

# Polar Bear Reproduction



## Mating Season:

From March to June but occurs mostly in April and May.

Females generally mate once every three years.

Male polar bears will fight with competitors to mate with females.



## Gestation Period:

Females are pregnant for about eight months.

During this time they need to gain an incredible 200 kg of weight.

Once their cubs are born they will not have the chance to eat again for about four months. They need a large enough store of body fat for their own survival as well as to have enough energy to produce milk for their young.



## Cubbing:

In late October pregnant females dig a den in the snow to give birth in.

Baby cubs are born with very fine hair and closed eyes.

The mother and her babies will stay in the den for the winter months. During this time the cubs fur will grow thick enough to withstand the cold conditions outside.



## Learning to Live:

When the cubs are old enough, the mother leads them to the sea ice. She hunts for seals and the cubs learn by watching her.



Polar bear cubs will eventually be able to hunt on their own. They stay with their mother until they are about 2- 2 1/2 years old. By this time the mother is ready to mate again.