

# Subspecies of the wolf

Contributed by All data on this page was taken from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wolf>  
Sunday, 25 February 2007  
Last Updated Sunday, 20 May 2007

It was once believed there were up to 50 subspecies. However, the last decade has seen a new and widely accepted list that has been condensed to 13 living subspecies, 15 including the common dog and dingo, and 2 recently extinct subspecies. This takes into account the anatomy, distribution, and migration of various wolf colonies.

Subspecies  
Classification  
Status  
Historic Range

Arabian Wolf  
*Canis lupus Arabs*  
Critically endangered, declining  
Israel, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman

A  
very small subspecies. Typically blended brown or completely brown with a thin coat. Hunted regularly as a nuisance animal, though rarely encountered.

Arctic Wolf  
*Canis lupus arctos*  
Stable  
Canadian Arctic, Greenland

An  
average-sized subspecies. Almost exclusively white or creamy white with a thick coat. Hunted legally, though rarely encountered.

Caspian Sea Wolf  
*Canis lupus cubanensis*  
Endangered, declining  
Between the Caspian and Black seas

A smaller subspecies. Hunted as a nuisance animal.

Dingo  
*Canis lupus dingo*  
Vulnerable

(pure breed)  
Australia & southeast Asia

Hunted as a nuisance animal. Pure breed declining from interbreeding with the Domestic Dog.

Domestic Dog  
Canis lupus familiaris  
Stable  
Worldwide

Typically,  
a smaller subspecies, with 20% smaller brains, more feeble immune system, and poorer sense of smell. Maintained as pets, although some small feral populations do exist. Raised for their meat in some parts of the world.

Eastern Timber Wolf  
Canis lupus lycaon  
At risk  
Southeastern Canada, Eastern United States

A  
larger subspecies. Full canine color spectrum represented, though blended pelages predominate. First subspecies to be recognized in North America. Hunted legally in parts of Canada.

Egyptian Wolf  
Canis lupus lupaster  
Critically endangered, unknown  
Far Northern Africa

A smaller subspecies. Usually a grizzled or tinged gray or brown. Lanky. Very rarely encountered.

Eurasian Wolf  
Canis lupus lupus  
Stable  
Western Europe, Scandinavia, Russia, China, Mongolia, Himalaya Mountains

An  
average-sized subspecies. Generally short, blended gray fur. Largest range among wolf subspecies. Most common wolf subspecies in Europe and Asia. Population roughly 100,000. Hunted legally in some places, protected in others.

Great Plains Wolf  
Canis lupus nubilus  
Stable  
Southern  
Rocky Mountains, Midwestern United States, Eastern and Northeastern Canada, far Southwestern Canada, and Southeastern Alaska

An  
average-sized subspecies. Usually gray, black, buff, or reddish. The most common subspecies in the contiguous U.S. Hunted legally in parts of Canada.

Hokkaido Wolf  
Canis lupus hattai  
Extinct  
Japanese island of Hokkaido

A smaller subspecies. Became extinct in 1889 as a result of poisoning campaigns.

Honshu Wolf  
Canis lupus hodophilax  
Extinct  
Japanese islands of Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu

A very small subspecies. Became extinct in 1905 from a combination of rabies and human eradication efforts.

Indian Wolf  
Canis lupus pallipes  
Endangered, declining  
Israel, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India

A very small subspecies. Typically tawny, buff, or reddish with a very short, dense coat. Hunted as a nuisance animal.

Italian Wolf  
Canis lupus italicus  
Endangered  
Italian peninsula

An average-sized subspecies. Full canine color spectrum represented. Occupy comparatively smaller territories. Protected.

Mackenzie Valley Wolf  
Canis lupus occidentalis  
Stable  
Alaska, Northern Rockies, Western and Central Canada

A  
very large subspecies. Usually black or a blended gray or brown, but full color spectrum represented. This subspecies was reintroduced to Yellowstone National Park and Idaho starting in 1995. Hunted legally in Alaska and parts of Canada. Protected in the contiguous states.

Mexican Wolf  
Canis lupus baileyi  
Critically endangered  
Central Mexico, Western Texas, Southern New Mexico and Arizona

A  
smaller subspecies. Usually tawny brown or rusty in color. Reintroduced to Arizona starting in 1998. Current wild population 35-50. Current captive population 300. Protected.

Russian Wolf  
Canis lupus communis  
Stable, declining  
Central Russia

A very large subspecies. Hunted legally.

Tundra Wolf  
Canis lupus albus  
Stable  
Northern Russia, Siberia

A larger subspecies. Typically creamy white or gray, though full spectrum is represented. Hunted legally.

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