

# Earth Polar Regions - Information About Polar Regions

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The polar regions are the areas that surround Earth's geographic North and South Poles. The area surrounding the North Pole is called the Arctic and includes almost the entire Arctic Ocean and northern areas of Europe, Asia and North America. The area surrounding the South Pole is called the Antarctic and includes the continent of Antarctica and parts of the surrounding Southern Ocean. Earth's geographic poles are in a slightly different location than the magnetic poles.

## Polar Day

Right at the Poles, the Sun shines for half the year and it is dark for the other half of the year. This makes a year like one long day. The Sun rises in spring, reaches its highest point in the sky in summer, and sets in autumn. So the Sun is visible only during the warmer months of the year. When the Sun is visible during summer at the South Pole, it is the dark winter months at the North Pole. The time when the Sun is continuously in the sky is called Polar Day.

## Polar Atmosphere

There are some unique phenomenon that happen in the atmosphere. Noctilucent Clouds: In the mesosphere layer of Earth's atmosphere, noctilucent clouds form in the polar regions. The word noctilucent means to glow, and these clouds do glow blue in color when they are lit from below by the setting Sun. Less Ozone: Most of the ozone destruction has happened in the part of the stratosphere that is over Earth's polar regions. There are now a number of ozone holes, including a very large hole over Antarctica.

## Polar Life

All sorts of living things call Earth's polar regions home – from tiny lichens encrusting the rocky landscapes of the Arctic tundra to huge blue whales swimming through the frigid waters of the Southern Ocean. Some animals are only part-time residents, migrating to warmer, lower latitudes during the winter months. Others live in polar locales year-round. Most have special adaptations that allow them to survive the extreme cold of the Earth's polar regions.

## Polar Culture

There are people who live in the Arctic region. Inuit - The Inuit are the native cultures that continue to live on coastal areas of Arctic tundra in Canada, Alaska, Siberia, Greenland. Inuit hunt for seals, whales, polar bears and other animals from the ocean. Norse: Norse were originally from Scandinavian countries. During the Middle Ages Norse explorers and warriors called Vikings raided regions within and near the Arctic. Today, many people living in these countries are descendants of the Norse.

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