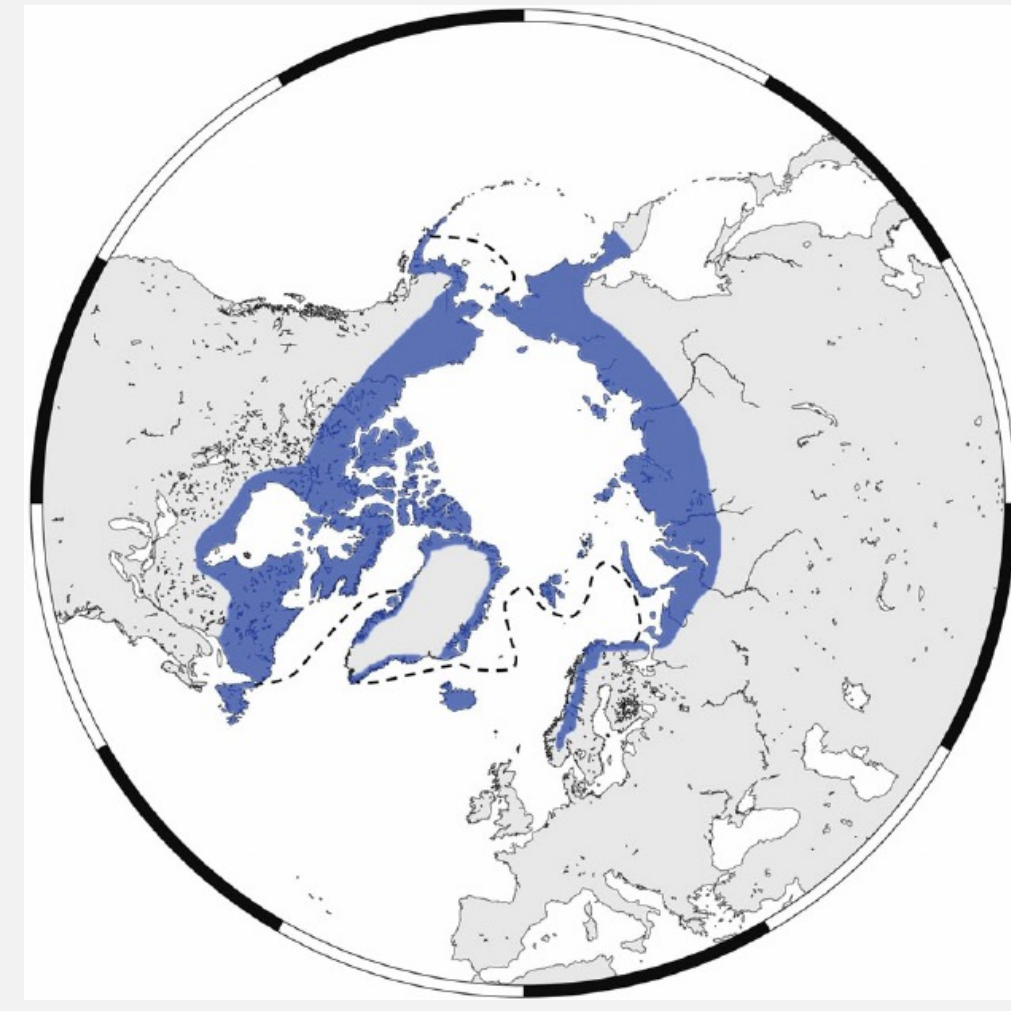


General Characteristics

- Small canid, 6-12 lbs
- Adults are 32-36" in length (tail included)
- Omnivorous
- Circumpolar distribution



Habitat

- North of tree line
- Arctic/alpine tundra
- Coastal areas
- Ice floes

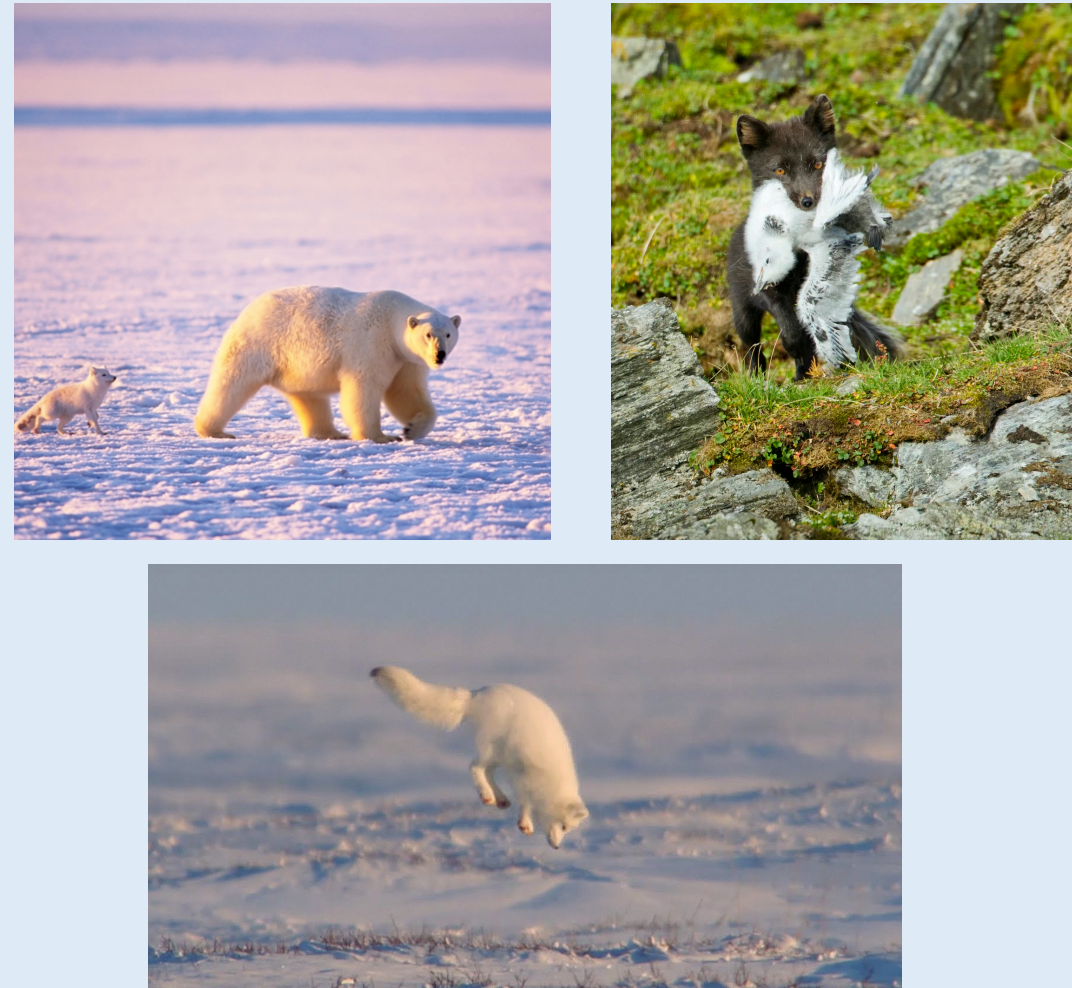
Vulpes lagopus (the Arctic fox)

Fun Facts

- Best insulative properties of any fur on Earth - 26,000 follicles/sq centimeter!
- Only canid with a seasonal color change
- Their dens are "passed down" to offspring and can be centuries old

Diet/Hunting Habits

- Prefers lemmings, but will eat other small mammals, birds, eggs, and carrion
- Fox jumping behavior
- Will follow polar bears and scavenge their kills



Unique Cold-weather Adaptations

- Thick, triple-layered fur coat
- Counter-current heat exchange in legs
- Fur covered paw pads
- BMR drops in times of extreme cold or starvation



Breeding

- Form monogamous pairs, often mate for life
- Mating occurs Feb-Apr
- Gestation around 52 days
- Litters born May-June
- Usually 5-8 pups, many more on good forage years

Ecology and Conservation

- World populations estimated to be several hundred thousand, but some isolated populations are critically endangered
- Sustainably harvested for their fur in Canada, Alaska, and Russia
- Threatened by global warming, which allows competitively superior red foxes to expand their range north

