

4

Endangered animals

Reading

Before reading

- 1 Discuss these questions.
 - 1 What do you know about polar bears?
Where do they live?
What do they eat?
 - 2 What do you know about penguins?
 - 3 Are these animals dangerous?
 - 4 Do you know what *endangered* means? Do you think these animals are endangered?

- 2  Read and listen.



Polar Bears

Polar bears are our biggest land **predators** and they can look frightening. An adult male can weigh up to 600 kilograms and be three metres long. When a polar bear stands on two legs, it is taller than a man.

Their **habitat** is snow and ice in cold northern countries like Alaska, Greenland and Canada. In winter, they travel across the frozen seas looking for **prey**. They eat seals and other animals and they are excellent hunters.

They have white fur, so it is difficult to see them in the snow. They have sharp, strong claws which help them to catch and hold their prey. They also have long necks, small heads and large, flat feet. This makes them very strong swimmers.

Sadly, changes in climate mean that polar bears are now an **endangered** species. In places like Hudson Bay in Canada, temperatures have been getting warmer since 1950. This means that the sea has been freezing later every year, so the bears have less time to hunt on the ice. As a result, hungry bears go into towns looking for rubbish to eat.

Conservationists have tried to keep the bears away from towns, but sometimes they have to catch them as the bears can **attack** people when they are hungry. The bears are not killed. They are taken by helicopter far from the town so that the animals can look for food in their normal habitat.

Penguins

Penguins are birds, although they cannot fly. They are excellent swimmers because of their body shape and their wings, called flippers. They can dive deep into the sea to find prey. They eat krill, which are tiny sea animals, fish and squid. Their beaks are sharp, which helps them to catch prey, but also to fight.

Penguin feathers are black on their backs and white on their fronts – in this way, they are **camouflaged** from their predators when they are swimming. Underwater predators like seals and sharks cannot see them very well against the light surface of the water. Flying predators like eagles find them difficult to see from the top against the dark ocean.

There are different **species** of penguins living in different areas of the world, but almost all of them live in the southern **hemisphere**. Most penguin species have an extremely cold and icy habitat – they are one of the few animals that live in Antarctica.

Like polar bears, penguins are becoming **rare**. This is partly **due to** climate change, but also due to water **pollution** killing their prey and oil spills from large ships. Other human activities are resulting in fewer penguins, including accidents with fishing nets, and people collecting too many of their eggs. We must act carefully now to save penguins from becoming endangered.



Vocabulary

3 Match the words from the text to the definitions.

- 1 attack (verb) try to hurt
- 2 _____ (noun) people who look after our environment
- 3 _____ (noun) dirty, dangerous chemicals and gases that damage nature
- 4 _____ (noun) a group of animals or plants that are the same
- 5 _____ (adjective) in danger of disappearing from the earth
- 6 _____ (noun) animals that eat other animals
- 7 _____ (noun) one half of the earth – one north and one south
- 8 _____ (noun) the natural home of an animal
- 9 _____ (adjective) when there are not many of something
- 10 _____ (adjective) caused by
- 11 _____ (noun) an animal that is killed and eaten by another animal
- 12 _____ (verb) hidden from predators by colour or shape

Reading comprehension

4 Correct the information in **bold**.

- 1 Adult polar bears are ~~smaller~~^{taller} than people.
- 2 Polar bears live in cold places in the **southern** hemisphere.
- 3 Polar bears have white **feathers**, so they are difficult to see in the snow.
- 4 Very hungry polar bears may attack **penguins**.
- 5 Penguins can **fly** extremely well.
- 6 Penguins eat fish, krill and **seals**.
- 7 Flying predators cannot see penguins against the **light snow**.
- 8 Penguins in many places are becoming **more common**.

5 Match the sentences with the pictures.

They live in Antarctica.
They eat seals.
They live in Canada.
They eat krill.

Their flippers help them to swim very well.
They have flat feet.
They have sharp beaks.
Their predators include sharks.



6 Match the two parts of the sentences.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 Polar bears hunt for prey | a by climate change. |
| 2 They are taller and heavier | b due to their body shape. |
| 3 They are camouflaged in the snow | c their prey to disappear. |
| 4 Their habitats are threatened | d although they are birds. |
| 5 Penguins are excellent swimmers | e than men. |
| 6 They can't fly | f on the ice. |
| 7 Their black and white feathers | g by their white fur. |
| 8 Pollution is causing | h hide them from predators. |

7 Discuss these questions with a partner or with your class.

- 1 Why are polar bears endangered?
- 2 Why are penguins becoming rare?
- 3 Do you know about any other endangered animals?
- 4 Do you think people can do anything to save these animals?



Great white sharks are the biggest ocean predators. They grow up to six metres long and can weigh more than 2,000 kilograms.

They have strong tails and pointed fins so they swim fast – about 24 kilometres per hour. They have approximately 3,000 teeth which they use to catch their prey.

Great white sharks live in cool seas and oceans all over the world. They eat seals, fish, sea turtles, and they sometimes attack small whales. They don't eat humans! If they attack humans it's because they are curious – not to eat them.

Great white sharks are excellent hunters and well-camouflaged so they can hide and wait for their prey. They are grey on top, so they are difficult to see on the rocky sea floor.

Use **numbers** in your writing to make your descriptions more accurate and interesting. Describe **size** (metres, centimetres), **weight** (kilograms), **speed** (kilometres per hour) and **age** (years).

Often, it is impossible to know the exact numbers, so we use approximate numbers. We use phrases with these – can you find them in the text?

up to tells us the number could be smaller than this or the same

more than / over tells us the number is bigger than this

approximately / about / roughly tells us we don't know the exact number, or the number varies

8 Match the two parts of the sentences.

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 1 Cheetahs can run | a approximately 60 years old. |
| 2 Giraffes are very tall – | b more than 3,000 kilograms. |
| 3 Elephants live to | c up to 120 kilometres per hour. |
| 4 Camels can live for | d sometimes over five metres. |
| 5 Millipedes have got | e roughly 300 legs, depending on the species. |
| 6 Hippos can weigh | f about six months without water in winter. |

9 Write about crocodiles. Use this information.

| Name | Weight | Habitat |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| The Nile crocodile | approximately 700 kilograms | rivers and lakes of Southern Africa |
| Type of animal | Appearance | Prey |
| reptile | dark brown or green, long nose, long tail, about 66 teeth | fish, birds, zebras and sometimes humans! |
| Size | | |
| up to six metres long | | |

