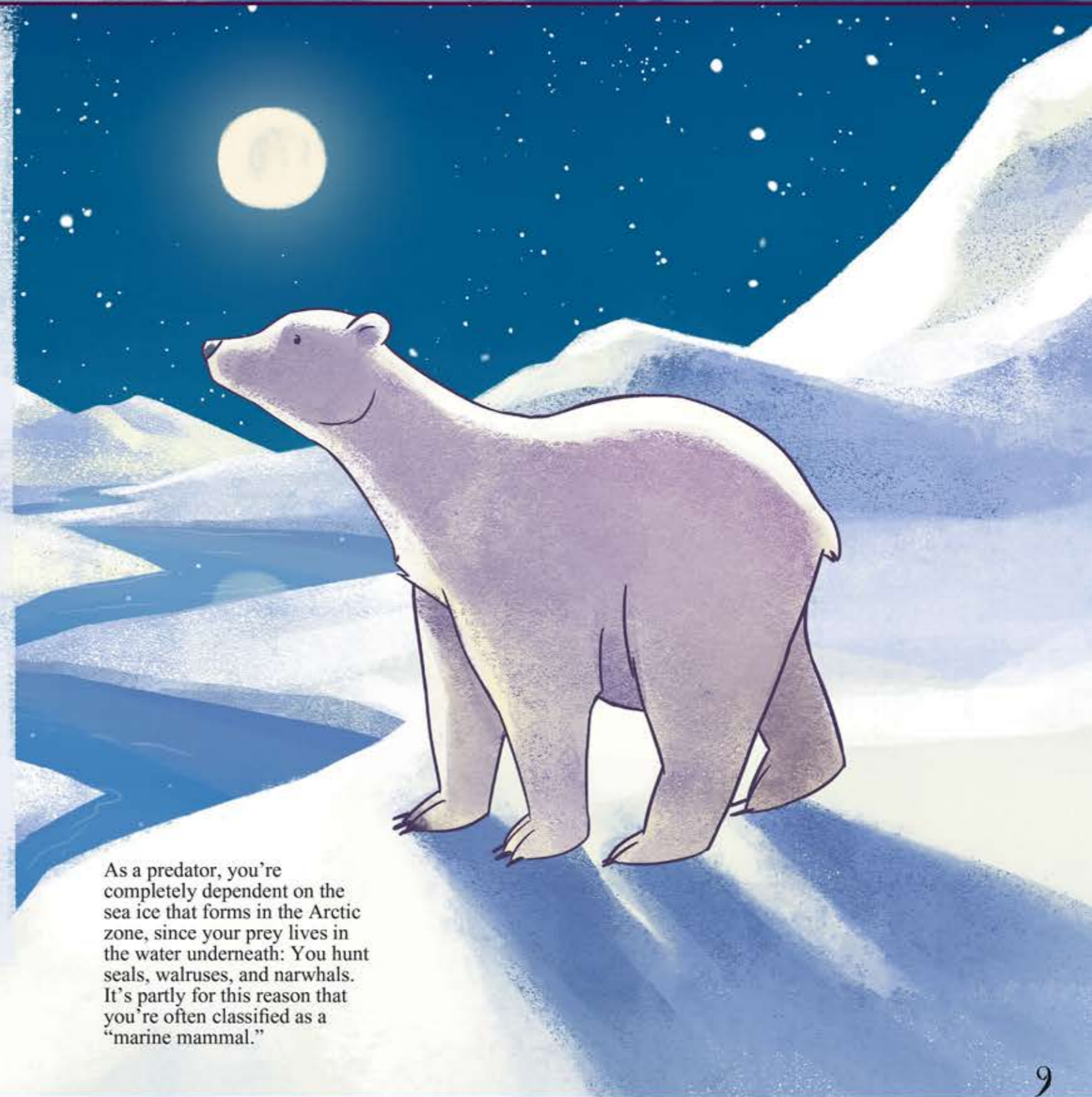


Walrus



If you...

need to hide, your white fur is the perfect camouflage for blending in with the snowy Arctic environment.



As a predator, you're completely dependent on the sea ice that forms in the Arctic zone, since your prey lives in the water underneath: You hunt seals, walrus, and narwhals. It's partly for this reason that you're often classified as a "marine mammal."

How a Polar Bear Hunts

You can move quickly, on land and in the water. You can reach a top speed of 25 miles per hour (40.2 kilometers per hour) running on land, and swim at a speed of 6 miles per hour (9.7 kilometers per hour).

That sounds fast, right? Sadly, your prey, like seals, narwhals, and walrus, can swim much faster. So you need to be more clever than your prey in order to not go hungry. As a polar bear, you have lots of crafty hunting techniques for outsmarting dinner...

Still hunting (below): Stalking (right):

This is the polar bear's most common hunting method.

1. You use your sense of smell to find a seal's breathing hole in the thick ice.
2. You crouch silently nearby, waiting patiently, sometimes for hours, for a seal to appear.
3. When it does, you quickly reach in with a forepaw and drag it out onto the ice.
4. Then you bite its head to crush its skull. Now you can eat!



If you...

are struggling to find food in the months of late summer and early fall, you will have to fast like other polar bears. During this time, polar bears cannot hunt for seals because the sea is unfrozen.



Most of the time, you will fail to catch the seal you're hunting. But if you use your clever techniques and hunt for many months on the ice, you should catch enough prey to not go hungry.