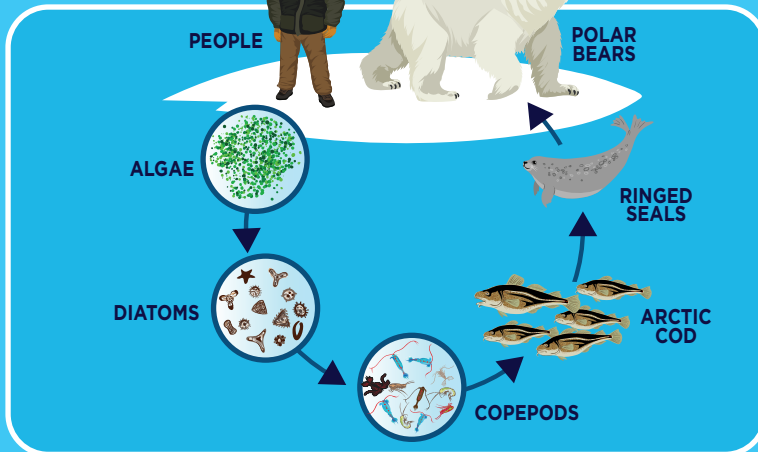
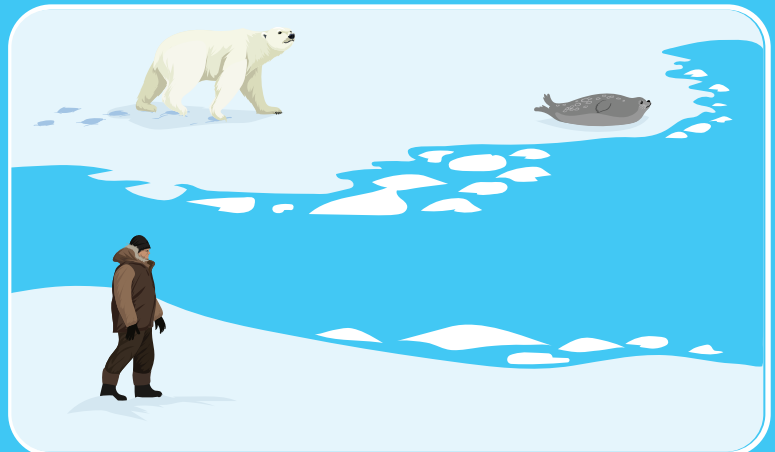


WHY SHOULD WE CARE ABOUT ARCTIC SEA ICE?

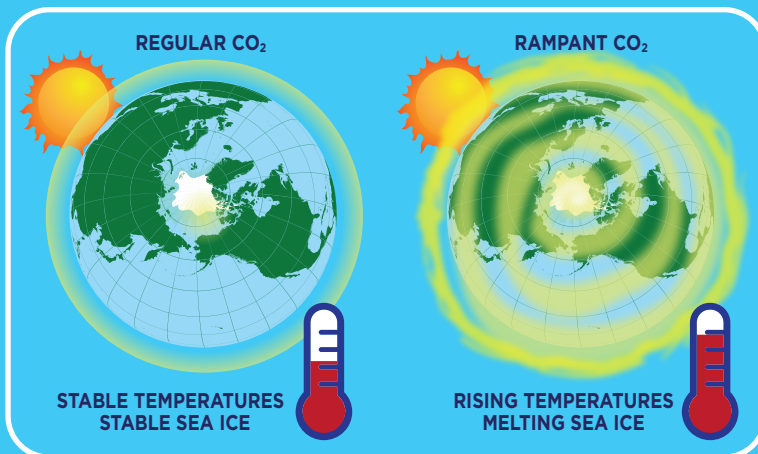
an educational handout



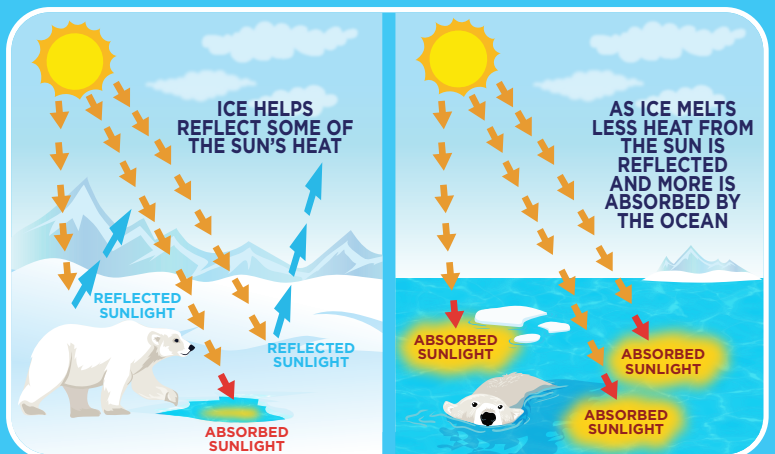
Sea ice is as important to the Arctic ecosystem as soil is to a forest. The food chain begins with algae and other tiny organisms that live on and in the sea ice. Arctic cod feed on them. Seals eat Arctic cod. And polar bears eat seals. Food from this marine ecosystem sustains northern communities—the ocean is their garden. It's important to protect this ecosystem that many species depend on.



Polar bears rely on sea ice for catching their seal prey. The polar bear's main prey, ringed seals, rely on sea ice, too—for giving birth to and raising their young. Changes in the sea ice also impact the economy, health, and traditions of northern communities that rely on the ecosystem for transportation and hunting.



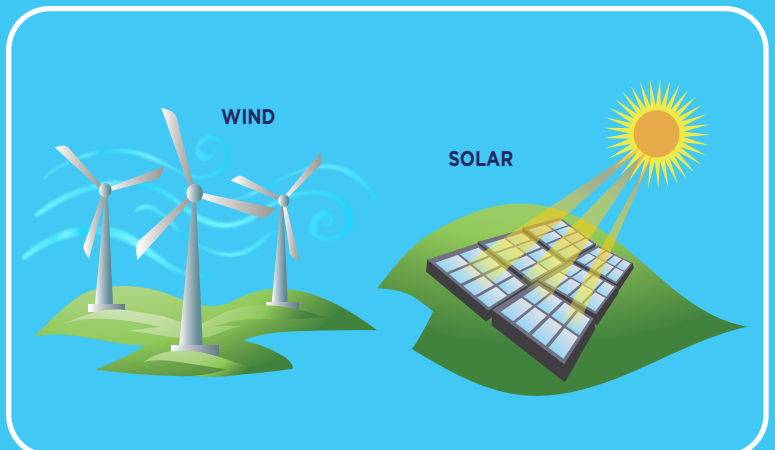
Natural amounts of CO₂ in the atmosphere act like a blanket around Earth, trapping heat and keeping our planet at a stable temperature. However, when we burn fossil fuels like coal, oil, and gas, we pump rampant amounts of CO₂ into the atmosphere. This build-up thickens the blanket around the world, heating up the planet and disrupting the climate. Just as a warm summer's day will melt the ice in your glass of water, a warming planet leads to Arctic sea ice melting.



Less sea ice means more heat is absorbed into the ocean. Just as a heart circulates blood and regulates the body's temperature, the ocean controls the world's climate system by circulating heat, moisture, and nutrients around the planet. Disruptions in this system, such as extra heat, have global impacts and can lead to more frequent and extreme weather events around the world.

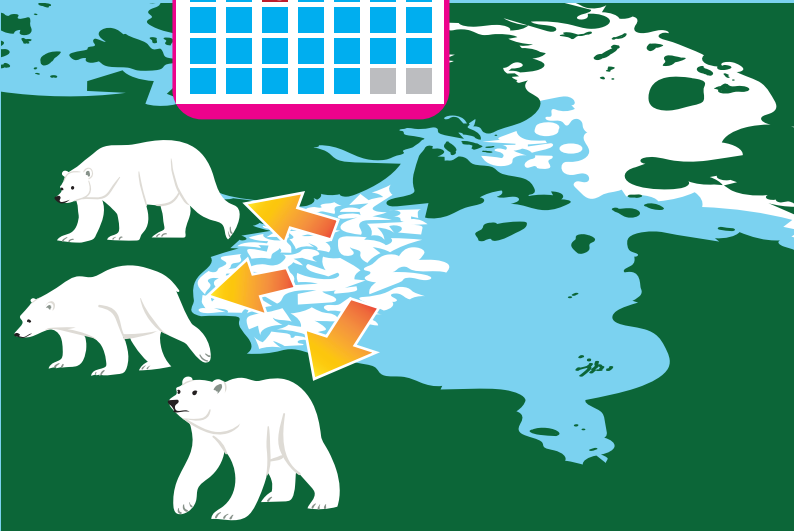
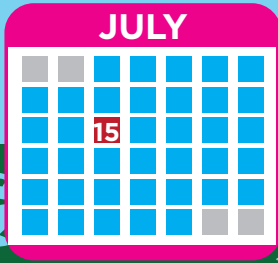


Without action to reduce CO₂, the probability of ice-free summers in the Arctic increases significantly from the middle to the end of this century—greatly reducing the polar bear's ability to hunt during the summer months and impacting people and wildlife around the globe.



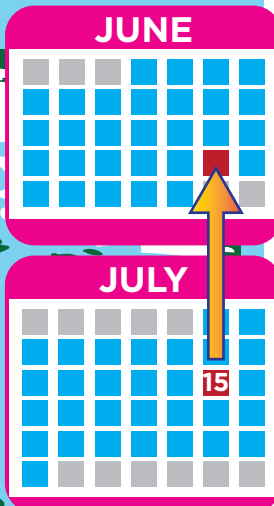
It's not too late to save sea ice! You can help by using **MUCH** less of the types of energy that burn fossil fuels and by letting your representatives know you support a renewable energy future.

1980



Every year, the polar bears of the Western Hudson Bay are forced ashore in the summer when the sea ice melts. We've created a new earth awareness day, **Arctic Sea Ice Day, on July 15**, to call attention to sea-ice loss in the Arctic and how we can help reverse the trend.

NOW



We chose July 15 because the breakup on Western Hudson Bay was historically in mid-July, with considerable natural fluctuation between years. Now the breakup is over three weeks earlier, on average, than it was in the 1980s.



TEAM UP WITH US FOR POLAR BEARS AND SAVE OUR SEA ICE!

The key to getting the climate system back to functioning the way it should, and to preserving a future for polar bears across the Arctic, is to move away from using fossil fuels for energy altogether. In the meantime, we can also take steps to use much less of the kinds of energy that add heat-trapping gases to our atmosphere.

One way we can work together is by encouraging the shift to renewable energy sources like solar and wind. Not only will this help reduce the carbon emissions that are causing the planet to warm and the sea ice to melt, it will also create jobs, strengthen the economy, and improve the overall environment and improve our health.

JOIN US IN HELPING TO SAVE SEA ICE BY:

1. Voting for candidates, at every level of government and in every election, who support the transition to renewable energy.
2. Supporting local initiatives that expand solar and wind—and talking about the benefits with friends, colleagues, and neighbors.
3. Contacting your representatives to let them know you care about this issue. See our primer on how to become an engaged citizen; also see our talking points below on wind and solar.
4. Signing our petition asking for a fair price on carbon. This will level the playing field for renewable energy and speed up the transition from fossil fuels.

On Arctic Sea Ice Day and every day, it's important to remember that future generations of polar bears and people depend on the decisions and plans we make today. Shifting to renewable energy brings economic benefits, decreases pollution, and creates jobs, but it will also be our legacy for the future.