

Polar Bears

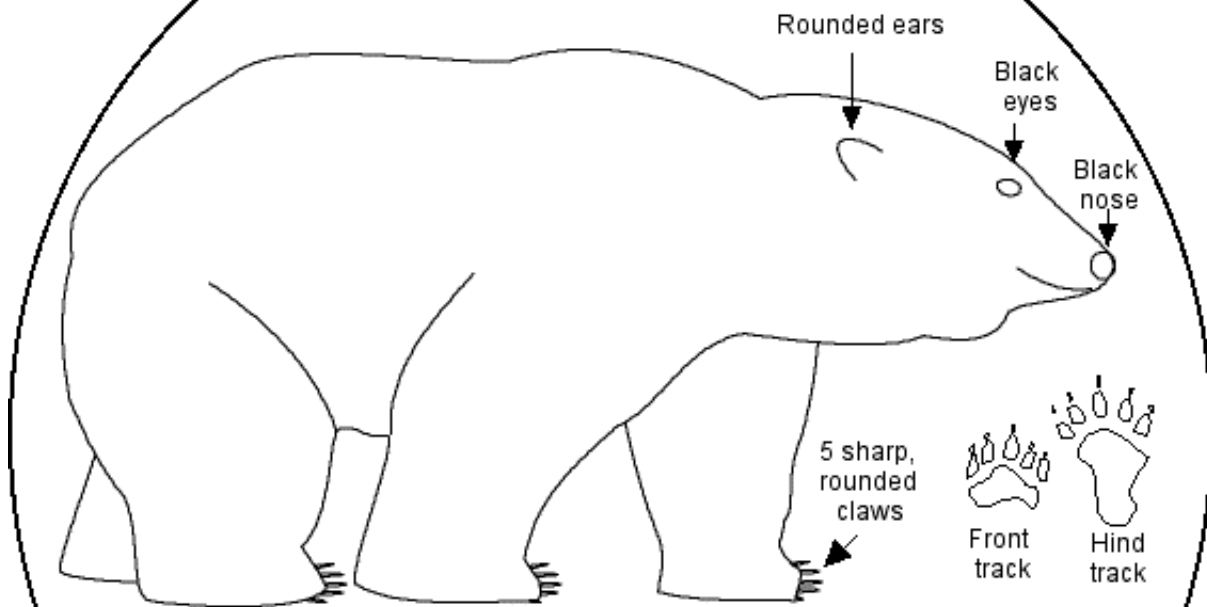
By _____

Introduction



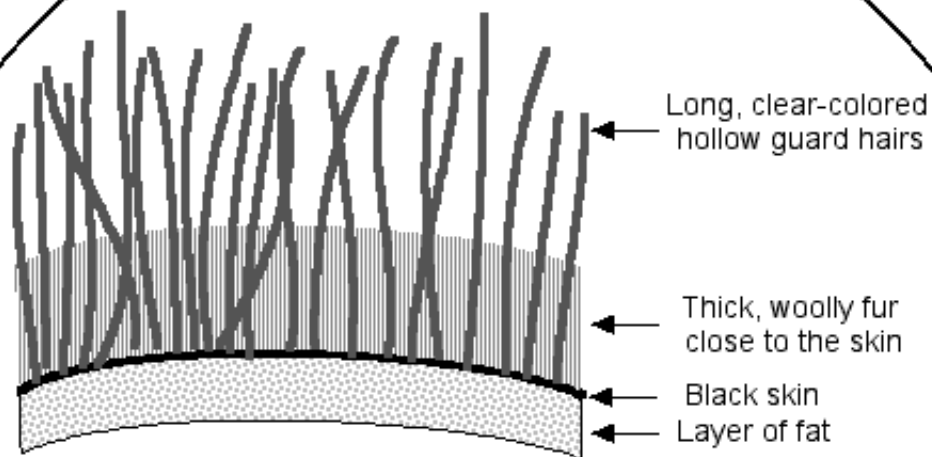
Polar bears are large, meat-eating bears who are adapted for life in a frozen Arctic environment. These mammals are powerful swimmers who hunt seals in the water. Polar bears can run in bursts up to 25 mph (40 kph).

Anatomy



Polar Bears are up to 10 feet (3 m) long and weigh about 1,700 pounds (770 kg); males are bigger than females. Polar bears have powerful jaws, 42 teeth, and a black tongue. The tail is small and flat. They have wide front paws with slightly webbed toes that help them swim. These bears paddle with their front feet and steer with the hind feet.

Fur and Skin



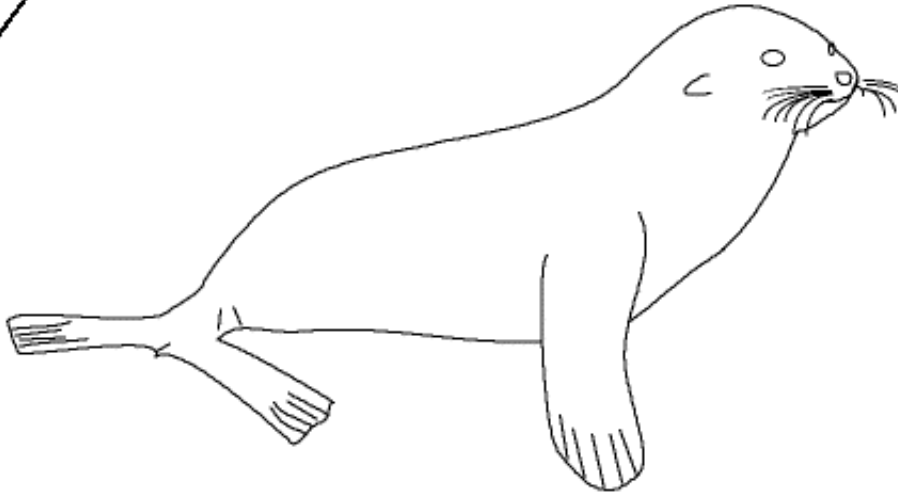
Polar Bears have two types of fur. They have thick, woolly fur close to the skin that keeps them warm. They also have hollow guard hairs that stick up and protect the bears from getting wet. These guard hairs are like drinking straws and are clear-colored (not white). The white-looking coat camouflages them well in the snow and ice. Under the fur, Polar Bears have black skin. They also have a thick layer of fat under the skin that helps keep them warm.

Habitat and Range



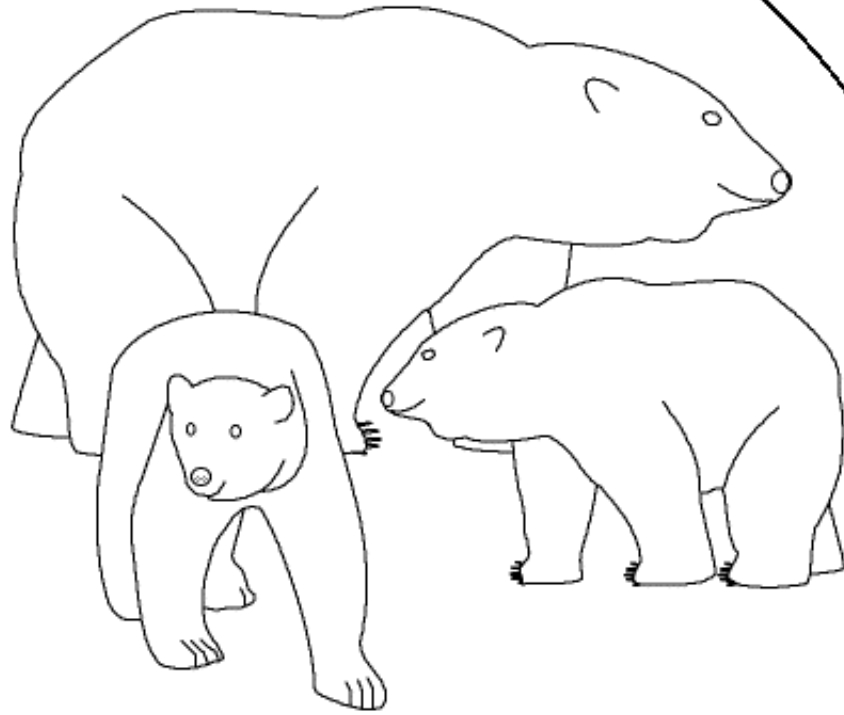
Polar Bears live in icy Arctic areas of Alaska, Canada, Greenland, Norway, and Russia. They spend much of their time swimming in frigid seas.

Diet



**Polar Bears are carnivores (meat-eaters) who frequently hunt and catch their prey in the water, often many miles from land. They are fierce predators who eat mostly seals (and some walruses and other marine mammals).
Polar bears don't drink water.**

Reproduction



When pregnant, females (called sows) build snow dens in which they spend the winter; they usually give birth to twin cubs. Male polar bears (called boars) are active all year.

Quiz

1. Do polar bears live in the Arctic or the Antarctic? _____
2. What are female polar bears called? _____
3. What are male polar bears called? _____
4. What are young polar bears called? _____
5. What color is the polar bear's tongue? _____
6. What animals are the mainstay of the polar bear diet? _____
7. Are polar bears mammals? _____