

# All About Wolves

## How Wolves Look

Adult wolves usually grow to around 1.5m long. Wolves only usually weigh between 22kg and 50kg but the heaviest wolf on record weighed over 79kg.

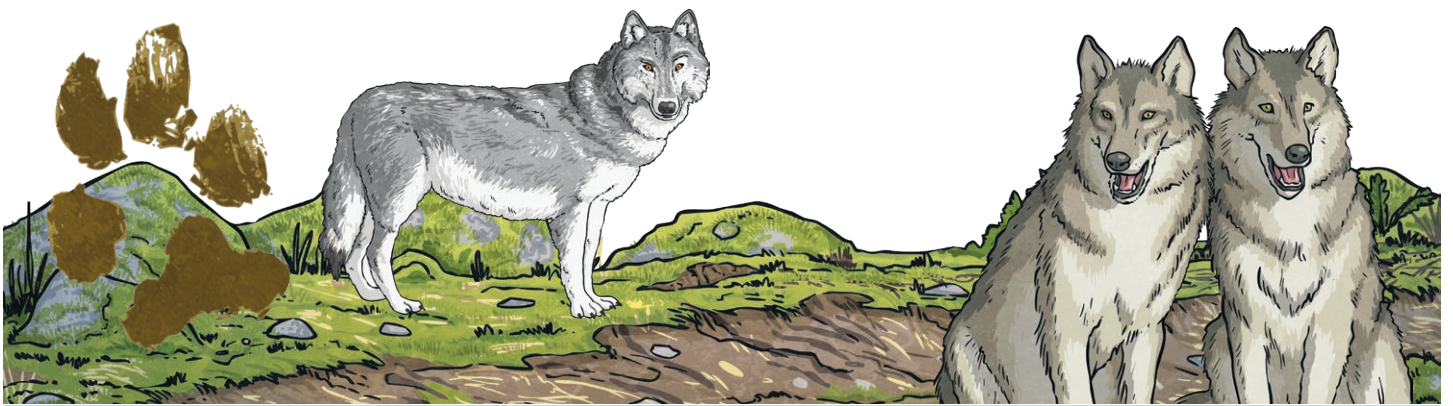
Wolves are double-coated. This means that they have two layers of fur. The outer layer of fur is made up of tough guard hairs. These keep dirt and water away from the wolf's skin. The wolf's undercoat is much softer and warmer. The wolf will often shed this coat in the summer because there are more daylight hours. However, it does help to keep them warm during winter.



## Who Wolves Live With

Wolves normally live in groups called packs. A pack is often made up of six to ten wolves from the same family. Packs are led by a parent male and a parent female.

Female wolves give birth to a litter of five or six young each spring. The young are known as pups or whelps. Wolves usually live for between six and eight years in the wild but they can live for much longer if they are being looked after.



## What Wolves Eat

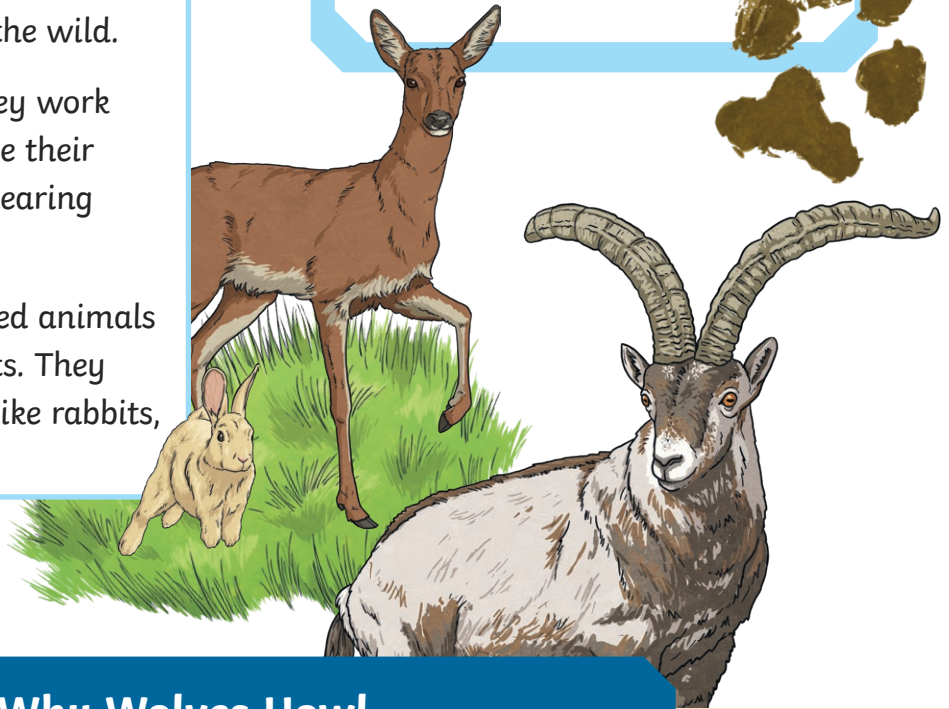
The wolf is a carnivore which means that they eat other animals. They are also an apex predator. This means that they are at the top of the food chain and do not have any predators in the wild.

Wolves are pack hunters so they work together to hunt prey. They use their excellent senses of smell and hearing to do this.

Wolves usually eat large, hoofed animals like deer, elk or mountain goats. They will also eat smaller animals like rabbits, squirrels and mice.

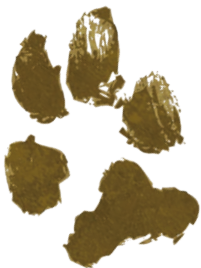
## Did You Know...?

The wolf has the Latin name 'Canis lupus'. This means 'dog wolf' in English.



## Why Wolves Howl

Wolves howl to communicate with one another across long distances. A wolf's howl can give important information, such as:



- its location;
- nearby predators;
- the position of prey.

Sometimes, wolves will howl together as a pack. This strengthens their bond with one another. Some studies have even shown that wolves will howl at one another as a sign that they like each other.



# Questions

1. What weight was the heaviest wolf on record? Tick one.

- ☐ less than 1.5kg
- ☐ around 22kg
- ☐ exactly 50kg
- ☐ over 79kg

2. Number the sub-headings from 1-4 to show the order that they appear in the text.

- ☐ What Wolves Eat
- ☐ Why Wolves Howl
- ☐ How Wolves Look
- ☐ Who Wolves Live With

3. Draw **four** lines and match each term to its definition.

double-coated	•	•	a group of wolves
pack	•	•	an animal that eats other animals
carnivore	•	•	has two layers of fur
whelp	•	•	one word for a young wolf

4. What is the Latin name for wolves? Tick one.

- ☐ Lupus canis
- ☐ Capus lunis
- ☐ Canis lupus
- ☐ Lupis canus

5. Give **two** different pieces of information that a wolf's howl can communicate.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

6. Look at the section called **What Wolves Eat**.

Find and copy a phrase that means 'at the top of the food chain'.

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7. Summarise what you have learnt about a wolf's fur using 20 words or fewer.

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# Answers

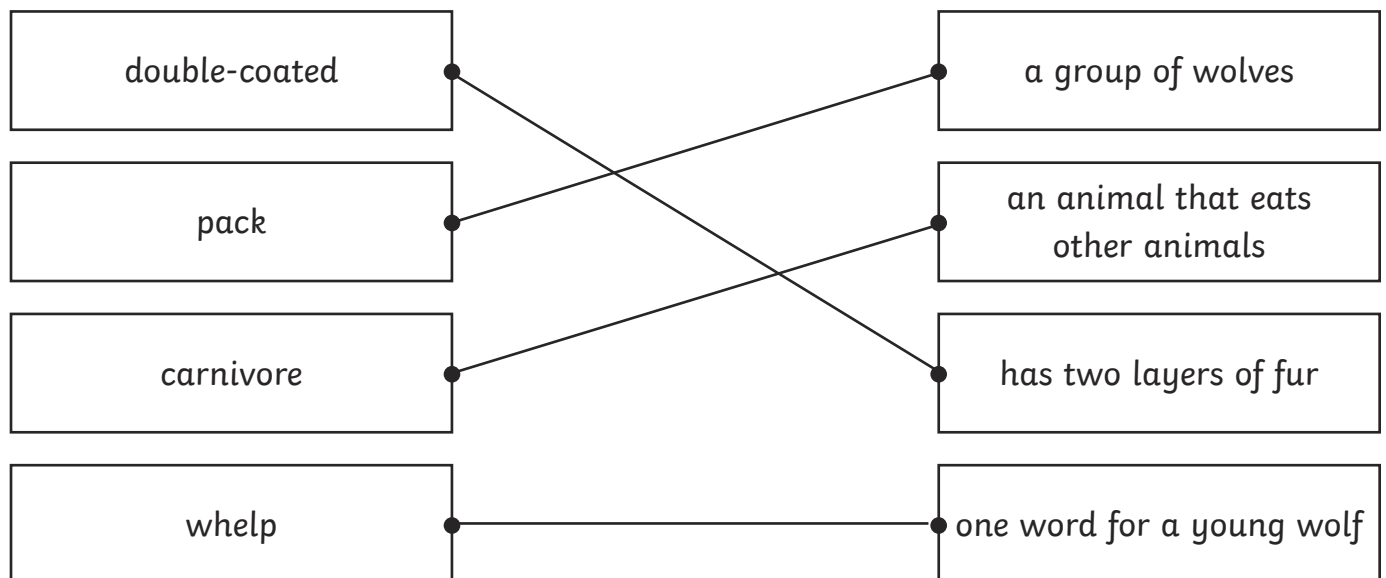
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- 3** What Wolves Eat
- 4** Why Wolves Howl
- 1** How Wolves Look
- 2** Who Wolves Live With

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4. What is the Latin name for wolves? Tick one.

- ☐ Lupus canis
- ☐ Capus lunis
- ☒ **Canis lupus**
- ☐ Lupis canus

5. Give **two** different pieces of information that a wolf's howl can communicate.

**Accept any two of the following: its location; nearby predators; the position of prey; bonding; that they like each other.**

6. Look at the section called **What Wolves Eat**.  
Find and copy a phrase that means 'at the top of the food chain'.

**apex predator**

7. Summarise what you have learnt about a wolf's fur using 20 words or fewer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: A wolf has two layers of fur. The top one keeps dirt away and the undercoat keeps them warm.**

# All About Wolves

The wolf is a large **canine** that can be found in the wild in Europe, Asia and North America. The wolf has the Latin name 'Canis lupus'. This means 'dog wolf' in English.

## Appearance

Adult wolves usually grow to around 1.5m long. Those that live in the north grow longer and larger than those that live further south. Wolves only usually weigh between 22kg and 50kg but the heaviest wolf on record weighed over 79kg.

Wolves are double-coated. This means that they have two layers of fur. The outer layer of fur is made up of tough guard hairs that keep dirt and water away from the wolf's skin. The undercoat of the wolf is much softer and warmer. The wolf will often shed this coat in the summer because there are more daylight hours but it helps to keep them warm during winter.



## Family

Wolves normally live in groups called packs that are made up of six to ten wolves from the same family. Packs are led by a parent male and a parent female.

Female wolves give birth to a litter of five or six young each spring. The young are known as pups or whelps. Wolves usually live for between six and eight years in the wild and for up to 17 years if they are being looked after in a sanctuary.



## Food

The wolf is a **carnivore** and an **apex predator**. They are pack hunters which means that they work together to hunt prey. They use their excellent senses of smell and hearing to do this.

Wolves usually eat large, hoofed animals like deer, elk or mountain goats. They will also eat smaller animals like rabbits, squirrels and mice.



## Howling

Wolves howl to communicate with one another across long distances. A wolf's howl can give important information like its location, a sighting of a predator or the position of prey.

Sometimes, wolves will howl together as a pack. This strengthens their bond with one another and some studies have even shown that wolves will howl at one another as a sign of love.



## Threats to Wolves

As apex predators, wolves have few natural threats. However, because of humans and their actions, wolves have been considered an endangered species at some points in recent history.

## Glossary

**apex predator:** A predator that is considered to be at the top of the food chain because it has no predators of its own.

**canine:** Relating to animals of the dog family.

**carnivore:** An animal that feeds on other animals.



# Questions

1. What does the Latin name 'Canis lupus' mean in English? Tick one.

- ☐ like a dog
- ☐ wolf dog
- ☐ like a wolf
- ☐ dog wolf

2. Number the sub-headings from 1-4 to show the order that they appear in the text.

- ☐ Howling
- ☐ Threats to Wolves
- ☐ Appearance
- ☐ Family

3. Draw **four** lines and match each term to its definition.

apex predator	relating to animals of the dog family
canine	an animal that feeds on other animals
carnivore	considered to be at the top of the food chain because it has no predators of its own
whelp	one word for a young wolf

4. How many young do female wolves typically give birth to each spring? Tick one.

- ☐ three or four
- ☐ four or five
- ☐ five or six
- ☐ six or seven

5. List **two** large, hoofed animals that wolves usually eat.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

6. Why do wolves often shed their undercoat in the summer?

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7. Discuss why humans are the greatest threat to wolves.

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8. Comment on what you think would happen if a wolf lost its ability to howl.

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# Answers

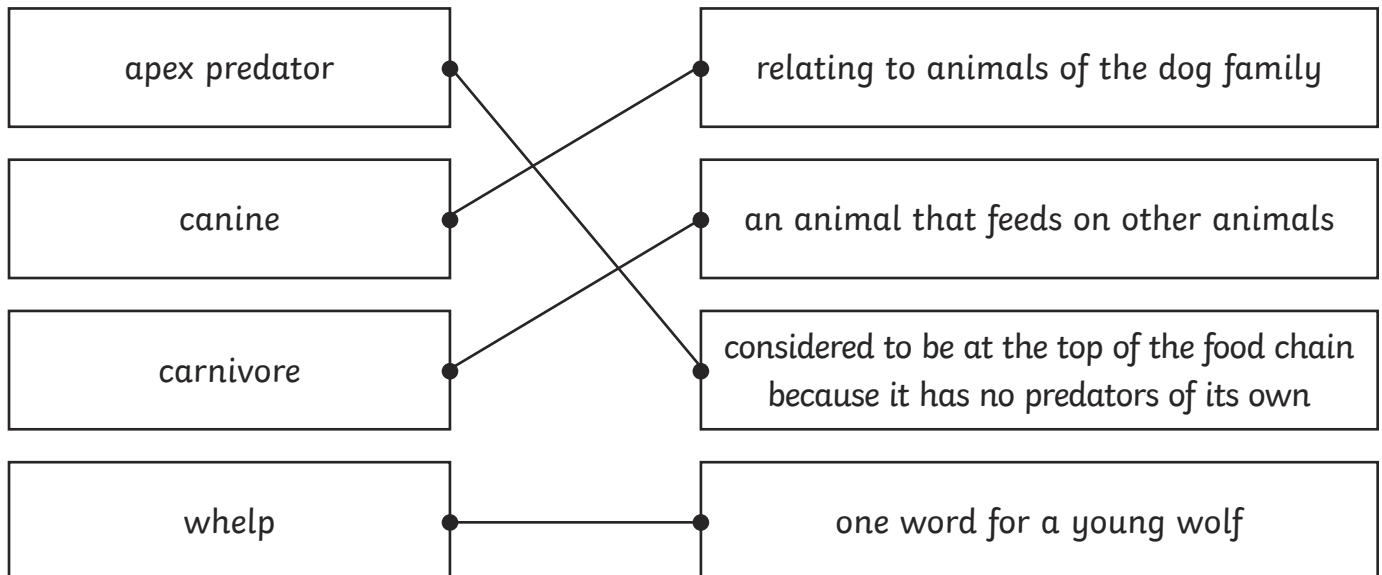
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- 3** Howling
- 4** Threats to Wolves
- 1** Appearance
- 2** Family

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4. How many young do female wolves typically give birth to each spring? Tick one.

- ☐ three or four
- ☐ four or five
- ☒ **five or six**
- ☐ six or seven

5. List **two** large, hoofed animals that wolves usually eat.

**Accept any two of the following: deer; elk; mountain goats.**

6. Why do wolves often shed their undercoat in the summer?

**Wolves will often shed their undercoat in the summer because there are more daylight hours.**

**Do not accept 'because it is hotter in summer'.**

7. Discuss why humans are the greatest threat to wolves.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: Humans are the greatest threat to wolves because they have no natural predators in the wild yet human actions have endangered the species in the past.**

8. Comment on what you think would happen if a wolf lost its ability to howl.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: If a wolf lost its ability to howl, I think that it would struggle to get other wolves to help it when it is hunting and struggle to bond with other wolves in the pack.**



# All About Wolves

The wolf is a large **canine** that is found wild in Europe, Asia and North America. The wolf has the Latin name 'Canis lupus'. This translates into English to mean 'dog wolf'.

## Appearance

Adult wolves usually grow to around 1.5m long from nose to tail tip and those that live in the north grow longer and larger than those that live further south. While wolves only usually weigh between 22kg and 50kg, the heaviest wolf on record weighed over 79kg.

Wolves are double-coated. This means that they have two layers of fur, which can be black, brown, grey, white, red and **taupe**. The outer layer of fur is made up of tough guard hairs that repel dirt and water; this layer helps the wolf to stay clean. The undercoat of the wolf is much softer and warmer. It is often shed in the summer because there are more daylight hours but this fluffy undercoat helps to keep wolves warm during harsh winter temperatures.



## Family

Wolves normally live in groups called packs, which are made up of six to ten wolves that are family members. Packs are led by a parent male and a parent female, who are sometimes known as the alphas.

Female wolves give birth to a litter of five or six young each spring. The young are known as pups or whelps. Wolves tend to live for between six and eight years in the wild and for up to 17 years in captivity.



## Diet

The wolf is a **carnivore** and an **apex predator**. They are pack hunters who have evolved to work together to hunt prey and they use their excellent senses of smell and hearing to do this.

Wolves most commonly eat large, hoofed animals, such as deer, elk or mountain goats. They will also eat smaller animals like rabbits, squirrels and mice.

Within a pack, the alpha male and alpha female eat first. Then, the other members of the pack feed. If there are particularly young members of a pack, adult wolves will swallow food and then **regurgitate** it to feed their young.



## Howling

Wolves howl to communicate with one another across long distances. A wolf's howl can give important information like its location, a sighting of a predator or the position of prey.

Sometimes, wolves will howl together as a pack. This strengthens their bond with one another and some studies have even shown that wolves will howl at one another as a sign of love.



## Threats to Wolves

As apex predators, wolves have few natural threats. However, because of humans and their actions, wolves have been considered an endangered species at some points in recent history.

## Glossary

**apex predator:** A predator that is considered to be at the top of the food chain because it has no predators of its own.

**canine:** Relating to animals of the dog family.

**carnivore:** An animal that feeds on other animals.

**regurgitate:** To bring swallowed food back up into the mouth.

**taupe:** Grey with a tinge of brown.

# Questions

1. How long do adult wolves usually grow? Tick one.

- ☐ around 1.5m long
- ☐ around 2.2m long
- ☐ around 5m long
- ☐ around 7.9m long

2. **They are pack hunters...**

What does this phrase mean? Tick one.

- ☐ They hunt every day.
- ☐ They hunt together.
- ☐ They hunt using eyesight only.
- ☐ They hunt large, hoofed animals.

3. List **two** continents on which a wolf can be found in the wild.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

4. Look at the section called **Family**.

Find and copy **two** words that can be used to refer to young wolves.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

5. Fill in the missing words.

The wolf has the Latin name '\_\_\_\_\_ '.

6. What information about wolves do you feel is missing from the text? Explain your answer and give a suitable sub-heading for this new section.

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7. Summarise what you have learnt about wolf packs using 15 words or fewer.

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8. Comment on how a wolf's fur is different in summer than it is in winter.

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# Answers

1. How long do adult wolves usually grow? Tick one.

- ☒ **around 1.5m long**
- ☐ around 2.2m long
- ☐ around 5m long
- ☐ around 7.9m long

2. **They are pack hunters...**

What does this phrase mean? Tick one.

- ☐ They hunt every day.
- ☒ **They hunt together.**
- ☐ They hunt using eyesight only.
- ☐ They hunt large, hoofed animals.

3. List **two** continents on which a wolf can be found in the wild.

**Accept any two of the following: Europe; Asia; North America.**

4. Look at the section called **Family**.

Find and copy **two** words that can be used to refer to young wolves.

- **pups**
- **whelps**

5. Fill in the missing words.

The wolf has the Latin name '**Canis lupus**'.

6. What information about wolves do you feel is missing from the text? Explain your answer and give a suitable sub-heading for this new section.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I would like to know more about how wolves are similar to the dogs that live in our homes today. I would call this section 'Wolves vs Dogs'.**

7. Summarise what you have learnt about wolf packs using 15 words or fewer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: Wolves live in packs of six to ten family members. Packs are led by parents.**

8. Comment on how a wolf's fur is different in summer than it is in winter.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: A wolf's fur is different in summer than it is in winter because they can shed their undercoat as daylight hours increase.**