

Winter Months

A long time ago when animals were people, they lived together in a large village. Earth was just formed so there were no seasons. The people didn't know how long to make each season but they were concerned about the length of *s-istk* (winter). The leaders decided to vote on the length of the cold months so they held a meeting in a large tipi. All the leaders except Coyote thought *s-istk* (winter) should last three months. They thought of a plan. One elder asked jumping mouse to sit next to the doorway and as soon as Coyote started counting the *qipc* (spring) months, Jumping Mouse was to jump and say that they only wanted three months of winter. Then everyone was to quickly follow Jumping Mouse out of the tipi. Everything went as planned. One of the leaders started counting the months but Coyote couldn't stand it any longer. He took over and held up his hands to count on his fingers. When he ran out of fingers he stuck his feet in the air so he could count on his toes. When coyote got to *s-kn'ir-mn'* (March), jumping mouse jumped up and yelled, "We have three months of *s-istk*." Everyone but Coyote quickly followed Jumping Mouse out of the tipi. Coyote was left with all fours up in the air in the middle of the tipi. He was so surprised. That is how people won the vote to only have three months of cold *s-istk* (winter).