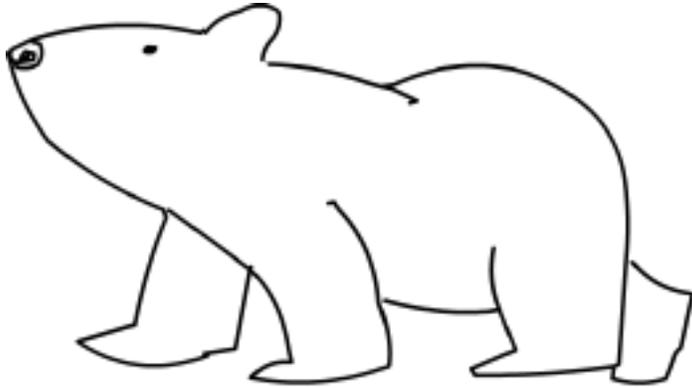


Polar Bear Profile



Polar Bear Family Tree

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Subphylum: Vertebrata
Class: Mammalia
Order: Carnivora
Family: Ursidae
Genus: Ursus
Species: Ursus maritimus

Hello, my name is Imek, which means 'water' in Inuit, and I'm a Polar Bear. I am a marine mammal because I live on Arctic ice packs in the North Pole. I love swimming in the icy water, which is where I find seals, walruses, fish, whales and ocean birds to eat. I usually only like to eat the skin and fatty parts because I need the extra calories to help my body stay fat which helps me stay warm in such freezing weather. My black skin is covered with a thick coat of white fur, but sometimes my fur looks yellowish in the summer. I even have fur between my toes to help me run on ice and snow.

I like to be by myself most of the time. But as a cub, I spent 2 or 3 years by my mom's side. I was born in my mom's den deep down in the snow and I have 3 other siblings who were born at the same time as me. My eyes were sealed shut for a few days but I did have fur to keep me warm. My mom protected my brothers and sisters when we were small cubs. Once got really angry and charged another polar bear that wanted to make a dinner out of us little ones.

I spend a lot of my time sleeping or lying around. Otherwise I'm walking, swimming and looking for food. Sometimes I'll wait patiently by a seal's breathing hole in the ice and catch the seal when it comes up for air. Otherwise, I'll creep up on it when it is lying around on top of the ice. After I eat, I lick my fur clean. As the seasons change, I can walk great distances, up to 1000 km looking for ice and snow to make my home.

I'm worried about global warming because it makes the ice and snow melt. And without ice and snow, I wouldn't have anywhere to live and the food I eat would disappear too. Humans sometimes try to trap polar bears because they sell our fur. Even though we are threatened by humans and the melting effects of global warming, Polar Bear populations are growing.