



Wolves in the Northwest Territories (NWT)

Wolves (Canis lupus) are a member of the Canidae (dog) family and look like a large husky dog. Adult males average about 40 - 50 kilograms while females are smaller, at about 35 - 40 kg.

Three different groups of wolves are found on most of their traditional range. Timber wolves live below the treeline or in the mountains, depend mostly on non-migratory prey like moose and bison and maintain regular territories. Arctic wolves live on the arctic islands, and prey mostly on caribou, muskox and arctic hare.

Tundra or caribou wolves travel above and below the treeline on the mainland of the NWT, depend largely on barren-ground caribou and do not maintain regular territories during the winter.

Wolf conflicts with humans are rare. Wolves are generally extremely wary of humans and not aggressive toward them by nature.

Though curious, wolves generally fear people and rarely pose a threat to human safety. However, there have been some cases of human injuries and a few deaths due to wolves in North America during the last 100 years. The main contributing factors were habituation to people, conditioning to human foods, rabies infections and the presence of domestic dogs.

To Prevent Conflicts with Wolves:

- Respect wolves for the large wild animal they are and for their ability to kill prey ten times their size.
- Resist the temptation to approach wolves or entice them to come towards you; do not let them get close to you.
- Do not feed wolves or leave food outdoors, including pet food.
- Do not approach fresh wolf kills, dens or rendezvous sites.
- Do everything you can to avoid teaching wolves to be comfortable around or lose their fear of people.
- Report wolves that seem comfortable around people, seek human food or frequent human areas to your local ENR office.



Early intervention keeps a problem from getting worse and could even prevent a human injury!

Wolf Encounters with Dogs:

Wolves can be aggressive toward domestic dogs. A wolf sees a dog as a “trespassing wolf” that should be driven away or killed. Wolves can be aggressive towards dogs at any time, but especially leading up to and during the breeding season (December – February) and the denning period (April - May), or if wolf pups are nearby.

If you encounter a wolf and your dog is present, bring your dog to heel at your side as soon as possible. Standing between your dog and the wolf usually ends an encounter. Do not try and break up a physical fight between the wolf and your dog to avoid any risk of injury to yourself.

If You Encounter a Wolf:

- Raise your arms to make yourself appear as large as possible.
- Act aggressively towards it – make noise and throw objects.
- Do not turn your back on the wolf and do not run.
- If the wolf does not run away immediately, continue making yourself large, maintaining eye contact, and backing away.
- Calmly, but slowly back away and maintain eye contact.

If you observe wolves in your community, please notify your nearest Environment and Natural Resources Office:

North Slave Regional Office: (867) 767-9238 ext. 53247

Fort Smith Regional Office: (867) 872-0400

Hay River Regional Office: (867) 875-7640

Deh Cho Regional Office: (867) 695-7450

Sahtu Regional Office: Wildlife Emergency Line (867) 587-2422

Inuvik Regional Office: (867) 678-0289

To report someone intentionally feeding wildlife, call the Report-A-Poacher hotline at: 1.866.762.2437.