

Coming soon to the Trust: *Arctic wolf pups*



It was with great delight I headed to Canada some weeks ago to get my first glimpse of the Arctic wolf cubs who will be coming over to become part of the UK Wolf Conservation Trust's growing family.

We will be importing three beautiful Arctic wolves (*Canis Lupus Arctos*) in midsummer, just as soon as they are old enough to travel. The pups will then be quarantined for six months in our facility at the Wolf Trust. The pups have been hand-reared by Parc Safari in Canada and donated to us to enhance our education programme.

When Arctic wolf pups are born their coats are of a beige colouring which gradually turns white following their first two moults. Becoming pure white is a gradual process and can take up to two years to fully develop.

The pups were born on 8th March at Parc Safari in the middle of the worst snowstorm of the winter. Mum, Roxy, gave birth early in the morning and by the time the staff could shovel enough snow away to get to her, all four pups she had given birth to were very poorly. Sadly, one pup died and the other three had to be taken into intensive care. Roxy then gave birth to one more pup;

this pup has remained with her and is doing very well.

We have named each of the pups from the Labradoran Inuit Language:

Sikko (f) – meaning ice
Pukak (m) – meaning fine snow
Massak (m) – meaning soft snow

Spending 24 hours a day with six-week-old wolf pups is a wonderful experience, but extremely demanding! They are so very inquisitive and run around constantly for approximately two hours then fall fast asleep for another two hours then start all over again! The first three months of their lives is the best time to socialise wolf pups and many hours have been spent playing, walking, feeding and sleeping with them.

Even at the tender age of six weeks the wolf pack hierarchy is forming. In our case the Alpha pair are Sikko and Pukak, who regularly gang up on Massak and boss him around or tell him off when it suits.

Sikko is very much an alpha female and although incredibly loving is extremely vocal when she wants or doesn't want something. I think we have a little 'diva' in the making and having two brothers

probably only adds to her princess-like qualities!

Pukak is a strong character who certainly rules the roost and with Sikko's assistance can just about overcome any obstacle in his way. It didn't take him long to learn how to get round the protective gates that were placed in the house in an effort to contain the mayhem!

Massak is very, very laid back, except when there's a bone around! The other two have to work as a tag team to remove anything he can chew from him. He's also the joker of the pack and I enjoyed many hours laughing at some of his antics.

All three pups are extremely affectionate towards people and love to cuddle up to us when they're tired! Interestingly, all three pups made friends with a six-month-old cat who loved playing with them and joined them at feeding times.

We look forward to introducing these stunning animals to you in the very near future.

Linda Paul
Senior Handler