

# AMAZING ANIMAL MOTHERS

## POLAR BEARS

**Instructions:** Consult reliable sources and answer the following questions.

Where are Polar Bears found? \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_



Gestation period:

Years

Months

Number of babies:

Litter size

Type of birth:

Egg

Live

In which ways do baby Polar Bears rely on their mothers?

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What makes Polar Bear mother's special?

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# POLAR BEARS

Polar bears live in Earth's Arctic regions. They spend a lot of their time on sea ice. They can travel long distances on the ice floes that drift through Arctic waters.

Polar bears have thick, whitish fur covering black skin. The fur and a thick layer of fat keep them warm. The black skin helps to absorb heat from the Sun. Polar bears even have fur on the soles of their feet. This fur protects the feet and keeps them from slipping. Sharp claws also help polar bears to walk on ice and to kill prey.

Polar bear males are larger than females. Males weigh 900-1,600 pounds (410-720 kilograms). They stand just over 5 feet (1.5 meters) tall at the shoulder and can reach a length of 8 feet (2.5 meters).

When a mom Polar Bear is 4 or 5, she can have a baby. Polar bears have one to four babies. The mother is pregnant for 8 months and then gives birth to a live baby. Baby polar bears are called cubs. The mom has the babies in a den and feeds them milk from her body for up to 2 years.

After they are weaned, cubs stay with their mother for a few more years, until they are ready to mate. Baby polar bears depend on their mother for protection, food and learning how to survive. Mother polar bears are very protective of their cubs. Polar bears live for 25 to 30 years in the wild.

There are 20,000 to 25,000 polar bears in the wild. Scientists predict that those numbers will drop sharply over the next 40 years. One reason is that the amount of sea ice in the Arctic has been shrinking. Less sea ice means that polar bears have less space to hunt and to mate.

