

# ARCTIC FOX

## ALOPEX LAGOPUS

## FUR VARIANT BLUE FOX

### DISTINGUISHING MARKS:

Smaller than fox, the length of the body 50-65 cm, weight 3-8 kg. In the summer back dark, stomach yellowish light, in the wintertime completely white.

### PREVALENCE:

In Finland only in the mountain areas of Enontekiö and Utsjoki. Arctic fox has spread to all the northern hemisphere.

### HABITAT:

Lives on the treeless plain as extremely rare. Resident of the treeless plain and arctic tundra.

### LIFE STYLES:

Moves every time of the day, the most active at night. Social species during the breeding season, when several couples can live in the same cave complex. No congenital fear of humans. Excessive heat in the summer can cause even heat-stroke death to this northern animal.

### NOURISHMENT:

Voles and lemmings, population changes according to abundance of food. Arctic fox eats in addition to eggs and young of willow grouse, ptarmigan, forest rabbit, (fish and carcasses, reindeer fawns).

### BREEDING:

Monogamous. Mating time is in March. Nests in the cave dug in sand or in boulder soil. 6-8 cubs are born in May-June. Plenty of food affects to the amount of the puppies. The female stays to the nest, while the male catches the haul. Family is together until autumn.

### DEVELOPMENT OF THE POPULATION:

Hundreds, perhaps thousands of arctic foxes wandered around Lapland in the end of 19th century. Hunting for fur destroyed the population and despite from protection, perhaps about 50 arctic foxes live in the Finland nowadays. Population increase's hindrance is that the reindeer care leaves no bodies to the terrain and the carcasses of the large predators has reduced. The competition caused by the foxes risen.

### HUNTING:

Completely calmed by virtue of conservation law.

### PRESERVATION:

Was protected in the Finland 1940, but population doesn't seem to be very promising despite protection. Extremely threatened.

