



ANCC NEWS

— CULTURE — ANNOUNCEMENTS — UPDATES —



ON THE HORIZON TRIBAL HARVEST MONITORING PROGRAM



Carving by
Joe Kunnuk
of King Island,
Alaska

ANCC is developing a framework for a statewide tribally-driven harvest monitoring program to carry out the following activities with respect to polar bears:

Subsistence harvest reporting

Tagging of harvested bears

Collection of biological samples from harvested bears

Collection of Indigenous Knowledge and observations from hunters

Hunters and tribal representatives have consistently expressed the need for a harvest reporting system that is driven by tribes and allows for us to gather information in a systematic way about the health of our subsistence resources. ANCC plans to conduct outreach in each of our communities to ensure that this program is shaped by the expertise and priorities of our tribes and hunters. Although this program is still in the development stage, ANCC welcomes feedback from polar bear subsistence hunters at any time. Please contact the ANCC office for more information.

Harvest reporting and tagging are currently carried out by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Marking, Tagging, and Reporting Program (MTRP). Subsistence hunters are required by federal regulation to have the hide and skull of polar bears tagged within 30 days of harvest. Contact information for local taggers can be found by calling **1-800-362-5148**.



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

- KATYA GRAY



KATYA GRAY

Reflecting on this past year, I am grateful for the resilience and adaptability of our people, which have always helped us to navigate challenges. This has been especially important during the pandemic, where I have seen our communities take steps to protect each other, safely maintain subsistence activities to keep us fed and healthy, and find ways to stay connected.

At ANCC we are continually drawing on our resilience and adaptability to keep our work moving forward. Like so much of the world, we have adapted to conducting business remotely. ANCC held governance board meetings in December of 2020 and March of 2021 by videoconference, allowing us to keep important conversations going to further polar bear co-management. I am proud of the progress we have made during this time. However, we know that this way of operating can never replace in-person engagement with our tribes and hunters. We look forward to the time when we can safely do so again.

Quyana to you all for helping us to adapt as we navigate this challenge together.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



NEW STAFF

Rhonda Sparks joined ANCC in January as our Program Specialist. Welcome, Rhonda!

ANCC OFFICE OPEN

Our office is once again open to the public. Masks are required prior to entering.



Help support indigenous polar bear management in Alaska through your online purchases. When making a purchase, be sure to use the link

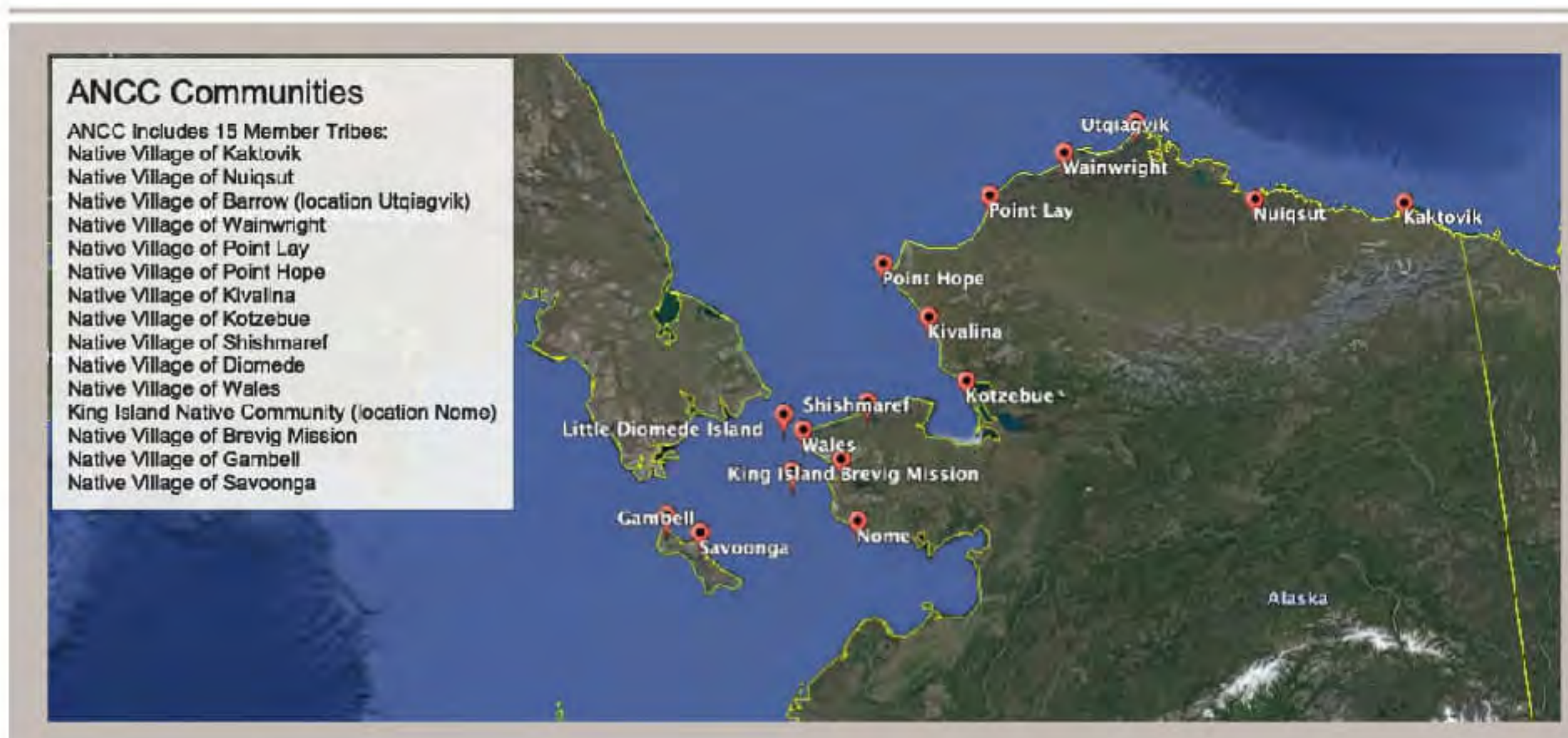
www.smile.amazon.com



SHARE YOUR PHOTOS

ANCC is seeking donations of photos that illustrate the cultural connections between Alaska Native peoples and polar bears. Photos of polar bears, hunting, dancing, and artwork would be featured in ANCC publications. Email your photos to:

info@nannut.org



U.S.-RUSSIA POLAR BEAR COMMISSION MEETING TENTATIVELY PLANNED FOR NOME



Rose Panik and Benjamin Payenna represent ANCC at the 2018 U.S.-Russia Polar Bear Commission Meeting in Egvekinot, Chukotka.

Plans are underway for the next meeting of the U.S.-Russia Polar Bear Commission to be held in Nome, AK in November of 2021.

Meeting organizers will be monitoring the COVID-19 situation to ensure that this event can be held safely. If necessary, the in-person meeting may be rescheduled for 2022. ANCC has advocated for Commission meetings to be held in locations that are accessible to affected communities and hunters, and closer to polar bear country.

The Commission was established by

the U.S.-Russia Polar Bear Agreement signed in 2000, and meets annually to make management decisions for Chukchi Sea polar bears. At the last in-person meeting in 2018 the Commission adopted an annual take limit of 85 bears shared equally between the U.S. and Russia, and recommended that the eastern boundary for the Agreement be changed from Point Barrow to Icy Cape. The four-member Commission includes one representative of the Native people and one representative of the federal government for each country. ANCC Chairman Benjamin Payenna has been recommended by the ANCC

governance board to be the next Native Commissioner for the U.S. This appointment is currently being routed for approval by the President of the United States. Taqulik Hepa with the North Slope Borough Wildlife Department serves as the alternate Alaska Native Commissioner.

Alongside the 2021 Commission meeting, ANCC plans to host a convening of indigenous representatives from Chukotka and Alaska to discuss shared management and research priorities, cultural values related to polar bears and subsistence, and other matters of mutual concern.

MANAGEMENT & RESEARCH UPDATES



Carving by Stanley Tocktoo Shishmaref, Alaska

CHUKCHI SEA POLAR BEARS

- No U.S.-Russia Polar Bear Commission meeting occurred in 2020 due to COVID-19.
- ANCC is continuing work on a draft Chukchi Sea Polar Bear Harvest Management Plan for consideration by our tribes. Community meetings to further develop the plan with our tribes and hunters will be held once COVID-19 allows.
- Results of a 2016 aerial survey in the Chukchi/Bering Seas were published in May of 2021, estimating the subpopulation abundance to be between 3,435 and 5,444 bears.

SOUTHERN BEAUFORT SEA POLAR BEARS

- Aerial surveys by NOAA to count polar bears and ice seals in the Southern Beaufort Sea occurred in the spring of 2021. Survey flights departed out of Utqiagvik and Deadhorse, and were coordinated with the AEWC in order to not disturb subsistence whaling.
- Work is underway on developing a method for integrating Indigenous Knowledge into the upcoming Integrated Population Modeling (IPM) effort for Southern Beaufort Sea polar bears. The IPM will provide an updated population estimate. This research is being coordinated through the Inuvialuit-Inupiat Polar Bear Commission.



CUBS' CORNER



PASSING ON KNOWLEDGE

With Clyde Oxereok - Wales, AK

STAY SAFE!

Clyde is a member of ANCC's governance board, as well as a hunter and founding member of the Kingikmiut Nanuuq Patrol. Here are some important safety tips for kids (and adults too!) living in polar bear country.

Storms are dangerous! Stay inside during storms.

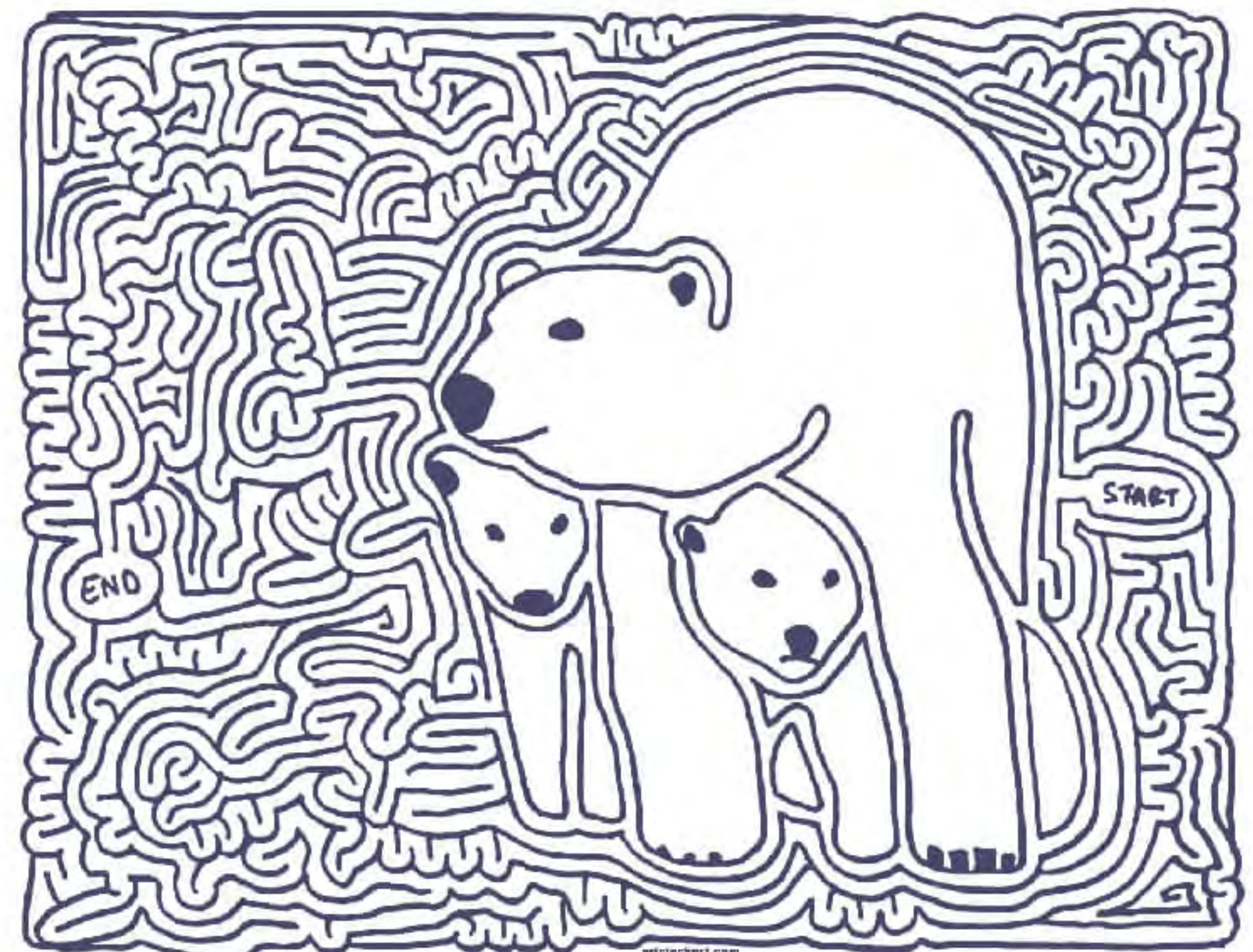
Storms are happening more frequently in times of the year when polar bears are around. This can make it easier for polar bears to sneak up on you if you are out in low visibility. Risk of exposure during storms is also very dangerous.

If you get lost in a storm, stick together! Do not separate until you find an adult.

This winter in Wales, several kids tried walking across the village to visit friends in a storm and got lost because the blizzard was so bad. This was a very dangerous situation, but thankfully they were all found and were ok.

If you are walking in your village and see a polar bear, IMMEDIATELY go inside the closest house or building that you can.

Sometimes polar bears can wander into villages and catch you by surprise. It is important to stay alert and stay safe.



Maze Illustrated by Eric J Eckert • ericjeckert.com