

Wolves

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According to Wolf Song of Alaska, wolves are often confused with Indian dogs, huskies, German Sheppard dogs, and male mutts.

Mountain lion, coyote, and dog tracks are often very similar to wolf tracks. It was stated in Wolf Song of Alaska that wolves are designed for running, catching, and killing large animals. Their strong, heavy, muzzle and extremely powerful jaws help them to do this, with the help of all 42 teeth an average wolf has. The front teeth are sharp and pointed. They puncture, slash, and cling onto prey. Their canine teeth interlock to grip and keep hold of the prey and the premolars and molars tear and shear the dead prey while the carnassials or back molars crack and crush bones and shear meat.

They are very vulnerable to skull injuries near big prey that kick. Wolf Song of Alaska says a wolf's smell is more than 100 times greater than a human's. The wolf is the largest in the canine family and lives 8-13 years or more in the wild. There are many things a wolf eats. Wolf Song of Alaska states predation is not violence but surviving by obtaining food.

The wolf is at the top of the food chain. They eat deer, elk, moose, beaver, horses, cattle, sheep, dogs, and caribou, but will eat birds, fish, lizards, snakes, fruit, and other small mammals if needed. They almost never attack humans. It was stated in Wolf Song of Alaska that wolves seek out sick, young, weak, crippled, and old animals, usually not killing healthy animals and will attempt to catch the easiest and most vulnerable animal. Wolves have a low hunting success rate and test many animals before finding one to catch and kill to have enough food for the pack. Ambushing, trails of blood

and hair, and bites on hindquarters, flanks, shoulders, nose, and tail are hunting methods of these creatures.

According to National Geographic, when wolves are successful in hunting, they do not eat in moderation and eat everything except stomach contents. Wolves don't chew a lot. They can eat 20 pounds of meat at a sitting. They use direct scenting, chance encounter, and tracking to locate prey.

Dominance in a wolf pack isn't based on muscle or attack. It was stated in National Geographic that the main male is at the top of the pack with his mate not far behind.

The Alpha is the highest in the hierarchy, then the Beta. Last is the Omega. "If necessary, wolves will attack other wolf intruders to protect their territory", states Wolf Song of Alaska. National Geographic says they are "one of the animal world's most fearsome natural villains" and Wolf Song of Alaska says in the world – people world, even though they are generally calm animals with a strong aversion to fighting. Wolves are considered game animal competitors with humans.

There are two species of wolf in North America. The *Canis Lupus* is more commonly known as the Gray Wolf and the *Canis Rufus* is more commonly known as the Red Wolf. According to Wolf. Org, there are more gray wolves than red wolves. There are 24 wolf subspecies in North America according to Wolf Song of Alaska. Wolves have been around for over 60 million years.

According to the National Wildlife Federation, wolves historically covered 2/3 of the US. The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, very little wolves lived in the US by the middle of the 20th century. Only a few hundred gray wolves, very
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few red wolves, and the occasional Mexican wolf, an offspring of the gray wolf.

In the 48 continental states, there are 5, 500 gray wolves and 100 red wolves today, states Wolf. Org. According to the National Wildlife Federation, habitat loss and overexploitation are major threats to wolves. Wolf Song of Alaska says the main threat is habitat loss. Populations in Alaska have been majorly reduced because of human encounters with the wolves, states Wolf Song Of Alaska. Defenders of Wildlife's Jacob Gregory says there is an increased amount of wolves killed in America.

Countless wolves have been shot, trapped, and poisoned for attacking domestic animals. According to Wolf. Org, the wolf population is increasing. Wolves at one time had an extensive range. They were found all over the northern hemisphere in the arctic tundra, taiga, plains, steppes, savannahs, hardwood, softwood, and mixed forests. National Geographic said as the country was settled, native wolf prey declined, so they ate livestock.

Governments then hunted them nearly to extinction. Their numbers have rebounded due to conservation efforts. The International Wolf Center claims wolves are currently stable or slightly increasing in the US. According to the Humane Society, when wolves aren't on the Endangered Species Act (ESA), they'll be managed by their state who will allow unnecessary and liberal wolf killings by hunters, trappers, and ranchers. According to National Geographic, wolves are endangered. Some populations survived, others reintroduced, when wolves were hunted to near extinction.

In 1973, the wolf was eliminated from the landscape and they were added to the endangered species act. Red wolves became extinct in the wild in 1980. Due to federal protection, their population has since increased. Much is being done to increase wolf population. State wildlife agencies, universities, and conservation organizations have developed recovery plans all over the US with the goal of restoring a secure status in the wild as a functioning ecosystem member, states the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Wolf population is increasing in America. Since settlers first came to America, wolf population has dramatically decreased, but is currently increasing in America.