



The Denali Wood Frog

While traveling the interior of Alaska, I discovered a most interesting creature living there— It's the wood frog. It is reported to be the only amphibian living on the tundra and in the taiga forest where the warm season is at best about 100 days long and winter temperatures can drop to minus 50 degrees Fahrenheit. The frog is only slightly larger than a man's thumbprint but he is a fascinating individual with a powerful voice. This frog is an ectotherm, which means his body temperature is the same as his environment. So how would you imagine that such a creature as a frog can survive an Alaskan winter?

Well it is thought that in the summer season he matures quickly from tadpole to frog, and then when the temperatures begin to drop he burrows into the leaves of the forest floor. The frog's liver secretes glucose which circulates throughout the body and lowers the freezing point.

As the cold deepens, the frog begins to freeze solid from the outside in—first the extremities, then the eyes, and so on. The last organs to freeze are the heart and liver. And finally, there he sits throughout the long dark winter, frozen solid on the forest floor--a veritable ice sculpture.

When spring comes, he slowly thaws, his vital functions begin again, and he hops away to welcome the spring with a lusty croak.

Scientists are still not sure how he is able to freeze solid and yet sustain no cellular damage. He is one of the miracles of nature that has been fitted not only to adapt to a harsh environment but to thrive—albeit—the only one of his kind to do so.

And now the point... In our world today, the love of men grows colder and the light within them darkens. Ours is becoming a spiritual wilderness. A harsh and hostile environment very close to home, and yet, if we yield to the Almighty, He can fit us not only to survive, but to thrive in this spiritual wilderness—all alone, if we have to.

Glenn Rawson

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(Written at Denali National Park in the Alaskan Interior)

Music: All Creatures of Our God and King - Jason Tonioli