

About Wolves

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The Gray Wolf

(*Canis lupus*; also spelled Grey Wolf, see spelling differences; also known as Timber Wolf or Wolf)

is a mammal in the order Carnivora.

The Gray Wolf shares a common ancestry with the domestic dog (*Canis lupus familiaris*), as evidenced by DNA sequencing and genetic drift studies. Gray wolves were once abundant and distributed over much of North America, Eurasia, and the Middle East.

Today, for a variety of human-related reasons including widespread habitat destruction and excessive hunting, wolves inhabit only a very limited portion of their former range. Though listed as a species of least concern for extinction worldwide, for some regions including the Continental United States, the species is listed as endangered or threatened.

The Gray Wolf, being a keystone predator, is an integral component of the ecosystems to which it typically belongs. The wide range of habitats in which wolves can thrive reflects their adaptability as a species, and includes temperate forests, mountains, tundra, taiga, and grasslands. In much of the world, with the exception of Northern regions, they are listed as endangered. They continue to be hunted in many areas of the world as perceived threats to livestock and humans, as well as for sport.

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