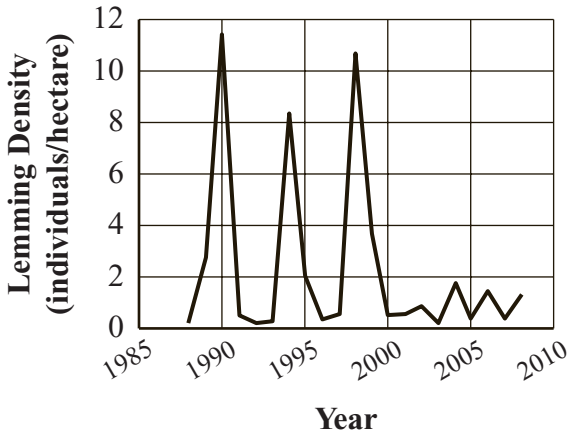


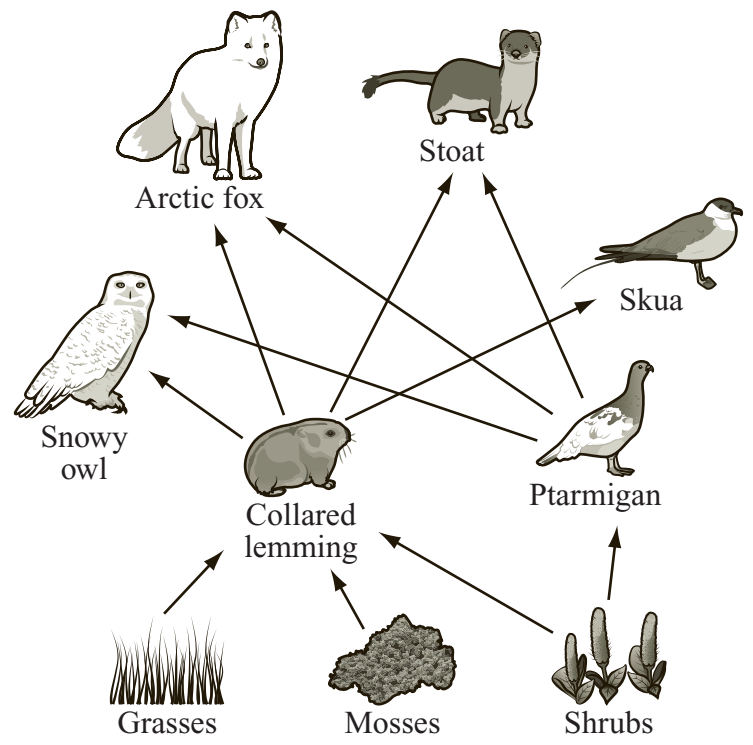
The collared lemming is a small mammal that lives in the arctic tundra. Collared lemmings have white fur in winter and brown fur in summer. For most of the year, the arctic tundra is covered by snow. During this time, collared lemmings remain active in tunnels they make in the snow. The snow provides insulation and a place where the lemmings raise several litters of 3–5 offspring each year.

Scientists studying the arctic ecosystem found that the collared lemming population in a certain area changed as shown in the graph.

**Collared Lemming Population
Density 1988–2008**



Collared lemmings play a key role in the arctic food web, as shown.



The primary food source of snowy owl chicks is the collared lemming. Snowy owls can lay 3–11 eggs per year, depending on the availability of food. Stoats also eat collared lemmings year-round.