



# GRAY WOLF

*Canis lupus*



The gray wolf is the largest species of wild dog. Both light and dark color phases exist in this species. The gray wolf can be distinguished from the coyote by its larger size and its wider muzzle. The gray wolf typically lives in packs of five to nine individuals. In each pack there is a dominant male and a dominant female, known as the alpha male and female. They are the only members of the pack that engage in reproduction. There is a strong dominance hierarchy within each pack. The pack hunts together, protects its territory, and raises the young.



## SPECIES QUICK FACTS

### SIZE

Gray wolves are significantly larger than coyotes. They average between four and five feet in length and about three feet in height.

### WEIGHT

Adult gray wolves can weigh anywhere between 55 and 150 pounds. They vary in size based on geographic location.

### FOOD HABITS

Gray wolves are carnivores that tend to hunt in packs for large mammals such as deer, elk, caribou, and moose. Individuals will also hunt for smaller mammals such as rabbits and squirrels.

### HABITAT

Gray wolves are usually found in deciduous and coniferous forests. They are also found on grasslands and Arctic tundra.

### GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

The gray wolf is found in the northern regions of North America, mostly in Canada and Alaska. There are several populations of gray wolves in the United States in Michigan, Minnesota, and the northern Rocky Mountains. They are also found in Mexico, where they are scarce, and in northern Eurasia.

### FUN FACT

Gray wolves can be found in packs that contain as many as 35 members.