



# Wolves

## Fact Sheet for Adults



### General Facts

- Wolves are carnivorous mammals and are part of the canine group, which includes 34 species such as foxes, coyotes and the African painted dog.
- Wolves are social animals that live in packs of up to 30, although the average size of a pack is between 6 and 8.
- Wolves are at the top of the food chain, with their only threat being human hunters.
- In the wild, wolves live for an average of 6 to 8 years, however, in captivity they live much longer.
- Wolves are excellent hunters and can run at speeds of up to 35mph when chasing their prey.
- A male wolf is called a dog, a female is called a bitch and offspring are called pups.
- Wolves generally weigh around 40 kilograms.
- Wolves are nocturnal, tending to hunt at night and sleep during the day.
- Although wolves are generally portrayed as evil or nasty animals, they play an important role in helping to keep the balance of nature. For example, when wolves were removed from Yellowstone Park in the USA, various animal populations grew too much. This meant that there became too many of those animals and not enough food, leading to animals starving. The wolf population had helped to keep the animal populations balanced.
- Wolves tend to live in remote locations and can live in environments with very warm or very cold temperatures. They live in habitats all around the world but are most numerous in the USA, Canada and Arctic Russia.

### Wolf Packs

- Wolves breed once per year and usually have a litter of around 4-6 cubs, born in a den. The den is usually a hole in the ground or a cave.
- A pack usually has one male and one female, along with their young. Only the alpha male and alpha female mate.

### Wolf Packs

- All of the adult members of the pack will help to care for the pups when they are born.
- Wolf pups are born deaf and blind, only weighing about 0.5kg.
- The pups are considered to be adults when they reach 2 years of age.
- When wolves hunt alone, they tend to catch small animals such as squirrels, hares, or rabbits. However, as a pack, wolves can hunt much larger animals, such as moose and yaks.
- When a wolf pack kills an animal, the alpha pair always eat first.

### Wolf Communication

- It is thought that wolves howl to scare away other wolves and to communicate with others in their pack.
- Wolves also communicate by leaving scent marks for other wolves to find or through different body postures. However, the most common way for wolves to communicate is by nuzzling each other and making sounds.

### Fun Facts

- The wolf is the ancestor of all breeds of domestic dog.
- The wolf species has been in existence for over 1.5 million years!
- The sound of a wolf howl can be heard up to 6 miles away.
- A wolf's nose is one hundred times more sensitive than the human nose.
- Wolves constantly move around their territory and can easily cover 40-50km in one day.
- Wolves are good swimmers.

Take a look at our Wolves Fact Cards within this [Little Red Riding Hood Discovery Sack](#) for some more fun facts!