

White Arctic Wolf

Canis lupus arctos

Description

Arctic wolves, recently classified as a distinct subspecies rather than a color phase of the gray wolf, exhibit notable adaptations for their cold environment. Born with brown or black fur, they typically turn white by the end of their first year, though a small patch of dark hair may persist above the tail base for a few years. They resemble grey wolves in size and shape but may have a thicker undercoat for added insulation.

Arctic wolves are monogamous and live in socially complex packs led by an alpha pair. Mating occurs in March or April, with litters of 5-6 pups born approximately nine weeks later. For whelping, they utilize sheltered rocky areas and gravel berms, remaining there until the pups are several weeks old and able to travel. Play is crucial for the social and developmental growth of young wolves and continues into young adulthood, both with pack members and individually.

FUN FACTS

- They hunt large mammals like muskoxen and caribou. Also preying on smaller animals such as hares and ground squirrels.
- Only found in colder northern regions of Canada.
- Their white fur allows them to blend in and hide in their snowy environment. This is very useful while hunting for prey.
- In addition to howls, growls, yips and barks, wolves also use tail positions to communicate.

If you find an injured or orphaned wild animal, please contact the Calgary Wildlife Rehabilitation Society hotline at 403-214-1312, for tips, instructions and advice.

