



Arctic Fox Speeds Across 2000 Miles of Ice in 76 Days!



What is the Arctic sea ice?

- The Arctic Ocean is in the far north of the Earth. The north pole is in the Arctic.
- It is so cold, the ocean has frozen over, creating sea ice. Animals can travel across this as if it was land.

A young Arctic fox has stunned scientists by racing over 2000 miles across the Arctic in just 76 days! The furry explorer travelled further and faster than anyone thought foxes could.

The fox's story begins in Norway, where scientists fitted it with a tracking device. They wanted to see how these amazing animals **migrate** and travel in search of food.

What happened next caught them by surprise! The female Arctic fox, who was less than a year old, left the Svalbard **archipelago** in Norway and travelled across the ice to Greenland.

She then raced across the Greenland ice sheet, covering 155km in one day — that's nearly 100 miles!

Finally, 76 days after she set off, she arrived in Canada. The fox had travelled across the sea ice which makes up a lot of the Arctic ocean. All in all, she had moved an average of 46 km (nearly 30 miles) a day.

The fox had travelled so fast, scientists thought she might have hopped on to a boat! However, she was moving too far north; the ice was so thick, boats wouldn't be able to get through.

Arctic foxes live across the Arctic circle and often move around across the thick sea ice searching for food, especially during the winter.

They are incredibly hardy and use their thick fur to live in temperatures as low as -50°C. They eat a range of different plants and animals.

Photo: An Arctic fox walking on the snow.

Their natural habitat is changing because of **climate change**, caused by human actions, such as burning **fossil fuels** for energy.

As the Earth's temperature is increasing, the sea ice in the Arctic is melting at an astonishing rate. This could make it much harder for Arctic animals, such as foxes and polar bears, to travel in search of food.

The tale of our Arctic explorer shows just how important it is to protect our environment and reduce climate change.

Glossary

migrate	Move from one habitat to another according to the seasons.
archipelago	A group of islands.
climate change	The changing weather and rising temperature of the Earth.
fossil fuels	Natural fuels, such as coal and gas, which are used for fuel.

Questions

1. How old is this Arctic fox?

2. Why do you think Arctic foxes need to travel so far to find food?

3. 'They are incredibly hardy, and use their thick fur to live in temperatures as low as -50°C .'
Tick the word which is closest in meaning to 'hardy' in this sentence.

- strong
- small
- resilient
- heavy

4. 'The sea ice in the Arctic is melting at an astonishing rate.'
Why do you think the author uses the word 'astonishing' in this sentence?

5. Number the events in the order in which they happened. One has been done for you.

- The fox left the Svalbard archipelago.
- The Arctic fox reached Canada.
- 1 Scientists fitted the fox with a tracking device.
- The Arctic fox reached Greenland.

6. Summarise this news story in 20 words or fewer.

7. Do you think journeys such as this will get easier or harder for Arctic foxes in the future?
Explain your answer.

Answers

1. How old is this Arctic fox?

She is less than a year old.

2. Why do you think Arctic foxes need to travel so far to find food?

Accept any reasonable answer which refers to the news story, e.g. I think Arctic foxes need to travel so far to find food because not many animals or plants can survive on the ice sheets, so there is less for them to eat.

3. 'They are incredibly hardy, and use their thick fur to live in temperatures as low as -50°C .'
Tick the word which is closest in meaning to 'hardy' in this sentence.

- strong
- small
- resilient
- heavy

4. 'The sea ice in the Arctic is melting at an astonishing rate.'

Why do you think the author uses the word 'astonishing' in this sentence?

The author uses the word astonishing to show that scientists are surprised by how quickly the ice is melting.

5. Number the events in the order in which they happened. One has been done for you.

- 2** The fox left the Svalbard archipelago.
- 4** The Arctic fox reached Canada.
- 1** Scientists fitted the fox with a tracking device.
- 3** The Arctic fox reached Greenland.

6. Summarise this news story in 20 words or fewer.

Accept any reasonable summary which is 20 words or fewer, e.g. An Arctic Fox has travelled over 2000 miles in 76 days. It's the fastest a fox has been recorded travelling.

7. Do you think journeys such as this will get easier or harder for Arctic foxes in the future?
Explain your answer.

Accept any reasonable answer which refers to the news story, e.g. I think this journey will get harder as climate change is causing the sea ice to melt.