

## Harp seals

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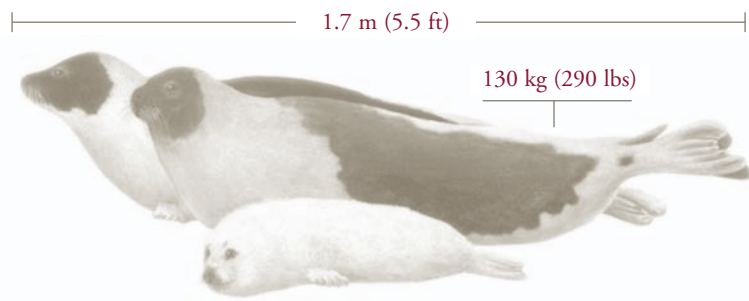
The harp seal is one of the best known of all the seals. Its scientific name, *Pagophilus groenlandicus*, means “ice lover from Greenland.” Harp seals are widely distributed, inhabiting the North Atlantic and Arctic Oceans from Newfoundland and the Gulf of St. Lawrence (Canada) in the West to northern Russia in the East. The harp seal is a highly gregarious and migratory species that lives in close association with pack ice. Its annual range is essentially defined by the northern and southern limits of pack ice, in summer and winter, respectively.

There are three distinct populations, based on small physical, genetic, and behavioral differences. In addition to the Northwest Atlantic population – the one hunted off eastern Canada in the spring and West Greenland in the summer – there is a second population that lives off the East coast of Greenland and breeds on sea ice near the island of Jan Mayen. The third population lives mainly in the Barents Sea and reproduces in the White Sea off the coast of Russia.



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### HARP SEAL PAGOPHILUS GROENLANDICUS



Adult weight	130 kg (290 lbs)
Adult length	1.7 m (5.5 ft)
Age at sexual maturity	5–6 yrs.
Age at first reproduction	about 6–7 yrs.
Life span (max.)	about 30 yrs.
Number of pups per year	1
Pup birth weight	11 kg (24 lbs)
Duration of nursing	about 12 days
Growth rate of pup per day	2.2 kg (5 lbs)
Weaning weight	36 kg (80 lbs)

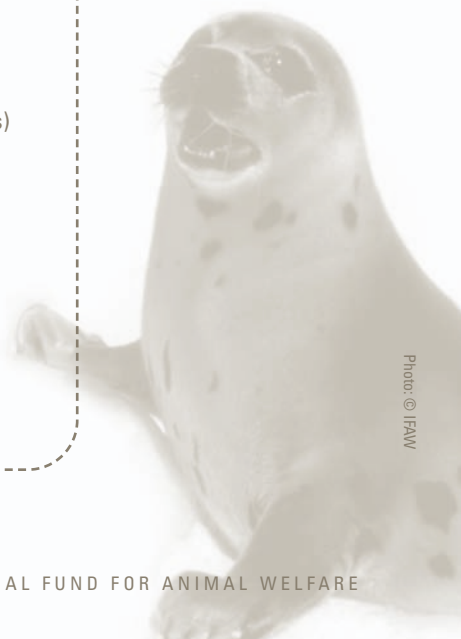


Photo: © IFAW

## Hooded seals

The hooded seal, *Cystophora cristata*, breeds on the ice along with harp seals and is also hunted in Canada's commercial seal hunt. The hooded seal is a large, silver-gray seal with a black face and irregular black spots covering most of its body. Its common name refers to the inflatable bladder located on top of the nose and forehead of adult males. When relaxed, this bladder forms a loose, wrinkled sac that hangs over the front of the nose. When inflated, it becomes a large "hood" that covers the face and top of the head. Males can also inflate their elastic nasal septums through one of their nostrils to form a large pink balloon. These structures are secondary sexual characteristics that males use to display to other seals during the breeding season.

The hooded seals' range overlaps with that of the harp seal throughout much of the North Atlantic. Like harp seals, hooded seals are migratory, their annual movements closely following the drifting pack ice. In Canadian waters, they give birth to their pups and mate in the same areas as harp seals, but a little later in the season, in the second half of March.

Compared to harp seals, hooded seal pups are born at an advanced developmental stage, having already shed their first coats of hair in the mother's womb. At birth, the pups are at an equivalent stage of development to the harp seal beater. Hooded seal pups are called bluebacks, named for the color of their pelts, which are blue-black on the back and silver-gray on the belly.



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### HOODED SEALS CYSTOPHORA CRISTATA



<b>Adult weight</b>	
male.....	300 kg (661 lbs)
female.....	200 kg (441 lbs)
<b>Adult length</b>	
male.....	2.5 m (8.2 ft)
female.....	2.2 m (7.2 ft)
<b>Age at sexual maturity</b> .....	3–4 yrs.
<b>Life span (max.)</b> .....	about 30 yrs.
<b>Number of pups per year</b> .....	1
<b>Pup birth weight</b> .....	25 kg (55 lbs)
<b>Duration of nursing</b> .....	4 days
<b>Growth rate of pup per day</b> .....	7 kg (15 lbs)
<b>Weaning weight</b> .....	55 kg (121 lbs)