

Wild Kids



Packing for the Arctic

by Nancy jo Tubbs

Have you ever wanted to travel to the land of icebergs and arctic wolves? Imagine your breath frosting the air and snow crunching under foot. In the High Arctic, temperatures reach -70 degrees Fahrenheit during five months of around-the-clock winter darkness. What would you wear to stay warm?

Let the arctic wolf be your guide. This fur-covered hunter has adapted to thrive in winter in the North. Arctic wolves live the farthest north of all gray wolves. Compared to their cousins to the south, these white wolves have slightly rounded ears and shorter legs and muzzle. They grow to 100 pounds and larger. This concentrated body mass helps them to keep warm.

The wolf's coat has two layers. Underneath is a soft, dense fine-haired fur that holds heat close to the body in winter. Longer, coarser guard hairs offer outer protection that sheds water and holds in heat.

Doug Hall of Cincinnati wears lots of layers during a 1999 Wintergreen expedition to the North Pole. Wolves' coats have their own layers, keeping them warm inside and shedding moisture on the outside.

Paul Schurke



Imagine going barefoot in the snow. Brrrr! Thank goodness the wolf has thick, padded toes with fur between them. A unique blood circulation system in its legs and feet also helps keep the wolf warm. Deep inside the wolf's legs, arteries and veins run close together so that the cool blood returning from the feet is warmed by blood coming from the heart. Arteries also carry warm blood into the foot pad to keep the foot from freezing.

Using the wolf as your guide, how would you dress for freezing weather? Think about how your body works.

The first thing sacrificed when our body temperature starts to drop is our skin. Blood stops flowing to the skin and goes to the internal organs and brain — better protect your fingers and toes, the tips of your ears and your nose, too! Otherwise, you could lose them to frostbite.

How many layers will you wear to cover your chest and back? Animals, including humans, need to keep the body core toasty. The chest and abdomen contain vital organs—the heart, liver, kidneys and lungs.

The body pumps warm blood to the head. But heat rises. You could lose a lot of body heat if you don't hold it in. What sort of head gear will you wear?

Since humans don't have built-in fur coats and hats, we have to rely on our smarts and be prepared. Make a list of all the clothing you would pack to survive in the Arctic. ■

Lynn and Donna Rogers



When they sleep, wolves curl up tight, leaving little body surface exposed to the icy air and ground.