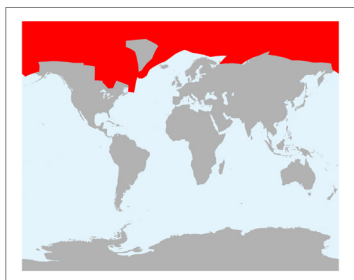




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Geographical range

**Knowledge**  
**Experts**  
**Get Involved**

## Amazing Species: Polar Bear

The Polar Bear, *Ursus maritimus*, is classified as Vulnerable on The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™. It is the largest living land carnivore in the world today and they live throughout the ice-covered waters of the circumpolar Arctic.

Experts have expressed serious concerns about the impact of climate change on the survival of Polar Bears. Rising temperatures cause melting of the sea ice which affects their access to prey, and the females ability to get on land to build suitable maternity dens. As a result, bears must fast for longer leading to malnourishment and in some cases starvation. Being forced on shore for extended periods also makes this species increasingly vulnerable to problematic interactions with humans and hunting (over-harvesting is an ongoing concern for some populations). As a top-level predator, Polar Bears are exposed to high levels of organochlorine pollutants which also pose a threat if accumulated at elevated levels.

A number of countries have signed the 'International Agreement on the Conservation of Polar Bears' which identifies the right of local hunters to harvest Polar Bears sustainably, and to outlaw hunting from aircraft and large ships. Polar Bears are listed on Appendix II of the Convention for International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) which means that international trade in this species is strictly regulated.

**Celebrate International Polar Bear Day, 27 February, 2015**



The production of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ is made possible through the IUCN Red List Partnership.