

ZOOLOGY

NINTH EDITION



ABOUT THE COVER

The harp seal (*Pagophilus groenlandicus*) is a member of a family of seals called "true" or "earless seals" (Phocidae) because its members do not have ear flaps. The largest population of harp seals consists of five to six million individuals along the eastern coast of Canada. A second population occurs along the eastern coast of Greenland, and the third population is in the White Sea off the coast of Russia. Adult harp seals weigh about 150 kg; have gray fur; a black face; and a black, "harp-shaped" saddle mark on their backs. The pup shown here was about one meter long and 10 kg in size when it was born in February or March. It gained size and fat reserves rapidly during 12 days of nursing. It was abruptly weaned when its mother, along with other adults, left the pack ice whelping (birthing) area to begin her seasonal mating. This pup must survive about six weeks on its own, without feeding, before it takes to the sea to begin feeding on a variety of fish and invertebrates. The white "lanugo" coat that you see here provides camouflage on packed ice and is gradually molted to the adult gray fur of the adult harp seal. Harp seals are preyed on by polar bears, killer whales, and sharks. Although their populations are now apparently healthy, loss of sea ice is a serious potential threat to their habitat.



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