

# CANADIAN ANIMALS





The Arctic fox is about the size of a large domestic cat. It is part of the canid family, meaning it is related to other foxes, wolves and dogs, and it is the smallest wild canid found in Canada. It usually measures between 75 to 115 centimetres in length, and its bushy tail makes up between 30 and 35 percent of its total length. The Arctic fox has a brown or grey coat with a lighter belly in the summer, and it turns into a thick, white one during the winter season. The white coat makes it very hard for the fox's prey to see it in the snow before it's too late. Some have a grey to dark grey-blue coat in the winter. The Arctic fox is the only canid that changes the colour of its coat in the summer. In addition to its thick coat, the Arctic fox is able to stay warm in the winter because it has short legs, a short muzzle and small rounded ears. These characteristics all reduce the amount of surface area it has for heat loss. Also, its feet are covered in fur, similar to the fur on a hare's foot.

### **Did you know?**

The Arctic fox has the warmest pelt of any animal found in the Arctic. It can endure temperatures as low as  $-50^{\circ}\text{C}$  before its metabolism increases to provide warmth.



Hares' coats change colours slightly from season to season. In winter the coat is bright white and in summer white with an ashen tinge. Despite seasonal changes, their tail is always white. Their eyes are placed on each side of their head giving them a view of 360 degrees without turning their head. Normally they move with the front legs taking the first steps separately, followed by the hind legs stepping together. When they sense danger hares first stand up on their hind legs to assess the area, then bolt. They can jump as far as 2.1 metres in a single bound and can move approximately 60 kilometres an hour. The Arctic hare's large back feet act like snowshoes that help to keep them from sinking in the snow. Their front feet have long, strong claws that help them dig beneath snow to find food.

### **Did you know?**

Arctic hares have black eyelashes that protect their eyes from the sun's glare, just like sunglasses.



The bald eagle isn't bald. The word “bald” actually comes from the word “piebald” which is used to describe something that is spotty or patchy. Adult eagles are dark brown and have white feathers covering their heads and tails. They also have hooked yellow beaks, large talons, and oversized feet equipped with small spikes, called spicules. Together, eagles use these body parts as their own type of fishing pole. Eagles also have a super sense of vision, allowing them to see four to seven times farther than humans. Young eagles are called eaglets and are light grey and fluffy when they first hatch. Their feathers turn dark brown when they're about 12 weeks old and ready to leave the nest. The feathers on their heads and tails won't turn white until they're about four years old. Life can be challenging for young eaglets, and nearly 50 per cent don't survive their first year.



### **Did you know?**

When a bald eagle loses a feather on one wing, it will lose a feather on the other in order to keep its balance!





The resembles a gigantic housecat. It has a very short body, small tail, and long legs. Their fur coat is usually thick, long and grey in the winter and short, thin and light brown in the summer. Year-round they have black tips on the end of their tails and on their triangle-shaped ears. The Canada Lynx has a very wide face that has longer patches of fur on the side of its face – it looks like a beard! The long, round feet of the Canada Lynx act like snowshoes by distributing their weight to help keep on top of the snow. They also have sharp claws that retract helping them to climb, fight predators and capture prey. Their feet are covered in a thick layer of fur to keep them warm in the winter.

### **Did you know?**

In the 1900s the lynx populations faced a huge decline because of the fur trade.



The cougar is the second largest wild cat found in the Americas, the largest being the South American Jaguar. It has a very muscular body that varies in colour from tawny red to dark brown. The throat, chest, chin and whiskers are white. Cougars are known for their large front paws and long tail, which is used for balance and can grow to a length of 90 centimetres. Cougars have extremely powerful hind legs, which make them excellent jumpers. A cougar can jump straight up 5.5 metres from the ground.



Did you know?

The average sprinting speed of a cougar is 56 kilometres an hour!





Harp seals are light grey in colour, with large harp-shaped rings on their backs. The rings are less distinctive in females, whose back is mostly black, but they can range in colour from dark brown to black. The harp seal's face is black, but not its head. Its pups are born with a fluffy white coat, which gives the pups the nickname “whitecoats,” but it's shed after three week's time.



### **Did you know?**

The name “harp seal” comes from the large harp-shaped ring on the seal's back.



The red fox is a small dog-like mammal, with a sharp-pointed face and a light body build that allows it to be quick on its feet. The red fox is known for its long bushy tail and lustrous rusty or orangish-red fur. The red fox has a dark muzzle and black ears and paws. Its tail-tip, throat and under parts are generally white. While male and female foxes look similar, the male fox is called a dog and is usually slightly larger than the female vixen. The red fox has a litter of one to ten pups between March and May every year. The young are born blind and aren't able to open their eyes until they're about two weeks old. After one month, fox pups are weaned off their mother's milk and start eating pre-chewed food. After about seven months, young red foxes are able to hunt on their own and leave their parents in search of their own territory. Some foxes have been known to travel up to 250 km to find a suitable home.

### **Did you know?**

Red foxes are not all red. Other common red fox colours include brown, black and silver. Even foxes that come from the same litter can be different colours!





The wolf is the largest wild member of the dog family. It can be many colours, from white to black, but most often grey. The wolf has short, soft under-fur covered by coarse, outer guard hairs. The under-fur is dense and insulates the wolf against the cold. Stiff hairs also protect its footpads. Its size is similar to that of a German shepherd, but it is leaner with bigger feet and longer legs. It also has a long, bushy tail with a black tip.



### **Did you know?**

Most experts believe the domestic dog descended from the wolf — the two are genetically identical and are capable of interbreeding.

*Thanks for you watching!*

