

ARCTIC LIFE



Powerful *polar bears* rule the Arctic. Before winter, this mother bear made a den in the snow where she gave birth to her two cubs. Now that it's spring, the cubs follow her and learn how to hunt seals and survive life on the ice.

A thick layer of fat called **blubber** helps keep a *walrus* warm in cold Arctic waters. The watchful mother must defend herself and her calf against hungry polar bears and killer whales.



In the Arctic summer, the land bustles with wildlife. Many kinds of birds migrate here to breed. Hoofed mammals find easy grazing. Small mammals raise lots of babies. Wolves, foxes, and bears wander the frozen land searching for their next meal. The Arctic Ocean is also full of life, including whales, seals, and many other sea creatures.



With their thick skulls, sharp horns, and shaggy coats, *musk oxen* can stand side by side to form a mighty wall! They often protect their calves this way against wolves and other predators. The “wall” also shields the little ones from cold, bitter winds.



LOOKS LIKE
IT'S ALMOST TIME
FOR A HAIRCUT!



A majestic *snowy owl* is about to grab a furry little rodent called a *lemming* in its powerful **talons**. In years when lemmings aren't so plentiful, the owls may travel way below the Arctic Circle in search of food.

The coat on this young *Arctic fox* is changing from summer brown to winter white. That way, the fox blends in as it hunts—in any season! Foxes eat whatever they can find or catch. They often follow polar bears, hoping to steal some scraps from their meals.



WELCOME TO THE ANTARCTIC

At the “bottom” of the world is a whole continent called Antarctica. It’s the only **landmass** inside the Antarctic Circle (see map). A thick layer of ice covers most of Antarctica. A range of mountains divides the continent, and even most of that is under ice.

Believe it or not, very little moisture from the sky falls here, so you can truthfully call the landscape a desert. Most

of the snow that does fall never goes away. It sticks around year after year, piling up to make the ice sheet thicker and thicker.



The *Weddell seal* lives farther south than any other mammal. Weddell seals swim under the sea ice to feed—mostly on fish and squid. They can dive a half-mile deep and stay underwater for more than an hour. This seal (above) is taking a minute to rest on the ice.

ANTARCTICA IS THE COLDEST AND WINDIEST SPOT ON EARTH. BRRR!

