

# Tundra Life

Life on the tundra is tough. Despite its icy ground, tundra is actually a dry desert, with frozen soil called permafrost and a complete lack of trees. Animals must be adapted to handle the dark winters and buggy summers.

**Caribou:** Also known as reindeer when they're in human care, caribou are unique in the deer family because both males and females grow antlers. Every year, these bony antlers fall off, then grow again. How do you think caribou use their antlers?

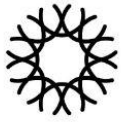
**Arctic Tern:** With their long wings and v-shaped tail, terns are great at flying and diving through the air. Their feathers are mostly white, with a black patch on their head, and red-orange beak and feet.

**Arctic Fox:** How can an Arctic fox catch a lemming hiding under the snow? By pouncing and diving head first into the snowdrift! These foxes also scavenge for leftovers of bigger predators, and even eat bird eggs and berries. Their coats are white in the winter and brown in the summer.

**Musk Ox:** What long hair you have! Musk oxen have helmet-like horns to protect themselves from predators like Arctic wolves. Their long, woolly coats keep them warm when the temperature drops in the winter.

**Polar Bear:** They may be bears, but these Arctic icons are also considered marine mammals! Their long, narrow head and neck and webbed feet make them great swimmers, but when there is less sea ice in the summers, they look for prey on the tundra.

**Lichen:** A favorite food of caribou, lichen is made of a fungus (like a mushroom) and an algae (similar to a plant) working together. The fungus shares nutrients and water, and the algae shares energy it gets from the sun like a plant.



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