

They get upon the islands of ice, where they wait for their prey ; and as long as they find abundance of subsistence, they never quit their post ; so that when the ice begins to float in spring, they suffer themselves to be carried away with it, and as they cannot regain the land, nor even quit the ice on which they are embarked for a long time, they frequently perish in the open sea. Those which arrive on the coasts of Norway or Iceland with these floats of ice, are so nearly famished, that they devour, with the greatest voracity, every thing they meet ; and this may have occasioned the prejudice that these sea bears are more fierce and voracious than the common kind. Some authors have been persuaded that the sea-bears were amphibious, like the seals, and that they can remain as long as they please under water ; but the contrary is evident, from the manner in which they are hunted. They can swim but a short time together, nor can they go above the space of a league : they are followed by a small boat, and are soon weary. If they could dispense with respiration they would plunge to the bottom, in order to rest themselves ; but when they dive it is only for a short time, being obliged to rise to the surface of the water for fear of drowning, and then the hunters kill them.

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