

BIOMES OF THE WORLD

TUNDRA



Tundra comes from the Finnish word, tunturia, meaning “**treeless plain.**”

Trees cannot grow in the tundra's frozen soil.

TUNDRA

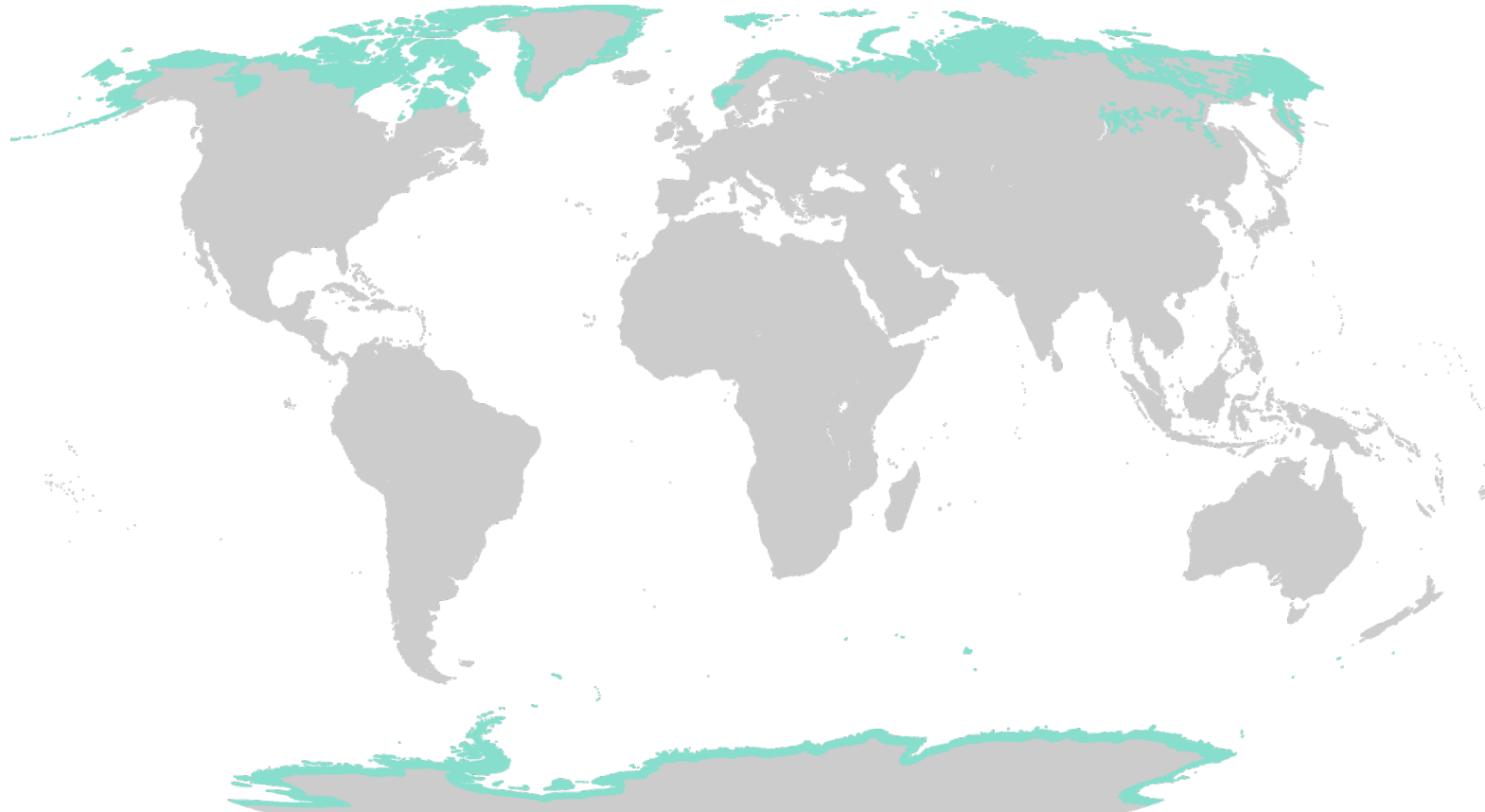


LOCATION

The Tundra, sometimes known as a polar region, makes up 1/5th of the word. Tundra got its name from the word “Tunturia” a Finnish word that means “barren land”. The biggest Tundra's that you might know, are the Arctic and Antarctica.

Tundra: Location

The tundra covers 1/5 of the land on earth. The tundra surrounds the North pole and Antarctica.



THE TUNDRA

Tundra ecosystems are very cold, treeless habitats found at the top of very tall mountains and in the Arctic regions. In the tundra, the climate is extremely cold and windy. There is very little rainfall because it is covered with snow most of the time. The tundra has a permafrost, or a thick layer of soil, that remains frozen year-round. Mountain goats, sheep, and many kinds of birds live in this delicate mountain tundra. They feed on the ground covering plants and insects. Cushion-like plants, called flora, survive in the tundra by growing in rocky crevices where it is slightly warmer and protected from the wind. A wide variety of animals live on the Arctic tundra including polar bears, wolves, caribou, geese and the Arctic fox. In the short summer season, the sun shines for 24 hours a day.

The poles



The Polar Regions are located in two places. They are found at the very top of the Earth in the Arctic and at the very bottom of the Earth at the Antarctic.

POLAR REGIONS

The polar regions, sometimes called the Arctic, are the coldest places on Earth! Bitter cold temperatures and long winters that never end make polar regions the most difficult places to live!

In Antarctica the land is like a giant sheet of ice surrounded by frozen oceans. Many animals have become adapted to live there. Emperor penguins, for instance, have an extra layer of blubber to stay warm. These amazing creatures huddle together in large groups to keep their young warm and protected from predators. Many animals that live in the polar region have white fur or skin to help them blend into their environment. This is a form of camouflage. These frigid places are home to a variety of wildlife including penguins, bears, deer, lynx, fox, hares, and many types of birds species to name just a few.

Tundra: Weather

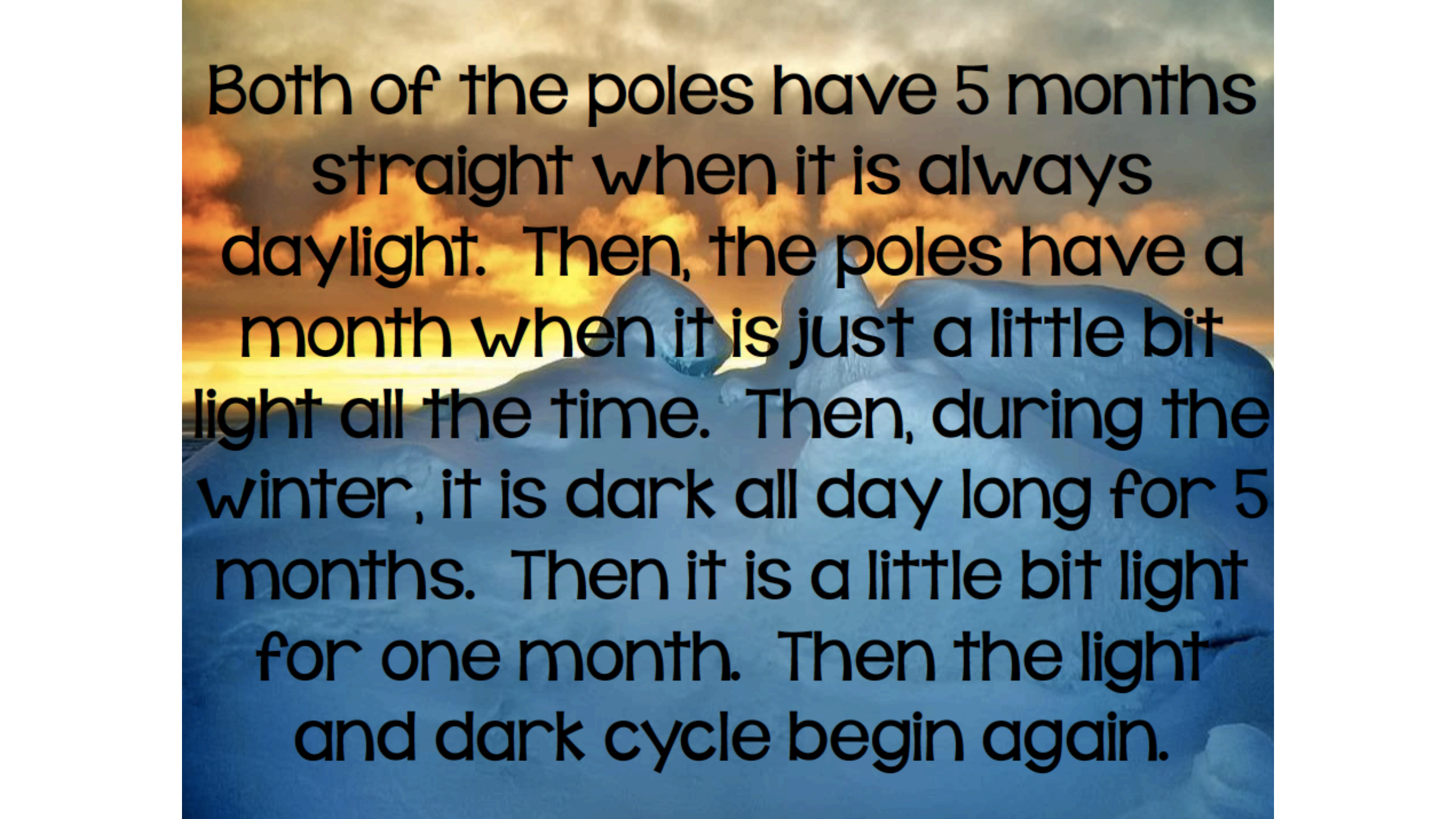
- The tundra biome is the coldest and the driest weather of all biomes. It does not rain as much, the winters are long, and the summers are short. The winter lasts 8 months and reaches a temperature of -60 degrees F. In the summer the temperatures will reach 50 degrees F which is just enough to thaw the surface of the ground.



CLIMATE

A tundra are very cold! They are the coldest areas of the world and are sometimes called “cold deserts” because they get little rain and have very few plants and animals.

Antarctica is the coldest place on earth with temperatures as low as -129°F . The average temperature of the Arctic is about -30°F .



Both of the poles have 5 months straight when it is always daylight. Then, the poles have a month when it is just a little bit light all the time. Then, during the winter, it is dark all day long for 5 months. Then it is a little bit light for one month. Then the light and dark cycle begin again.

During the six-weeks of summer, temperatures average about 50°.

More than 400 kinds of flowers bloom in the summer.



Tundra: Plants

Because of the extreme cold weather, there are no trees in this biome. Plants that do grow in this biome include grasses, shrubs, herbs, lichens, and mosses. They grow in groups and stay low in the ground to stay protected from icy winds.



LIFE

Similar to a desert, there is not much life in a Tundra. Plants in the Arctic are short and grow closely together. Some plants include, mosses, heaths, and lichen. Animals you might see are hares, squirrels, polar bears, seals, and foxes. Animals that live in Antarctica include, penguins, whales, krill and small plants like moss that live on rocks.

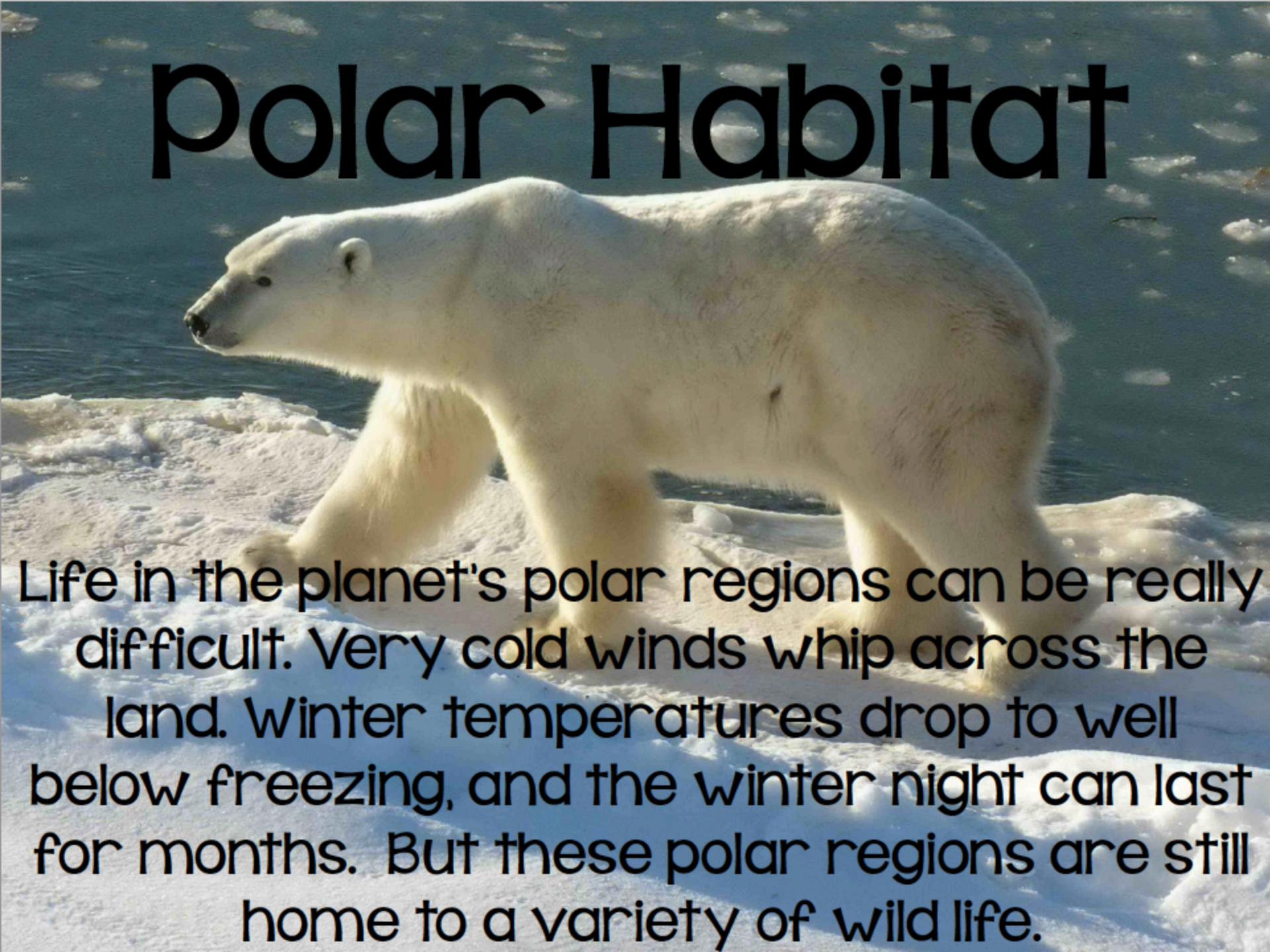




Temperatures average
-30° during the long
winter months.

Thick fur protects large
land mammals like
caribou and polar bears.

Polar Habitat

A polar bear is shown in profile, walking across a large, flat piece of sea ice. The bear's fur is white and appears thick and textured. The ice is a pale, slightly yellowish white, with some darker patches and shadows. In the background, the dark blue water of the ocean is visible, with small, white ice floes scattered across the surface. The lighting suggests a bright day, with some shadows cast by the bear and the ice.

Life in the planet's polar regions can be really difficult. Very cold winds whip across the land. Winter temperatures drop to well below freezing, and the winter night can last for months. But these polar regions are still home to a variety of wild life.

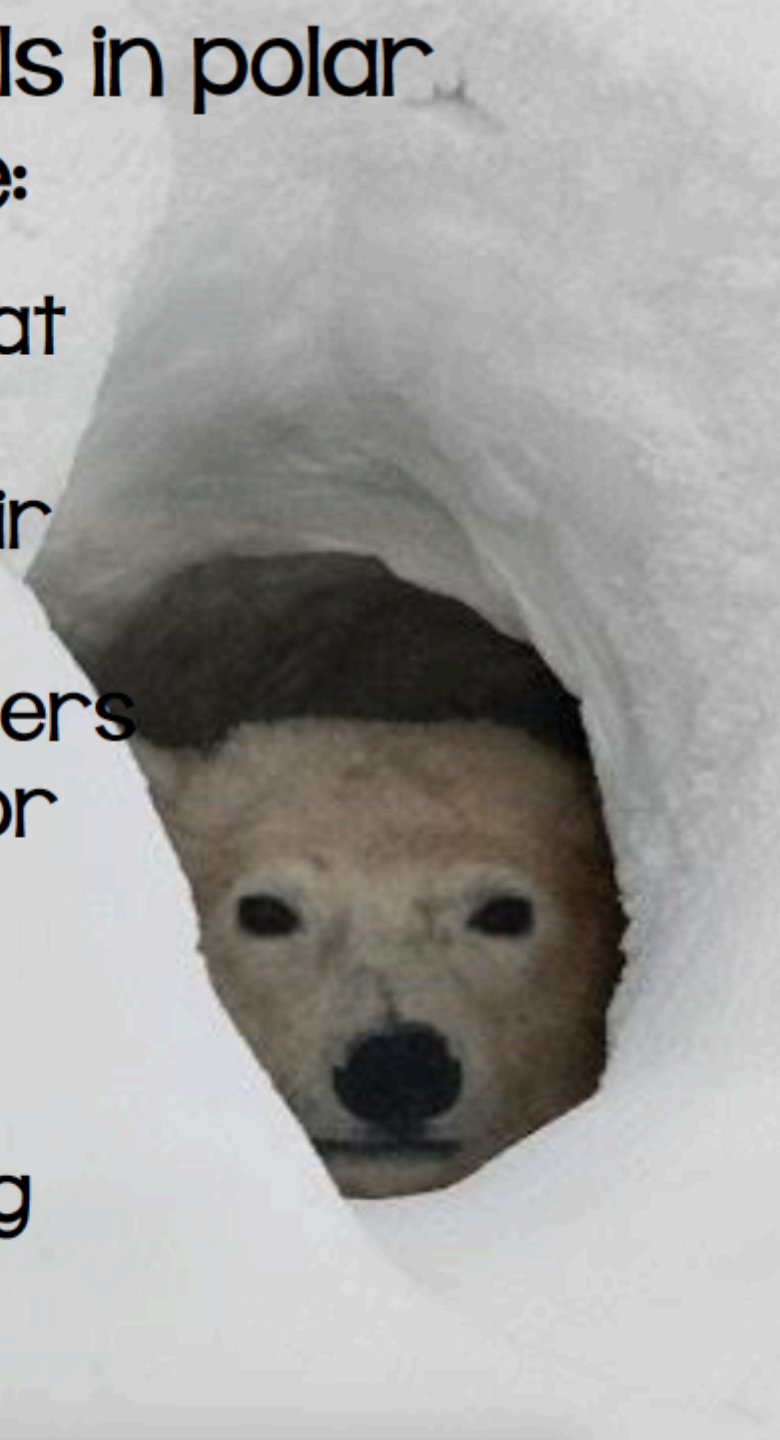
Tundra: Animals


There are a few types of animals that actually live in this extremely cold biome but mostly migrate south for the winter. Animals you can find in this biome are lemmings, caribou, arctic fox, and the largest and most dangerous animal is the polar bear.



•Some ways that animals in polar habitats stay warm are:

- Developing a thick layer of fat that keeps them cozy
- Having thick fur all over their body and feet
- Having thick layers of feathers
- Burrowing into the ground or into snowbanks
- Migrating south during the coldest months
- Hibernating (sleeping) during the coldest months



A close-up photograph of a white Arctic fox sitting on a grey rock. The fox has bright orange eyes and a black nose. The background is a blurred forest of brown trees.

The Arctic has many large land animals including reindeer, musk ox, lemmings, arctic hares, arctic terns, snowy owls, squirrels, arctic fox and polar bears.



There are many kinds of large marine animals that live in the Arctic. The walrus, narwhals, whales and seals all make their home in the Arctic.

Many people think that penguins and polar bears live both at the North Pole and the South Pole, but that is untrue. Penguins only live in Antarctica, which is near the South Pole. Polar Bears live in the Arctic, which is near the North Pole.





The animals in polar regions hunt fish or each other for food rather than relying on plants. Since very few plants grow in the polar regions, most animals must eat other animals to survive. These penguins are diving for fish.