



Bethany from S.K.H.
Yan Laap Memorial
Primary School



Who depends on them?

Only the toughest plants and animals can survive in tundras.

While you won't find any trees in tundras, there are many types of shrubs, mosses and berry bushes.

Lots of wildlife lives in the Arctic tundra, including Arctic foxes, polar bears and reindeer.

Alpine tundras are not quite as cold as the Arctic tundra, so they have more wildlife. They are home to mountain goats, sheep and birds, which feed on the plants and insects.

Why are they at risk?

Climate change is warming up the tundra. The permafrost is melting. And as it melts, its carbon is released into the atmosphere as carbon dioxide gas. This is making the planet even warmer.

Melting permafrost is also turning parts of the Arctic tundra into marshes. This makes it difficult for the species that normally live there, such as the reindeer.

Also, the sea ice around the Arctic tundra is melting earlier every summer. This makes it harder for animals like polar bears to travel in search of food.

Warming tundras also mean fires are more likely. This is something we are seeing right now. This year, our planet had the hottest June and July ever. During these months, more than 100 fires happened in the Arctic tundra.

All about the tundra

Before you read: Only the toughest plants and animals can survive in the tundra, where there are no trees.

What are tundras?

Tundras are very difficult places to live in. They are extremely cold and windy, with no trees and very little rain.

There are two types of tundra: alpine and Arctic.

Alpine tundras are found on mountains, where trees cannot grow because of the high altitude. The Arctic tundra covers the area around the North Pole: from the edge of the Arctic Ocean all the way to the forests of Russia and Canada.



For most of the year, the tundra is covered in snow. Plants can only grow during the short summer, which lasts about 180 days in alpine tundras, and just 60 days in the Arctic tundra.

The tundra covers about a fifth of the Earth's surface. However, climate change is causing the Arctic tundra to shrink.

Why are they important?

Tundras are very important to our planet.

Beneath the surface of the tundra is a layer of frozen soil, called "permafrost". While the top layer of soil melts during the summer so plants can grow, the layer beneath it always stays frozen. This is important, because that layer of permafrost takes in carbon from the atmosphere and stores it for a very long time. This helps stop air pollution.

How can we help?

The way to protect the Arctic tundra is to stop using fossil fuels (like coal and oil) and use green energy instead.

Right now, we are burning lots of oil and coal, and this puts too much carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. We can help by using wind power or solar power instead.

Written by Charlotte Ames-Etridge

FUN FACTS!

The polar bear is the largest carnivore that lives on land. It travels around the sea on floating chunks of ice!

Quick questions

1. What animals live in the Arctic tundra?
2. How much of the Earth's surface is covered by tundra?
3. Why can't trees grow in the tundra?

say it

Phrases from this story

extremely
非常

Arctic
北極

altitude
高度

frozen
結冰的

carbon
碳

solar power
太陽能