

Awake, Awake

Polar bears spend relatively little time sleeping. The males hibernate from late November to late January in snowbank dens. The females stay put until March. When they come out to eat, their menu is the same as when they went in, mostly meat and fish.

Spring comes in April to the Rocky Mountain grizzlies. They emerge from hibernation and graze on new grass, licorice root, glacial lilies, spring beauty, angelica and skunk cabbage. The newborn cubs get their first exciting look at the great outdoors.

The black bears who have spent the winter in caves or mossy hollows under low spruce

branches wake up in April, too, when the melting snow floods them out. They range across Canada, from Newfoundland to the Queen Charlotte Islands. Food is usually scarce when they start ambling about so they eat spruce needles, carpenter ants, grubs and beetles.

The chipmunks, ground squirrels, marmots and woodchucks (or groundhogs) also hibernate. The male woodchuck may emerge as early as January if the weather is mild, the female in the first mild days of April. The hoary marmot, who lives in British Columbia and the Yukon, is the most determined sleeper of all, clocking off eight months a year, from late August to late April.



The return of the Canada geese is one of the first signs of spring.



Arctic Poppy.

Festivals

Yellowknife in the Northwest Territories has a mild climate, for the Northwest Territories.

In June the temperature ranges between a minimum mean of 24°F (-4.4°C) and a maximum mean of 85°F (29.4°C).

The arrival of the warm weather and the long, long days is celebrated on June 23 by the Annual Midnight Golf Tournament which begins in sunlight (at midnight) and ends the same way. The greens are not grass but sand, and the ravens sometimes steal the balls.

At the other end of the NWT, in Frobisher Bay, the residents celebrate the arrival of spring with Toonik Tyme in April. In Frobisher the