



Mexican Gray Wolf

(*Canis lupus baileyi*)

Order: Carnivora **Family:** Canidae

SIZE: Weight, 68-80 lbs.; about 5 ½ total length, (about the size of an adult German shepherd). Males are larger than females.

DESCRIPTION: An impressive head with a short, thick muzzle. Tail is generally dark at the tip. Raises its mane, or hackles, when assuming a threat posture. Has a richly colored coat of buff, gray, rust, and black.

SENSES: Acute hearing and sight. Keen sense of smell for finding food, defense, as well as to communicate with one another.

COMMUNICATION: Vocalizations include barks, howls, growls, whines and whimpers. Howls are used to assemble pack members and advertise territory. Wolves have individual, distinctive howls. Territories are defined with scent marks placed on trees, rocks and bushes along trails and by body postures and vocalizations.

LOCOMOTION: Long and powerful legs make it well adapted for running long distances. Able to cover hundreds of miles in a few days when hunting. Usually obtain their prey by quick and open chase.

HABITS: Habitat includes chaparral desert scrub, grassland valleys, and wooded areas. Will travel through desert areas but will not remain there. In populated areas they may hunt at night, elsewhere by day. A Mexican wolf pack usually consists of 3-8 individuals. They have a complex social hierarchy, with a top (alpha) male

and female, who are mainly responsible for maintaining territorial boundaries, keeping the peace among pack members, and initiating the movements of the pack. These two may also be the only pair to breed in the pack. Below the alpha pair in status are the remaining pack members, usually arranged in two linear hierarchies.

DIET: Includes deer, elk, pronghorn, rabbits, rodents, javelina and occasionally livestock.

RANGE: It was exterminated from the Southwest in the mid 1900's. The historic range was throughout western Texas, southern New Mexico, central Arizona and northern Mexico.

Re-introduction plans provide hope for the survival of Mexican Gray Wolves in the future.

FAMILY LIFE: The alpha pair will mate only once a year. Wolves have a litter of 4-8 pups, usually giving birth in April or May. While the female is nursing the pups for 6-8 weeks, the male provides her with food, other pack members will also assist in raising the young. Pups begin learning to hunt at 3 months by following their parents. Juveniles may stay with their parents for 1-2 years.

DID YOU KNOW THAT...?

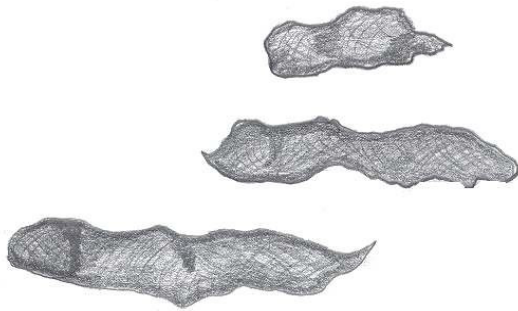
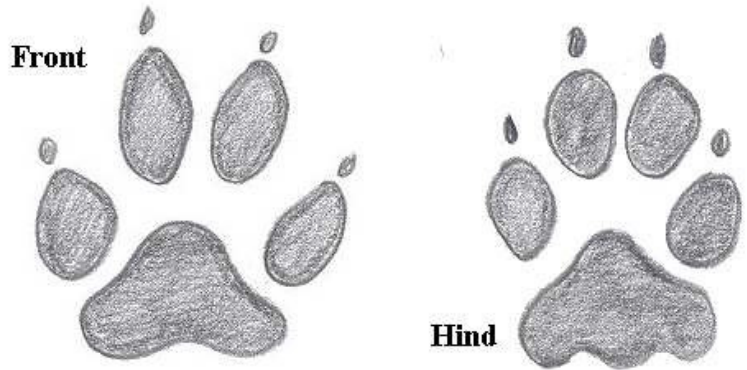
- Once a pair bond forms between a male and female, the union usually lasts for life or until one dies.
- They play an important role in the ecosystem that is not filled by other predators.
- While wolves have no natural predators, man is their primary enemy.
- In 1976 the Mexican wolf was listed as an endangered species under the Endangered Species Act.
- Mexican wolves were common throughout western Texas, southern New Mexico, central Arizona and northern Mexico from prehistoric times until the turn of the century. In the early 1900's over hunting of elk and deer by man resulted in many wolves preying on livestock. This led to intense efforts to eradicate wolves. They were shot, trapped, and poisoned by private individuals and government agencies, (Wildlife Services, formally Animal Damage Control). By the mid 1900's Mexican wolves had been eliminated from the United States.
- They have evolved as predators of large hoofed mammals like deer and elk. They are adept at identifying the sick, injured, old and young animals that are easier to kill. This helps to keep the prey population healthy and strong. They are cooperative hunters, which enables them to bring down preys larger than themselves.
- The Mexican wolf (*Canis lupus baileyi*), is the most distinct subspecies of North American gray wolves and may be a relic form remaining from an early invasion of wolf-like canids that had crossed into North America over the Bearing Land bridge from the old world.
(Dr. Robert Wayne U.C.L.A.)
- Under a joint agreement between the United States and Mexico, five Mexican wolves were captured in Durango and Chihuahua (Mexico) between 1977 and 1980. These wolves established a captive breeding population that is now managed for the Service by the American Zoo and Aquarium Association in 40 zoos and wildlife sanctuaries in the U.S. and Mexico. In 1995 two additional lineages of captive

Mexican wolves, both maintained in captivity since the 1960's, were added to the breeding program after DNA tests confirmed them to be pure Mexican wolves.

Track

Front Foot is about
4 3/4 inches long.

Hind foot is about
4 1/4 inches long.



Scat

About 6 1/4 inches long

Range

Historic range was throughout western
Texas, southern New Mexico, central
Arizona and northern Mexico.

