



# *Care For Us*

*Arctic Wolf (*Canis lupus arctos*)*

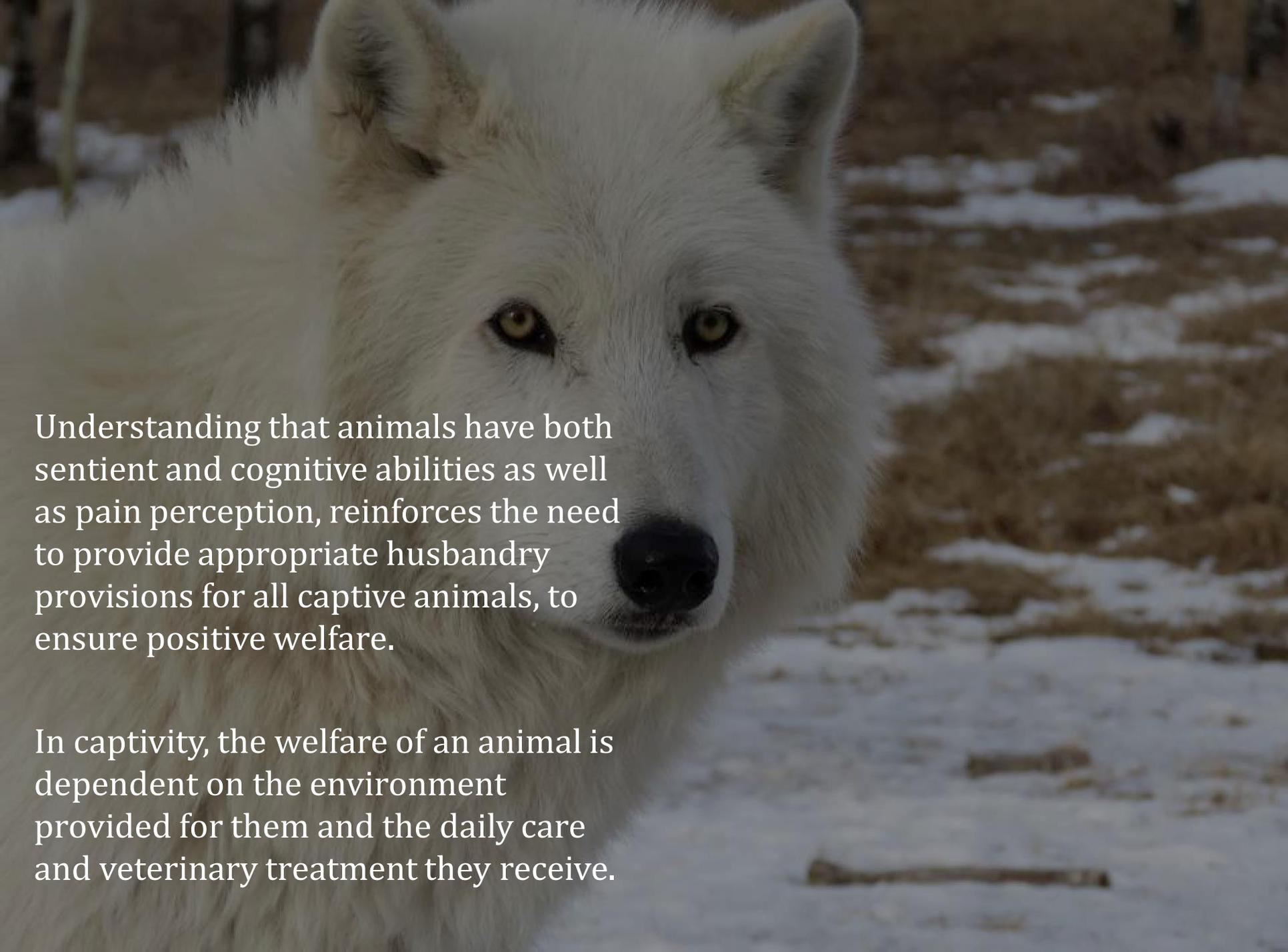
# Animal Welfare

Animal welfare refers to an animal's state or feelings. An animal's welfare state can be positive, neutral or negative.

An animal's welfare has the potential to differ on a daily basis. When an animal's needs - nutritional, behavioural, health and environmental - are met, they will have positive welfare.

A good life in captivity might be one where animals can consistently experience good welfare - throughout their entire life.





Understanding that animals have both sentient and cognitive abilities as well as pain perception, reinforces the need to provide appropriate husbandry provisions for all captive animals, to ensure positive welfare.

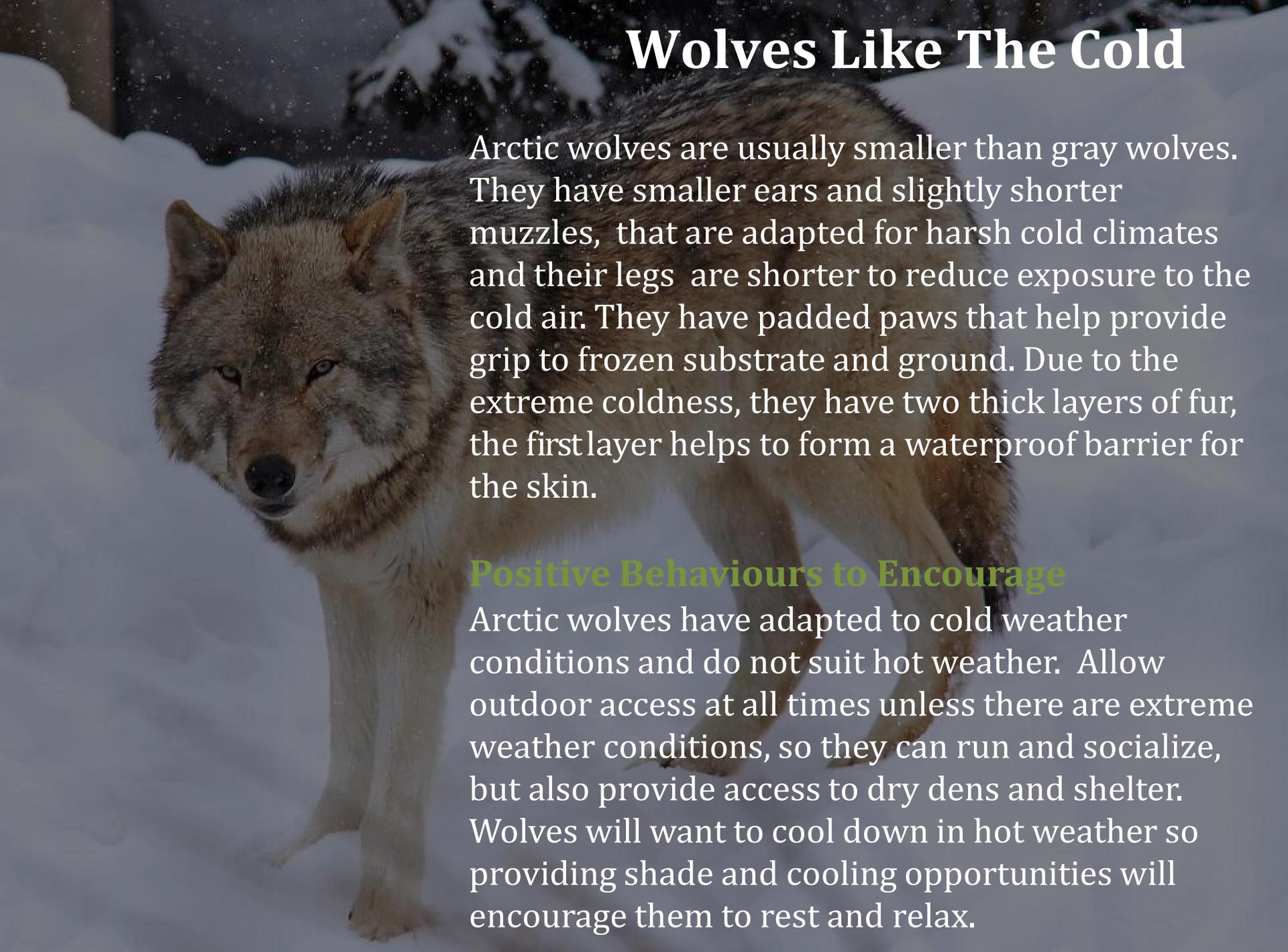
In captivity, the welfare of an animal is dependent on the environment provided for them and the daily care and veterinary treatment they receive.

The Arctic wolf is a subspecies of the gray wolf. They are found along the northern edge of the North American continent and northward to the North Pole, as well as along the eastern and northern shores of Greenland.

The IUCN classifies them as Least Concern on their Red List of Threatened Species. In Alaska, their population numbers are still relatively high, but elsewhere their numbers are very low due to a lack of sufficient food and habitat for them to survive.



# Wolves Like The Cold

A photograph of a wolf standing in a snowy, winter environment. The wolf has thick, brown and grey fur and is looking towards the camera. The background is a soft-focus snow-covered landscape with some dark evergreen trees.

Arctic wolves are usually smaller than gray wolves. They have smaller ears and slightly shorter muzzles, that are adapted for harsh cold climates and their legs are shorter to reduce exposure to the cold air. They have padded paws that help provide grip to frozen substrate and ground. Due to the extreme coldness, they have two thick layers of fur, the first layer helps to form a waterproof barrier for the skin.

## Positive Behaviours to Encourage

Arctic wolves have adapted to cold weather conditions and do not suit hot weather. Allow outdoor access at all times unless there are extreme weather conditions, so they can run and socialize, but also provide access to dry dens and shelter. Wolves will want to cool down in hot weather so providing shade and cooling opportunities will encourage them to rest and relax.

# Wolves Like their Food

A white wolf is shown in profile, facing left, standing in a grassy field. The background is a blurred green landscape with trees. The wolf's fur is thick and white, and its ears are pointed upwards.

Arctic wolves are active pack animals, which have evolved to hunt for their food. They have very sharp teeth as well as powerful jaws. Generally they will eat large prey which requires group hunting. Wolves are protective of any kill they make, using pack behaviours to protect the food from other predators.

## Positive Behaviours to Encourage

While wolves can generally be fed once per day, fast days can also be provided to mimic wild state feeding behaviours. Hide food in items that require them to use their powerful jaws, hang food from poles or ropes and use other feeding enrichment tools to encourage a pack to work together. Feed a mainly carnivorous diet and provide whole carcasses and bones (supervised), to help with enrichment and to increase their activity levels. Make sure diets are age-appropriate and seasonal nutritional requirements are addressed.

# Wolves Are Social

Arctic wolves are social animals and their psychological well-being and growth is dependent on important social interactions. Wolves can express a wide variety of social preferences and their pack social structure can be complex, with pair and group bonds forming. Arctic wolves live in packs of around four to seven individuals. Generally, the size of the pack will depend on how much food happens to be available to them. Wolf packs follow the cues of the head male and female, called the alphas. In any pack there is only one alpha male and alpha female, and often these two have the pups, which are then looked after by the whole pack.

## Positive Behaviours to Encourage

Never keep a wolf on its own and try to always provide group structures and sizes that meet the social, physical, and psychological well-being of all the individual animals. Encourage positive interactions such as play and hunting behaviours, but remember that social relationships are determined by age, sex, breeding season, dominance ranking, and can involve dominance aggressive interactions which can be lethal if not carefully managed.

# Wolves Like to Communicate

Communication between individual wolves in a pack and between packs is very important. Wolves may bare their teeth and growl as a sign of aggression or threatening behaviour. They will also show submissive signs, such as ears flattened back, or rolling over onto their backs. They also communicate by scent marking, leaving their urine and faeces on trees or rocks - important territorial behaviour. Vocal communication includes whines, barks, squeals and howls. Wolves howl prior to a hunt, or after play and social interactions. They may also howl just for fun.

## Positive Behaviours to Encourage

Provide appropriate social grouping to encourage positive communication and interactions. Create an enclosure that encourages scent marking in different territories.

# Wolves Like to Roam

Wild Arctic wolves are territorial and will roam over large areas of rough terrain in packs or alone. They can run extremely fast, particularly when hunting and cover large distances looking for food.

## Positive Behaviours to Encourage

Encourage wolves to use their full enclosure space and provide large, complex outdoor spaces. A relatively flat 'run-able' ground that includes rocks, natural vegetation, artificial dens and soft substrate to dig to help encourage natural roaming behaviours. A large and varied enclosure will provide greater opportunity for the wolves to express their full range of natural, species-appropriate behaviours like running, scent marking, pack socialization and breeding.

# Wolves Are Clever

Arctic wolves are large-roaming, social animals and have evolved to live and hunt as a pack in often harsh environments. This requires complicated hunting and social behaviours in order to survive.

## Positive Behaviours to Encourage

In captivity they can grow bored due to limited space and an uninteresting environment. A captive wolf can demonstrate abnormal behaviours such as repetitive pacing, fur pulling, and long rest periods (depression), if left in a small, dull environment. Providing large outdoor spaces and environmental enrichment for captive wolves encourages them to explore, interact appropriately in their pack, mark territories, dig, denning and other natural behaviours that are positive.

# Wolves Breeding

A white wolf is shown in profile, looking towards the right. The background is a blurred natural setting with trees and foliage. The wolf's fur is thick and white, and its eyes are dark. The overall tone of the image is somewhat muted, with a dark overlay.

Pups are born in a den and litter sizes can be from one up to 11. They nurse for the first four weeks from their mother and one or more of the subordinate females in the pack. From five to ten weeks of age, they add regurgitated food from other pack members to their diet. At six months old, the youngsters join the adults in hunts, and by the time they are two years old, they are considered mature.

## Positive Behaviours to Encourage

Wolves have seasonal reproductive cycles related to photoperiod, so indoor enclosures can prevent successful breeding. All pack members assist with looking after the pups and the pups communicate through visual, tactile, and auditory ways at a very young age, so providing appropriate social groups and allowing access to large outdoor spaces is important for breeding.

# Enclosure Design

Enclosures should have appropriate environmental choices, stimulation and variability and be able to accommodate different social structures and behaviours.

They should have sufficient flatspace to accommodate running, include substrate for digging and incorporate sufficient complexity to give wolves an opportunity to perform a normal range and pattern of marking, pack running, stalking and other natural behaviours. There should also be provision of refuges and dens away from the public.

Enclosures should provide protection from weather extremes, an ability for wolves to suitably cool themselves off in hot temperatures.



# Arctic Wolves Enjoy...

Having lots of space to run, dig and socialise in. They enjoy comfortable bedding, interesting foods and dens to hide away in.

In captivity we should always try and replicate their natural and normal behaviours, so they are happy and healthy throughout their lives.

**W**ILD  
WELFARE

