

# Polar Pals

**I**magine living in the Arctic Circle, where temperatures stay below freezing most of the year, and ice covers much of the land and sea.

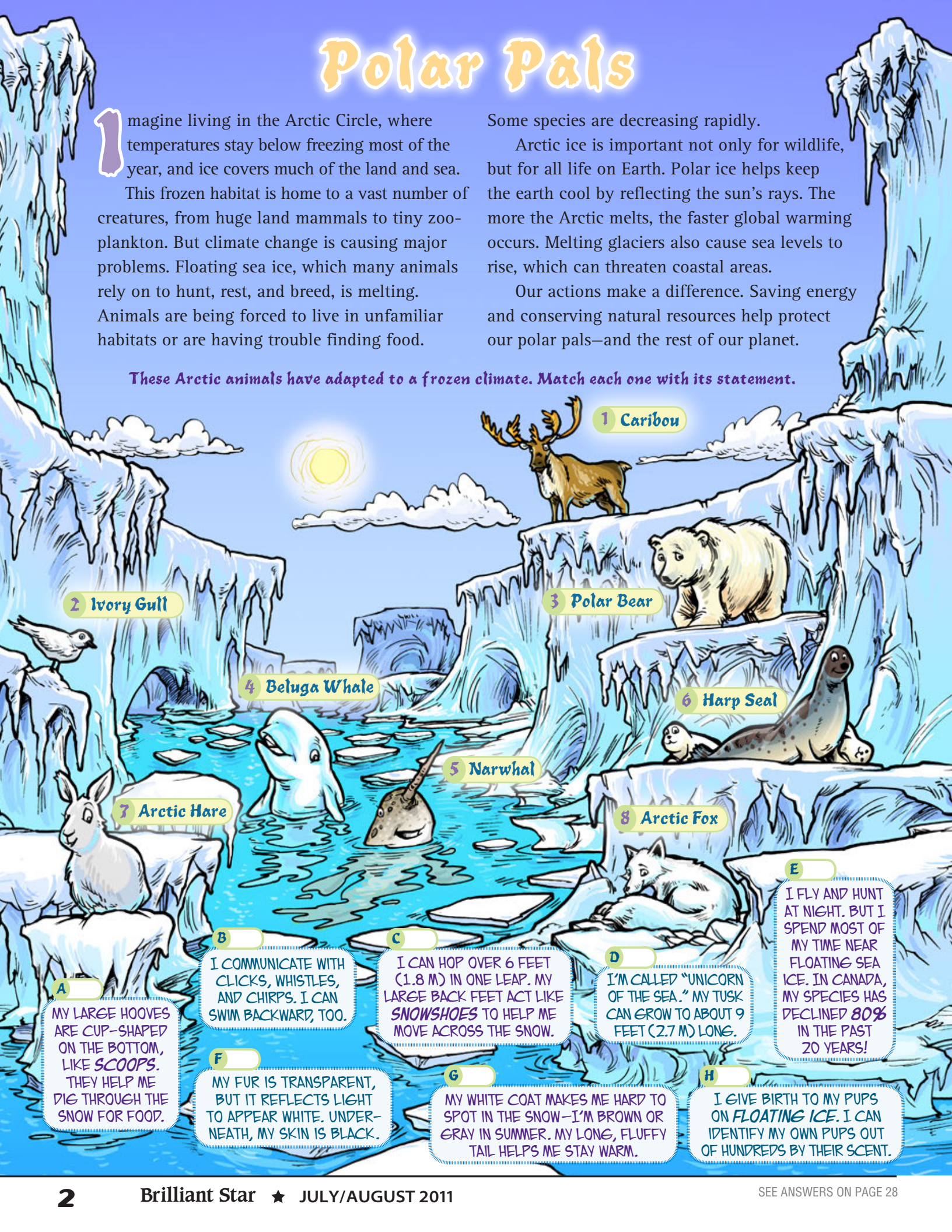
This frozen habitat is home to a vast number of creatures, from huge land mammals to tiny zooplankton. But climate change is causing major problems. Floating sea ice, which many animals rely on to hunt, rest, and breed, is melting. Animals are being forced to live in unfamiliar habitats or are having trouble finding food.

Some species are decreasing rapidly.

Arctic ice is important not only for wildlife, but for all life on Earth. Polar ice helps keep the earth cool by reflecting the sun's rays. The more the Arctic melts, the faster global warming occurs. Melting glaciers also cause sea levels to rise, which can threaten coastal areas.

Our actions make a difference. Saving energy and conserving natural resources help protect our polar pals—and the rest of our planet.

*These Arctic animals have adapted to a frozen climate. Match each one with its statement.*



**1 Caribou**

**2 Ivory Gull**

**3 Polar Bear**

**4 Beluga Whale**

**6 Harp Seal**

**5 Narwhal**

**7 Arctic Hare**

**8 Arctic Fox**

**E**

I FLY AND HUNT AT NIGHT. BUT I SPEND MOST OF MY TIME NEAR FLOATING SEA ICE. IN CANADA, MY SPECIES HAS DECLINED 80% IN THE PAST 20 YEARS!

**A**  
MY LARGE HOOVES ARE CUP-SHAPED ON THE BOTTOM, LIKE **SCOOPS**. THEY HELP ME DIG THROUGH THE SNOW FOR FOOD.

**B**  
I COMMUNICATE WITH CLICKS, WHISTLES, AND CHIRPS. I CAN SWIM BACKWARD, TOO.

**C**  
I CAN HOP OVER 6 FEET (1.8 M) IN ONE LEAP. MY LARGE BACK FEET ACT LIKE **SNOWSHOES** TO HELP ME MOVE ACROSS THE SNOW.

**D**  
I'M CALLED "UNICORN OF THE SEA." MY TUSK CAN GROW TO ABOUT 9 FEET (2.7 M) LONG.

**F**  
MY FUR IS TRANSPARENT, BUT IT REFLECTS LIGHT TO APPEAR WHITE. UNDERNEATH, MY SKIN IS BLACK.

**G**  
MY WHITE COAT MAKES ME HARD TO SPOT IN THE SNOW—I'M BROWN OR GRAY IN SUMMER. MY LONG, FLUFFY TAIL HELPS ME STAY WARM.

**H**  
I GIVE BIRTH TO MY PUPS ON **FLOATING ICE**. I CAN IDENTIFY MY OWN PUPS OUT OF HUNDREDS BY THEIR SCENT.