

If a bear is encountered:

- Keep calm and assess the situation.
- If the bear does not know you are there, move to safe shelter or quietly leave the area.

If a bear is curious or approaches you:

- Gather in a group, make noise, wave your arms.
- Talk: let the bear know you are human.
- If the bear continues to approach, use deterrents such as cracker shells, rubber bullets, mace, rocks, etc.
- Do not run.

If you have surprised a mother with cubs:

- Back away slowly. Get away from the cubs.
- Act non-threatening: avoid direct eye contact, sudden movements or startling noises.
- If charged: roll in a ball, cover your neck with your hands.

If a bear attacks:

- Shout for help.
- Use deterrents or any weapon available.
- Defend yourself by fighting back: hit bear on the nose and face.

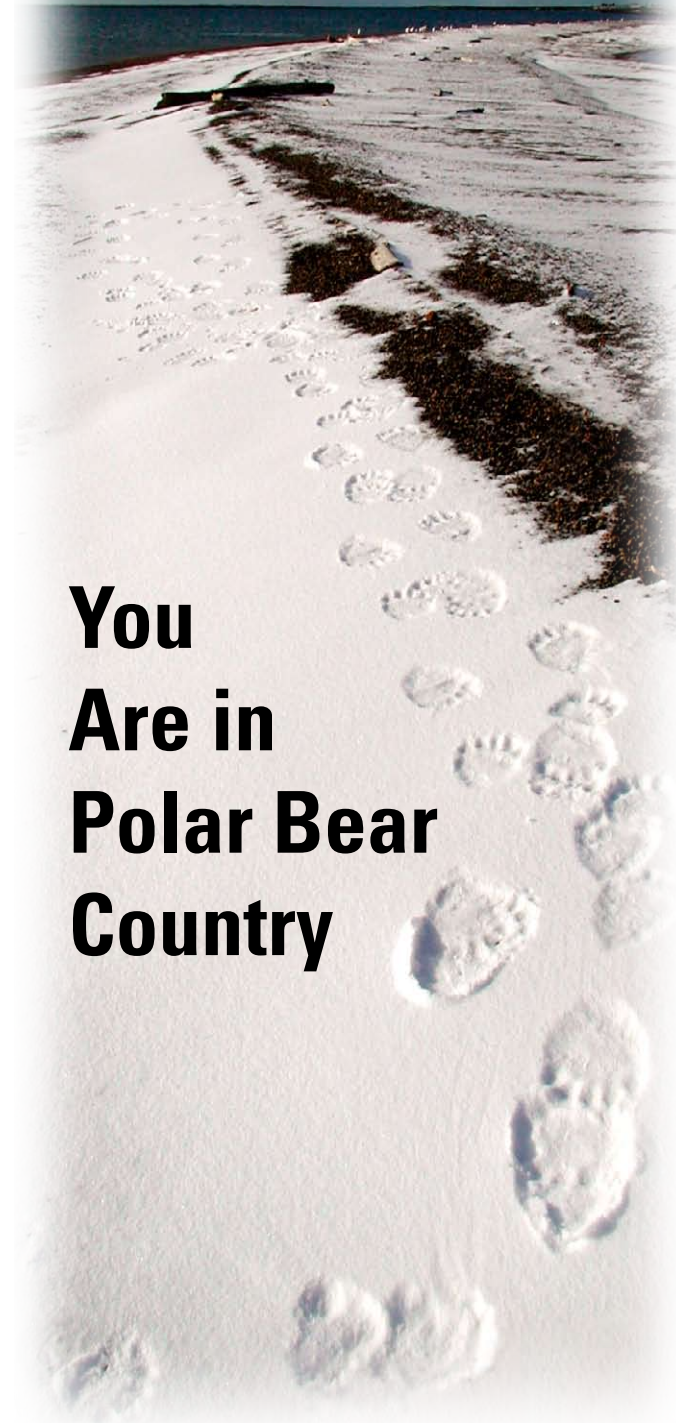
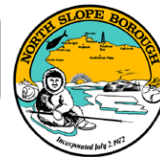


If you have a close encounter with a polar bear, please report it to:

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Marine Mammals Management**
1011 E. Tudor Road
Anchorage, Alaska 99503
1-800-362-5148

Arctic National Wildlife Refuge
101 12th Avenue, Rm 236
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701-6237
1-800-362-4546

Photos by USFWS



You Are in Polar Bear Country



Polar bears have an important place in the cultural traditions of Alaska Natives. Stories about the amazing strength, hunting ability and stealth of polar bears foster both fear and respect for these great creatures of the north.

Kaktovik residents and visitors have a unique opportunity to see polar bears. Especially in fall, polar bears come to the coast to rest, feed, and wait for the ice to form. People and bears must learn to share this habitat.



Observe bears from a distance that doesn't disrupt what they are doing:

A law called the Marine Mammal Protection Act makes it illegal to disturb a polar bear without good reason.

What is disturbance? It is anything that changes the natural behavior of the bear. This includes approaching a bear or chasing one on an ATV, snow machine, or pick up truck if it prevents a bear from feeding, resting, or moving in its normal manner. **It is not only illegal to chase a bear, it is unsafe for both the person and the bear.**

Avoid Close Encounters!

Polar bears can seem tame because they are often tolerant of people around them, but **polar bears are wild animals!** Polar bears can be extremely dangerous, especially when hungry or feeling threatened.



Polar bears are also curious animals, and they may approach you to investigate.

Stay Alert!

Remember: polar bears can change their behavior and move very quickly.



Think Ahead!

“What will I do if a bear appears?”

Learn to Identify Polar Bear Behavior:

A **CURIOS** bear may approach slowly, sniff the air, cock its ears forward, sway its head to catch a scent, and stop often.



A female polar bear with cubs is likely to be **PROTECTIVE** and will defend the area near her cubs.

A **NERVOUS** bear may chomp its teeth and blow air from its mouth.



A **PREDATORY** bear may stalk you, or move toward you without hesitation, often with head down and mouth open. It can attack very quickly.