

## OBSERVING THE ARCTIC FOX

Before visiting the natural habitats of the Arctic fox, it is useful to visit The Arctic Fox Centre and learn about the species and their way of life. There is a lot of scientific information available and common literature like this book can be of great help.

It is important to learn about the area, about weather conditions and security, rules and regulations, to respect the nature and wildlife. Also be aware of the following, regarding the Arctic fox:

- Show concern, be patient, try to keep a good distance to the breeding den, 40 meters at least.
- Try to limit the time by the den to 20 minutes. Remember there are other people who also would like to see the animals.
- If you see a fox that you want to observe or photograph, the best way is to sit down, stay still and watch from a distance. If you are quiet and avoid rapid movements, it is more than likely that the fox will become curious and approach you on its own, if it feels safe and secure.
- Chasing the animals can really damage all your effort to photograph the foxes, they don't like it.
- If you have to pass a breeding fox den on your hike (some are located by the trail), walk briskly, stay silent and do not stop until you are around 40 meters away from the den.
- Avoid being between parents and offspring and give them space to move freely. Adult foxes will want to walk around you so make sure they can do so.
- If the animals show signs of insecurity or fear, please back off or leave the den area entirely. No one enjoys watching terrified animals anyway.
- Even though the parents appear calm and tame, it does not mean they feel that way. They might simply not dare to leave the den to find food. Presence of people can prevent them from leaving to hunt or to nurse the cubs so they will become malnourished or starve.
- It is necessary to give the breeding den a break so that the parents will have time to attend the cubs, we should all agree on a break between 19:00 and 9:00.
- Dogs prevent us from seeing the foxes in their natural habitats as they fear dogs. It is not likely that foxes are active for a while, even 1-2 days after the dog is gone. If you have a dog with you, keep it in a leash and prevent it from approaching an active fox den.
- Fox dens are protected by law in Iceland: "it is a mandatory obligation to leave no trace at a fox den and it is forbidden to harm or destroy a fox den. Dogs are not allowed to run free at or around fox dens during the denning season and it should be avoided to have any other unnecessary activity at a den" (Law nr. 64/1994, stipulation nr. 437/1995).