

高中部自選(2)

Why Polar Bears and Penguins Never Meet

Polar bears and penguins are among nature's strongest survivors. They both live in environments with temperatures well below zero. Though many people imagine these animals living side by side, they never meet because they live at opposite ends of the planet.

Polar bears live in the Arctic, the frozen ocean region at the earth's North Pole. They are well suited to this cold environment because they have two layers of fur and a thick layer of fat to keep warm. But if they can survive extreme cold, why are they found only in the far north and not the far south?

The answer lies in geography, not biology. Around 200 million years ago, the earth's continents formed a single landmass and slowly drifted apart. The ancestors of polar bears lived in areas that became Europe, Asia, and North America. By the time polar bears appeared, Antarctica—home to penguins—was already far away.

Penguins face even harsher conditions in Antarctica, where temperatures can drop to -60°C . Still, they have special ways to survive. Their bodies circulate blood to reduce heat loss, and they are excellent swimmers that can dive to hunt food.

Penguins have not migrated north because they cannot fly and have limited ability to travel long distances. They also nest on land, making them vulnerable to animals like foxes and bears in the Arctic. In short, penguins are safest where they are, far away from polar bears.