

Wild Kids



Home Sweet Home

by Nancy jo Tubbs

Imagine you're a furry newborn wolf pup. You weigh just a pound.

At home in your den, you're snuggled up against your mother and four brothers and sisters. You may not yet know where you are, because you're blind, deaf and nearly helpless. You wiggle around and find your mother's nipple. You drink milk from her warm body.

The dark, quiet den will be home, safe home, for the first two months of your life. Two weeks will pass before your eyes open and three weeks before you can hear. At that time, you'll take your first wobbly steps outside the den.

Your mother picked this place. She dug a hole about 10 feet into a sandy hillside. Roots overhead keep the dirt roof from falling in on your head. At a high spot at the end of the hole, where no rain or wind can reach, is the place

where your mother gave birth to you.

When you are about eight weeks old and used to playing outside, your pack may move to a new place away from the den. This is called a rendezvous site. Here you and the other pups will play, explore and sleep outside. You have left your den for now, but may return with the pack next year. Then you'll wait outside to hear the first puppy whimpers of a new litter of wolf youngsters.

Wolves can make a den out of an old fox burrow, a hollow log, a small cave, an abandoned beaver lodge or nearly any protected spot. Within their territory, they pick a site near water so the mother doesn't have to go far for a drink. The adult wolves hunt near the den and bring food back for the mother and pups. The den is a good hiding place for pups, who are easy prey for predators, such as owls and eagles. ■



**A
Mazing Trip:
Lead the
pups' father
home to
his family
at the den!**

