

fun facts

- Harp seals move in the water using side-to-side propulsion with their tail.



- Harp seals move on the ice by pulling themselves with their fore flippers which have sharp claws.



- Mother harp seals only nurse/care for their pups for about 12 days after birth.
- Harp seal pups are known for their bright white coats which molt with maturity into the 'harp' pattern for which they're named.



- Harp seals spend most of their life migrating through the freezing oceans of the Northern Hemisphere, but they will congregate once a year in one of three breeding sites: Newfoundland, the Greenland Sea, or the White Sea.



THE Harp Seal

Pagophilus groenlandicus



Liz Faggard

conservation

The biggest threat to harp seals is humans.

- Indirectly, humans effect harp seal populations by contributing to climate change.
- Warming temperatures in the Arctic make the breeding season shorter and the ice thinner during whelping.



- The largest impact on seal numbers is mass seal hunting that occurs each year at all three of the breeding sites.

- 'Seal clubbing' is illegal except in Canada, where the government supports the practice by herding the seals onto the ice with boats
- 95% of the seals killed are less than 3 weeks old, preyed on for only their unique white pelage.

