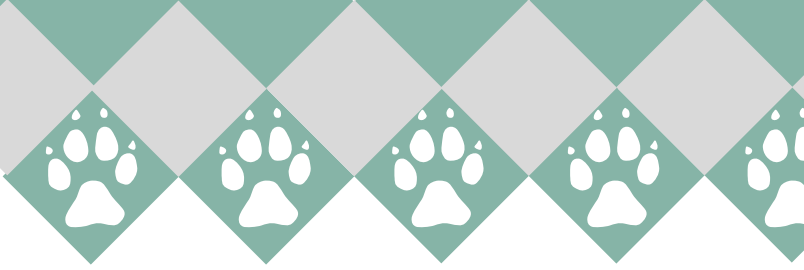


# Wild Kids



## A Journey Through the Seasons

by Jen White,  
International Wolf Center  
Interim Outreach Educator

**D**o you like the cool, crisp breeze of a fall day when the leaves are vibrant with colors? Or do you prefer the warm sun of an endless summer day? Many people have a favorite season. We also have different activities depending on the season. Some days you wear a heavy coat outside, while other days you don't wear any coat at all! Have you ever wondered how wolves change with the different seasons? While you are reading along, compare a wolf's activity to how your life changes with the seasons.

### SPRING **New Beginnings** SUMMER **Family Time**

In spring pups are born, and a mother wolf sticks close to the den.

Pups spend the first few months in the den. This is because they are born helpless. They weigh only a pound and are unable to see or hear. Pack members work together to help raise the pups; they may bring the mother food so she can stay with the pups. In spring, baby elk and deer are born, and sometimes wolves catch them for food.

In summer the pups move from the den to an area called a rendezvous site. It is often an open area surrounded by dense vegetation. The site is a safe place for the growing pups to sleep, explore and play while the pack is out hunting. It is also a social center for the pack. Pups practice being a grown-up wolf by learning how to communicate with their ears, tails and voices. By the end of the summer the pups begin to venture out on short hunting trips with the pack.



Lynn and Donna Rogers/www.bearstudy.org



Isaac Babcock





Isaac Babcock

## ACTIVITY: Keeping a Record of Changes

Keep a phenology journal about the changes in your life through the seasons. A phenology journal is an account of seasonal changes you see in the world around you as well as the biological effects of those changes. Compare the seasonal activities of humans with those of wildlife.

Example: Based on human activity, how do you know when spring comes? Do you hear a lawn mower? Are people planting gardens? Did you put your snow sled in the attic? Also note what the animals and plants are doing: Are the birds building nests? Do you see baby animals? Is the grass turning green? When do leaves appear on the trees? Be sure to record the date you notice each event happening.

	Date	Human Activity	Plant and Animal Activity	What date did this happen last year?
SPRING		put away sled	tulips appear	April 1
			robin observed in lawn	April 15
		first lawn mower heard		May 1
		first laundry hung outside to dry		May 17
SUMMER		swimming pool opens	temperatures hit 80 degrees for first time	May 6
		my first sunburn	cicadas heard	June 1
		vegetable garden blooming		June 15
		school starts	first leaf color observed	June 23
FALL		wear a sweater for first time	geese observed flying south	July 30
			temperature drops below freezing	July 5
			first snow	September 4
WINTER		switch to warmer coat		September 8
		enough snow for sledding		October 2
				October 12
				November 12
				December 1
				December 1
				January 10

## FALL Exploration and Discovery

When fall comes, wolves travel more as a pack. The pups travel longer distances, learn their territory and practice finding prey and hunting. It is important that they learn these things because in fall hunting becomes a full-time job. If the prey migrate to winter feeding grounds, the wolf pack may follow. In fall wolves begin to grow thick insulating fur called an undercoat, which will keep them warm during the upcoming winter.

## WINTER Adapting

Winter can be bitter cold, but wolves stay active and adapt to their environment. Wolves' sprawling feet help them travel through the deep snow. Winter is also the time to prepare to mate. Usually only the dominant male and female mate, most often in February or March, and after about 63 days, new pups are born in spring. The yearly cycle will once again repeat itself. ■



Lynn and Donna Rogers/www.bearstudy.org

