

Polar Bears

Polar bears live in very cold habitats, in which the ground is often covered with ice and snow. This actually helps the polar bear because they use the ice cover to hunt seals, their main source of food. In the picture you can see the polar bear reared up on his hind legs, getting ready to smash through the ice to get a seal that is hiding underneath. The polar bears use their keen sense of smell to find these hiding seals.



In recent years the ice cover has been diminishing (meaning that there is less of it). Think about what affect this has on the polar bears. Focus on:

- Health
- Population
- Affects on the Community

When you are done, discuss the adaptations that a polar bear has to help it survive.

Black Bears

Black bears live in the forests of North America. They are highly adaptable omnivores, and will eat nearly anything, from insects to berries. This helps black bears because they are able to find food in almost any situation. However, black bears are large animals, and therefore need a lot of food. The picture shows a black bear that is eating the garbage created by humans, which can provide a significant amount of food.



In recent years the black bears habitat has been heavily disrupted by humans. Think about what affect this has on the black bears. Focus on:

- Health
- Population
- Affects on the Community

When you are done, discuss the adaptations that a black bear has to help it survive.

Tree Swallows

Tree swallows are a bird that breeds in North America, but migrates to Mexico for the winter. Like most birds, the tree swallow makes many of its decisions based on the climate. Birds decide when to breed based on what the temperatures are. This in turn decides when they lay their eggs. Birds also make decisions about migration based on the climate. When they make this decision, they are not aware of the climate at the end of their journey, only the beginning



Over the past few decades, global temperatures have been rising. Think about what affect this has on the tree swallow. Focus on:

- Life Cycle
- Population
- Affects on the Community

When you are done, discuss the adaptations that a tree swallow has to help it survive.

Vultures

Vultures are scavengers (they eat dead animals) that live in many different areas of the world, most of which are hot. Vultures will fly above animals, and wait for them to die (either from old age, disease, or from the heat), at which point they swoop down and eat the carcass. Vultures have bald spots on their bodies, and are able to shift their feathers to either cover or expose these spots. This helps them maintain their body temperature in the heat



Over the past few decades, global temperatures have been rising. Think about what affect this has on the vultures. Focus on:

- Availability of Food
- Population
- Affects on the Community

When you are done, discuss the adaptations that a polar bear has to help it survive.