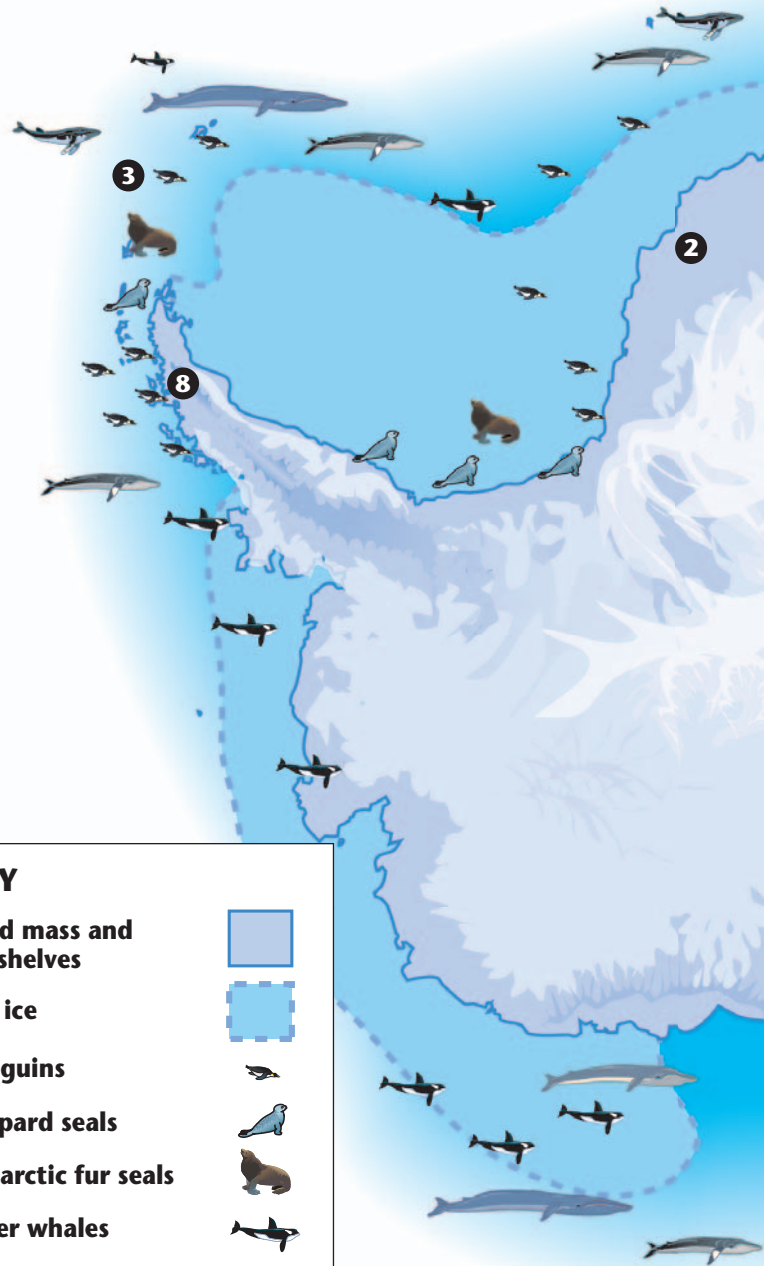


AMAZING ANTARCTICA

Why do people go to the coldest, windiest place on Earth? Scientists study Antarctica to learn new information about Earth. Tourists seek adventure and beauty. Antarctica's land, seas, and sky hold amazing treasures for everyone.

Antarctica is big: 14 million square kilometers, or one and a half times the size of the United States. But only 2.4 percent of this area is exposed land. Ice as thick as 4.8 kilometers (28 Washington monuments stacked up!) covers the rest.



KEY

Land mass and ice shelves



Sea ice



Penguins



Leopard seals



Antarctic fur seals



Killer whales



Humpback whales



Blue whales

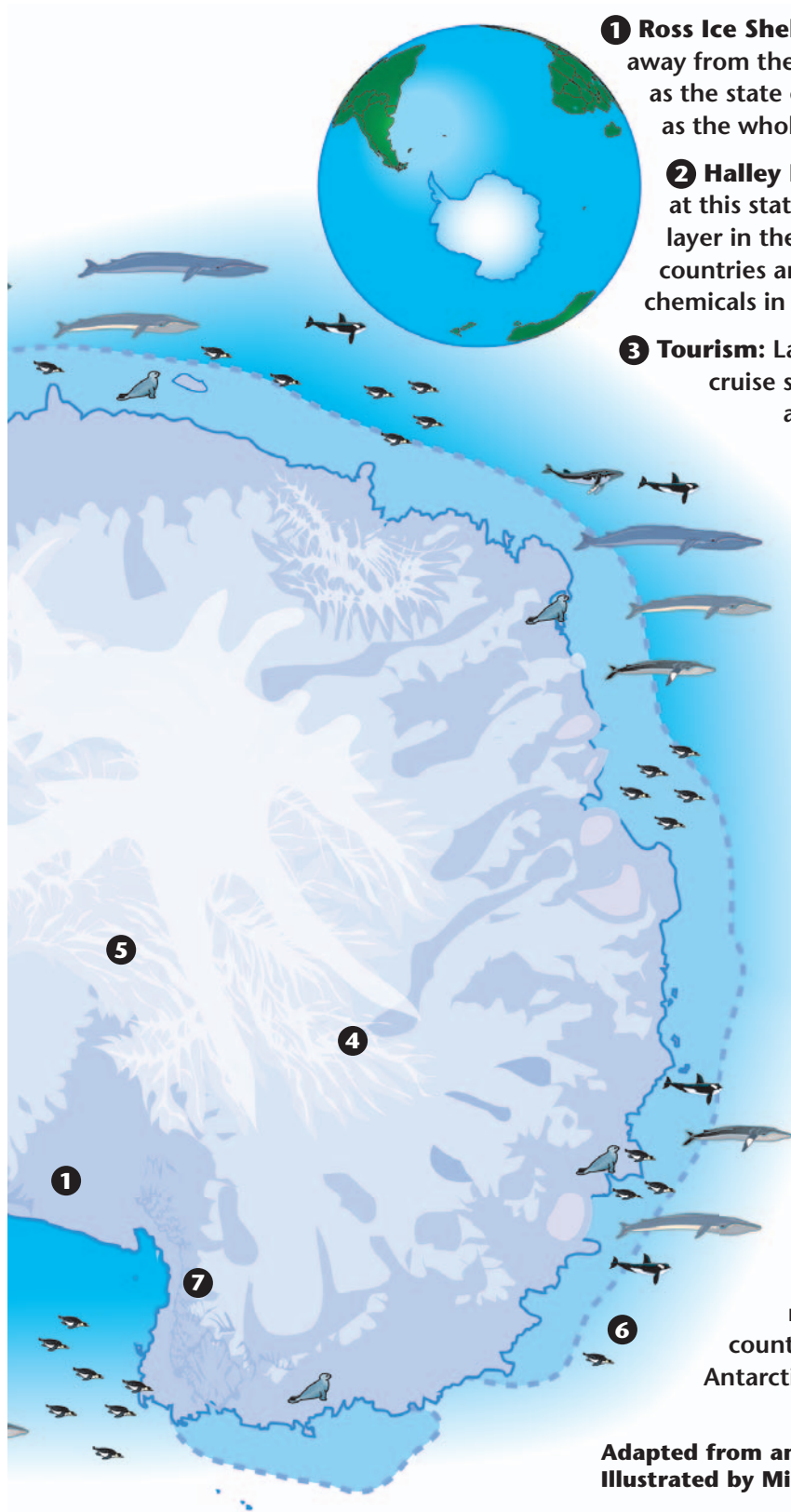


Fin whales



Minke whales





1 Ross Ice Shelf: In March 2000, a giant chunk of ice broke away from the Ross Ice Shelf. This iceberg is almost as big as the state of Connecticut and contains as much water as the whole United States uses in five years.

2 Halley Research Station: British scientists working at this station in 1985 first reported a hole in the ozone layer in the atmosphere high above Antarctica. Many countries are now working to reduce ozone-destroying chemicals in the air.

3 Tourism: Last year, 15,000 tourists visited Antarctica on cruise ships and airplanes to see penguins, to ski, and to enjoy the frozen beauty.

4 Vostok Station: The lowest temperature ever recorded on Earth was -128.6° F, measured at Vostok Station. Russian, French, and American scientists drilled deep into the ice. By studying this ancient ice, researchers learn about changes in Earth's air and weather over the last 420,000 years.

5 South Pole: The ice in the interior on the polar plateau moves more than 30 feet in a year. So each year scientists put in a new metal stake to mark the exact location of the South Pole. About 50 people spend each winter at the South Pole, working on scientific projects.

6 The magnetic South Pole: When a compass needle lines up with North or South, it points to what are called the magnetic poles. The magnetic South Pole is more than 1,500 miles from the spot we call the geographic South Pole at exactly 90° south latitude.

7 McMurdo Station and 8 Palmer Station are the two U.S. coastal scientific research stations in Antarctica. In all, 29 countries operate research stations and ships in Antarctica.

Adapted from an article by Sarah J. Ball
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