Svalbard: what wildlife will I see?

	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER
POLAR BEARS	**Mating season** begins. Females leave their dens with last season's cubs.	Males are busy with **courtship battles.** It's peak weaning season for two year olds.	Courtship continues amongst adults. **Pups start learning to hunt** from their mothers.	**Mating season** peaks. Females with cubs frequent the coast, hunting seal pups.	Cubs continue their steep learning curve. Remaining pockets of ice offer good **bear sightings.**	Females that mated start searching for a denning area and **preparing for winter.**	Denning peaks. Other mothers with cubs **migrate north** into the Polar basin.
BIRDS	Svalbard's summer visitors are still **on their way** to their nesting grounds.	Nesting begins from the **end of May** once the cliffs are clear of snow.	Every cliff and ledge in the archipelago becomes **filled with bird life!**	Egg-laying season **attracts predators** like gyr falcon, skuas, gulls and arctic fox.	It's **peak hatching season** and there's a general feeding frenzy.	The weather is changing and most seabirds are **preparing to leave** the archipelago.	Apart from the rock ptarmigan, the islands are **empty of bird life** over winter.
WALRUS & SEALS	**Walrus arrive** from their southerly wintering grounds and ringed seal **pups are born.**	Ringed seal pups are **prey to hungry bears**, while walrus are busy pupping.	Walrus males are **moulting**. Newly-weaned seal pups are now **on their own**.	**Walrus commonly 'haul-out'**, aggregating for safety. Seals prefer time on ice floes.	Further north there's a chance of spotting **bearded, hooded and harp seals.**	With sea ice forming, both walrus and seals **begin migrating south** for winter.	Few seals remain. Some ringed seal stay to **pup in lairs** under the snow.
WHALES	As the ice starts to recede, **whales start arriving** in coastal waters.	**Humpbacks** are most common. **Minke** and other baleen whales may also be seen.	Minke are seen in the fjords. **Fin and sei** might be seen in open sea.	Recession of ice brings whales and dolphins deeper into the fjords. Look out for **belugas.**	**Most whales have calved.** Mortality rates are high, providing food for hungry bears.	Ice starts to re-form in the fjords, and whales **begin their migration** south.	Most whales are **moving south** or are already in open ocean.
	SPRING	SPRING	SUMMER	SUMMER	SUMMER	AUTUMN	AUTUMN

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