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The Animal Rescue Agency #1: Case File: Little Claws

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## ESQUIRE FOX'S FIELD NOTES

Hello! Esquire Fox here. Mr. Pepper insists that I type up field notes after each mission. To be honest I'd rather just have the adventure and be done with it than sit around hunting for the right keys on this frustrating keyboarddddd. Anyway, it's been two weeks since our time in the Arctic, and I will have an irate rooster on my paws if I don't finally write something about our trip.

Let's see. For starters, you might have noticed that Little Claws was careful to jump on ice to test it after he ventured out of his den. This is because the Arctic is warming, and each year there is less ice left. Even "multiyear ice," or ice that hasn't melted for centuries, is disappearing under higher temperatures. Polar bears have to be careful where they walk, if they don't want to be unexpectedly thrust into the sea.

The problem goes deeper than that, though! Faster ice melt also means the polar bears have less time to eat seals in the spring and fatten up before the summer,

when food is most scarce. It also interferes with the growth of algae on the ice. Little Claws and Big Claws wouldn't deign to eat algae themselves, but plankton do—then fish eat the plankton, and seals eat the fish. When the food chain gets disrupted, the bears start to starve.

The man in the white fur hat was the human who caused all the trouble for Little Claws and Big Claws. The general threat to polar bears is also caused by humans. It might not be as literal as a hunter chasing down a cub, but it's just as deadly. There is overwhelming scientific consensus that the release of greenhouse gases from human activity is the primary cause of the rise in temperatures that threatens the existence of the polar bears.

Humans are also the animal world's greatest hope for change, though! Any person who wants to help can join the global fight to stop climate change. For starters, you could check out "What are the most important things kids can do to prevent global warming?" on the American Museum of Natural History's website.

Want to read more? Here are some reputable sources, the same ones I used to gather the information for these field notes:

“Arctic sea ice has been in decline for decades,”

National Snow & Ice Data Center,

[www.NSIDC.org](http://www.NSIDC.org)

“The surprising reason polar bears  
need sea ice to survive,”

*National Geographic,*

[www.nationalgeographic.com](http://www.nationalgeographic.com)

“The Causes of Climate Change,”

National Aeronautics and Space Administration,

[www.climate.nasa.gov](http://www.climate.nasa.gov)

That’s all for now! I’m off to go put my paws up and  
listen to my favorite jazz record.

Yours truly,

*Esquire Fox*

## FROM THE KITCHEN OF MR. PEPPER:



### MUSHROOM JERKY

If you are a child, kid, foal, colt, hatchling, larva, or fry, you must get an adult's help to make this. Mr. Pepper doesn't want you to burn or slice yourself.

#### INGREDIENTS:

- 8 ounces of mushrooms (Shiitake will make for the meatiest jerky possible. Esquire has been known, however, to equally enjoy ordinary white mushrooms.)
- Olive oil
- Salt and pepper

#### STEPS:

- Heat oven to 425°F.
- To clean the mushrooms, gently rub them with a moist cloth or paper towel. Don't get them fully wet, or your jerky will come out soggy.
- If you are using shiitake mushrooms, remove the woody stem. (Save this to make a mushroom tea

over a campfire when you and Esquire need to relax after a long day's mission.) If you are using standard white mushrooms, the stem can remain.

- Have an adult help slice your mushrooms. One-half-an-inch thickness is a good rule of claw. Slice them thinner to have something closer to a chip; thicker will make for chewier jerky.
- Place the mushroom slices on a cookie sheet. Drizzle them with plenty of olive oil and toss until they're coated. (This is easier if you have hands than if you have chicken feet, though the oil is a terrific moisturizer for one's scaly skin.)
- Arrange slices in a single layer and bake until they are deep golden brown, or about 25 minutes. Don't let them blacken.
- Remove from oven and sprinkle with plenty of salt and pepper. Let them cool for at least 10 minutes before eating. (Do not allow Esquire into the kitchen during this time!)

(Thank you to human chef Kate Merker  
for her assistance with this recipe.)