



[http://images.nationalgeographic.com/wpf/media-live/photos/000/005/cache/grey-wolf\\_565\\_600x450.jpg](http://images.nationalgeographic.com/wpf/media-live/photos/000/005/cache/grey-wolf_565_600x450.jpg)

# THE GRAY WOLF

An Endangered Canine

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## Introduction

Wolves face more problems than you can imagine. Their threats include hunters, people, habitat loss, and not enough food. While you are in your cozy and heated house with food, just think in your mind how hard the gray wolf's life is and all the dangers they face.



## Description

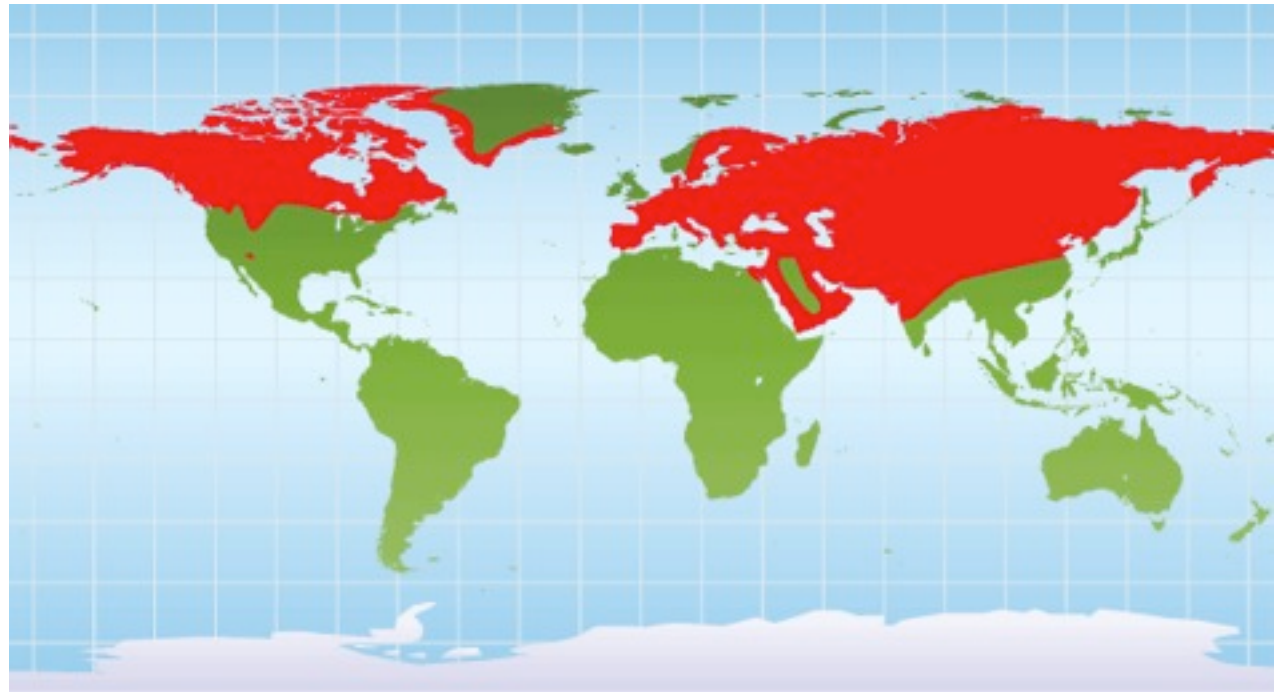
The gray wolf has many parts to its body and amazing skills, names, colors. Did you know that the wolf's teeth are so strong that they can crack open bones? Their tail helps them balance when they are running, jumping, and being active. A full grown adult wolf measures up to 34 inches long (86cm) at the shoulders. The wolf's fur grows longer during winter to keep it warm. Wolves come in different colors, like, gray, black, red-brown, steely-blue, white, and purple-white. The gray wolf's scientific name is *Canis lupus*. As you can see, the gray wolf has many characteristics.

## Habitat

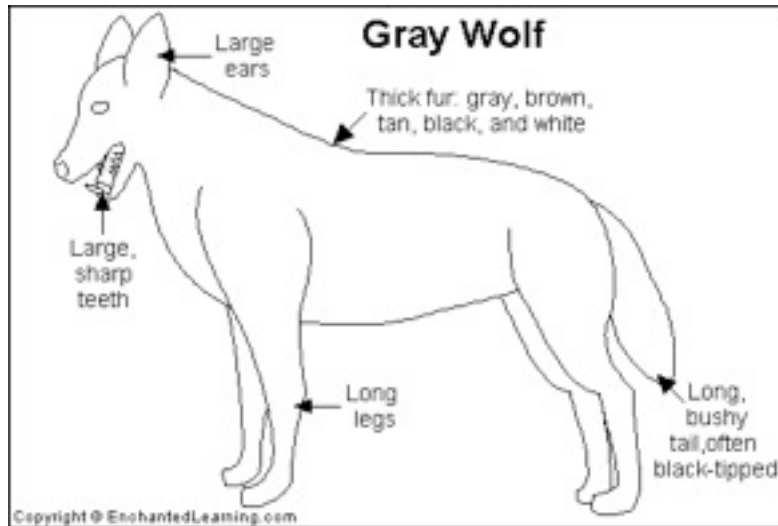
Wolves roamed North America a long time ago. But there are still wolves in Canada, Alaska, and parts of the United States.

Wolves live in Asia, and Europe as well. There are maned wolves in Africa. Wolves live in moun-

tains and in thick forests. They stay away from towns and humans. The Gray Wolf lives in tundra in Alaska, Canada, and in Yellowstone National Park in the United States. As you may see, wolves live in many places.



[http://animalfactguide.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/worldmap\\_graywolf.png](http://animalfactguide.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/worldmap_graywolf.png)



The Gray Wolf body

## Life Cycle

When a young wolf cub is born, it is helpless. It weighs about seventeen ounces, and can't see or hear, so it has to

stay with its mother. A female wolf can have up to seven

cubs at a time. As you can imagine, a newborn cub needs a lot of help from its mother. It's surprising how fast the cubs learn. At four weeks the cubs learn to communicate with each other. Around the same time the cubs leave the underground den to explore. At first they stay close to each other, but then they spread out.

Around four weeks, the cubs also start to learn sounds and smells. At the same time, they learn body postures. At four weeks, the cubs start to eat solid food, like meat, but still take milk from their mother. It's surprising that at four weeks a cub can eat solid food. As you can see, the cubs begin learning when they are very young. When the cub is hungry, it will lick its mother's snout. When they are one month old, their teeth start to grow. It's surprising that the cubs chew and gnaw on old bones to sharpen their teeth. As a result, when they are adults, their teeth will be very strong



The Gray Wolf life cycle.

[http://images.nationalgeographic.com/wpf/media-live/photos/000/005/cache/grey-wolf\\_565\\_600\\_x450.jpg](http://images.nationalgeographic.com/wpf/media-live/photos/000/005/cache/grey-wolf_565_600_x450.jpg)

The cubs get stronger as they grow. When the cubs are eight months old they weigh about 67 pounds (25 kg). At eight months old they start joining the pack to go hunting. Female wolves breed at different ages



A Gray Wolf cub.

<http://images.fineartamerica.com/images-medium-large/gray-wolf-can-is-lupus-pup-amid-lupine-tim-fitzharris.jpg>

than male wolves. Female Gray

Wolves can breed at age two, and male wolves can breed at the age of three. Female wolves breed once a year for 5-14 days, and then stop looking for a male to mate. The females breed in late January and early

March and April. They're pregnant for nine weeks. An average adult wolfe dies at age ten. They may die from old age, injuries, hunters, and starvation.



## Communication

Wolves have many ways of communicating in their daily life and when they hunt. For example, they use whines, yaps, snarls, growls, and when the cubs are hungry, they lick their mother's snout. They also use growls to threaten and warn others. The pups growl in play-fighting. They also have many signals, like they urinate on rocks and trees for other wolves to smell. They scrape on the ground with their paws to let others know that they were there. They have many different ways of hunting. They use pouncing and team work. They distract the prey, they use stamina, and they stalk the prey. Wolves have a lot of ways to communicate and work together.

## Threats

Wolves have many threats. Hunters kill them in many ways.

They trap them and kill them for their fur. They use pit traps,

bows and arrows, guns leg-holds, and poisoned carcasses.

Wolves can get many diseases, like arthritis, heart disease, and kidney disease. Lots of things live on the wolves, like hookworm, fluke, mange mites, tapeworms, roundworms, louse, and ticks. Wolves have many



Gray Wolf skin

<http://huntwolves.com/site/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/wolfrug.jpg>

enemies, like people, bears, large cats (like cougars), and rival wolf packs, and habitat destruction. As you can see, wolves have many threats and enemies.

## Solutions



Some people think that wolves are bad and evil because they kill farmers' cattle. There are actually reasons they kill cattle, and they do it to survive. They don't have enough food or habitat to live in.

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some of the reasons they are endangered. There are many more reasons the Gray Wolf is endangered, like hunters, starvation, and habitat loss. This is why it's so important that people try to help. People can help raise awareness of how wolves are endangered by reading and talking about how to help. Farmers can help by keeping cattle inside fences and by not shooting the Gray Wolf. We should save the Gray Wolf because it is a beautiful creature that plays a large role in the food web.

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