

READING

1 In groups, look at the headline and answer the questions.

- 1 Why do you think polar bears are in danger of becoming extinct?
- 2 What other animals are in danger of dying out?

Polar bears are facing extinction in the wake of retreating sea ice

2a Look at the headline again and predict which ten of the following words will appear in the article.

banks cubs deserts fast (n) fat (n)
icebergs mammals marine penguins
prey seals species thrive waves

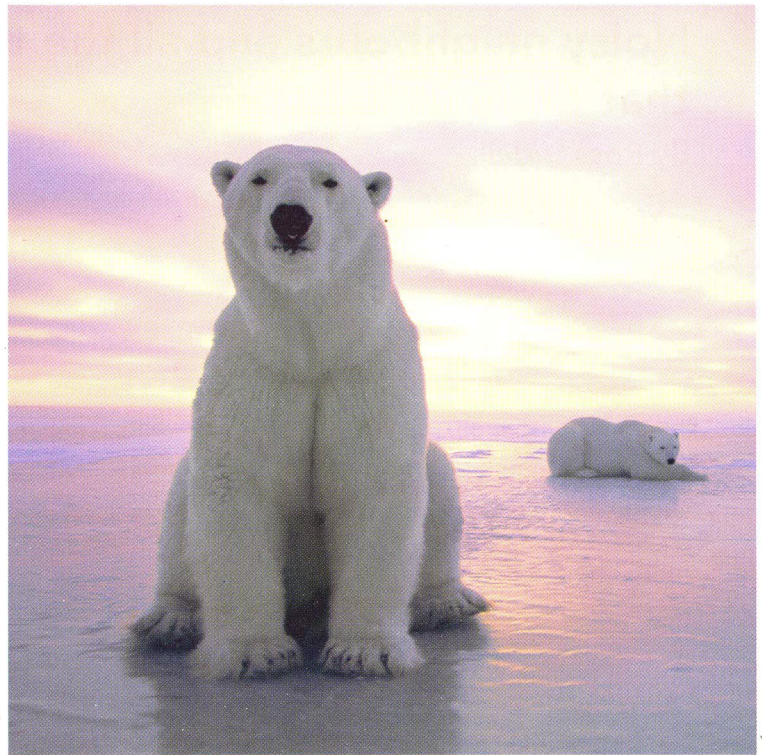
2b Match six of the words in Exercise 2a with these definitions.

- 1 eating no food at all for a period of time
- 2 a group of animals or plants of the same kind
- 3 an animal that is hunted and eaten by another animal
- 4 young bears, lions, tigers, etc.
- 5 animals that feed their young with milk from their body
- 6 relating to the sea and creatures that live there

3 Scan the introduction and the article and check your answers to Exercise 2a.

4 Read the introduction to the article and answer the following questions.

- 1 How long have sea levels been rising? Are they still rising?
- 2 How long has polar ice been shrinking? Is it still shrinking?
- 3 What success have environmentalists had in their fight against global warming?



We all know that sea levels have been rising for the last 20 years, but the rate of rise has increased rapidly in recent years. Polar ice has been shrinking at a rate of nearly 75,000 square kilometres a year over the last 30 years. Unfortunately, environmentalists have not achieved any significant results in their fight against global warming. So what effect has all this had on Arctic wildlife?

- 1 The retreat of sea ice in the Arctic is forcing the world's wild polar bear population into an unnatural fast, which threatens the species with extinction.
- 2 Scientists said yesterday that the earlier annual break-up of sea ice caused by climate change is cutting short the spring hunting season for the bears, which rely on floating banks of ice to reach their prey.
- 3 The disappearance of the sea ice in summer months is forcing hungry polar bear populations to spend longer on land, giving a false impression that numbers are increasing as they encroach on human settlements in search of food.
- 4 Travel agencies in Canada and the US offering Arctic tours have begun boasting of the increased likelihood of spotting the bears.
- 5 But a joint study by the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) and Nasa published in the scientific journal *Arctic* this week has found that, far from thriving, the polar bear is at potentially irreversible risk from global warming.
- 6 The research into bears in five Arctic regions found that sea ice has begun retreating progressively earlier each year when satellite images from 1979 to 2004 are compared.
- 7 Female bears rely on the spring hunting season to build the fat reserves needed to see them through the summer months. The retreating ice means they have not had time to build up normal levels of fat – which can reach a thickness of 12cm.
- 8 The study found the spring hunting season was being reduced by nearly three weeks in some places – reducing the fat levels by up to 80kg in each animal.

- 9 As females become thinner, they are more susceptible to disease. Their ability to reproduce and the survival chances of their cubs decline significantly.
- 10 Claire Parkinson, a Nasa scientist and co-author of the report, said: 'Our research strongly suggests that climate warming is having a significant and negative effect on a primary species reliant on the sea ice for survival.'
- 11 The sea ice provides a waterborne hunting ground for polar bears from which they can find their prey – seals and other marine mammals. The polar bear can detect a seal from 20 miles.
- 12 Ms Parkinson said: 'Our concern is that if the length of the sea ice season continues to decrease, polar bears will have shorter periods on the ice to feed.'

5 Read all the article carefully and complete the following sentences in your own words, with between two and five words.

- Polar ice is shrinking because of *climate change*.
- Polar bears are getting closer to where people live in order to _____.
- Travel companies are saying that there is a better chance of _____ on an Arctic tour.
- Polar bears are at risk from global warming, according to the _____.
- When female bears cannot build up fat reserves, they are _____.
- Polar bears need _____ to catch the animals they hunt for food.

VOCABULARY: word combinations

6a Match the words on the left with the nouns on the right.

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1 climate | a) images |
| 2 false | b) change |
| 3 scientific | c) journal |
| 4 global | d) effect |
| 5 satellite | e) impression |
| 6 significant | f) warming |

6b Complete the text with word combinations from Exercise 6a.

I read in a respectable ¹ _____ recently that ² _____ is already happening. ³ _____ have shown that ⁴ _____ is even reducing the legendary African snow on the top of Mount Kilimanjaro. Since 2000, observations of the ⁵ _____ of rising temperatures have started to mount up. Even the American business community has stopped trying to give a ⁶ _____ that everything is all right.

GRAMMAR: present perfect simple and continuous

7 Look at these sentences from the article and answer the questions.

- ... sea levels *have been rising* for the last 20 years, ...
- What effect *has all this had* on Arctic wildlife?
 - Which sentence focuses on an activity that is still continuing? Which tense is used?
 - Which sentence focuses on the result (or lack of result) of an activity? What tense is used?
 - Which tense is used for an activity that is completed?

GRAMMAR TIP

With *since* and *for* you can use some verbs in the present perfect simple and continuous with no difference in meaning, e.g. *live, stay, work, study, teach, wait, drive*.
She's lived / She's been living in that house for 20 years.

➔ Language reference and extra practice, pages 136–137

8 Underline the most appropriate form. Sometimes both forms are correct.

- In Iceland, the ice *has disappeared / has been disappearing* at an alarming rate.
- Since 1990, the Quelccaya ice cap in South America *has shrunk / has been shrinking* at the rate of about 30 metres a year.
- Rising sea levels mean that some reclaimed land in low-lying areas *has already vanished / has already been vanishing*.
- We've waited / We've been waiting for weeks to see Al Gore's film *An Inconvenient Truth*.
- To stop the rise of sea levels, the president of the Maldives *has sent / has been sending* 200 copies of the book *Global Warning: The Last Chance for Change* to heads of state.
- The environmental lobby *has tried / has been trying* to get the government to reduce CO₂ emissions for ages.

SPEAKING

9 Discuss changes in your environment. Use the present perfect simple and continuous.