Montana Gray Wolf Program

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/management/wolf

LIVING WITH WOLVES:

a guide to living and recreating in wolf country

Gray wolves primarily live in habitat that supports deer and elk. As a result, wolves sometimes use areas that are in close proximity to humans, particularly in and around deer and elk habitat in rural areas. Wolves can be legally killed if seen attacking dogs, chasing or attacking livestock, or to protect human life. For those living and recreating in wolf country, here are some tips on how to decrease the potential for conflicts.

HUMAN SAFETY

Wolf attacks on people are very rare. Most wolves fear people and will run when encountered. However, wolves are visual learners and some may stop and stare. All wildlife can be dangerous and should be given distance and treated with caution. There have been a small number of documented wolf attacks on people in North America and contributing factors were most often related to habituation to people and/or conditioning to human foods. In areas where people live near wolf habitat it is especially important to follow these steps to discourage habituation:

AT HOME

- Do not feed wolves or leave food outdoors, including pet food.
- Do not feed deer, turkeys, or other wildlife that may attract wolves or other predators like lions and bears.
- If wolves are seen close to people or human-inhabited areas, scare them away by making loud noises.
- Report wolves that seem comfortable around people, seek human food, or frequent human-inhabited areas to FWP (see contact info on back of handout).

Hikers, campers, and hunters are more likely to come upon areas of wolf activity such as a kill site, denning area, or resting site. After detecting a person's presence, some wolves may lope off quietly, others may bark or howl, or some may cautiously approach to get a better look. Hearing wolves barking and howling all around can be loud and startling. However, encountering wolves at close range is seldom a reason for alarm (unless you have a dog; see dog section on back) especially if you know what to expect. Once wolves have identified the disturbance, they generally leave the area. Vocalizing could go on for awhile as wolves regroup out of sight and pull back from the situation. If a wolf is killed, other wolves generally move off but may return to the site later. Here are some tips on what to do and how to avoid close encounters.

IN THE FIELD

- Avoid areas of wolf activity including fresh wolf kills and denning areas. Do not approach wolves.
- In the event of a close encounter, be calm and slowly leave the area. If approached, stand tall and make noise.
- Hunters: hang game meat out of reach. Wolves may feed on gut piles and carcasses left out overnight but will usually move off upon your return.
- Always carry pepper spray for any potential close encounter with wildlife.

DOGS

Wolves are very territorial and see dogs as competition. As a result, wolves are attracted to and will often try to kill domestic dogs. Traveling with a dog may therefore increase your chances of encountering a wolf. Dogs may even draw wolves into areas of human activity. Keep dogs inside or in protected areas, especially overnight and at dawn and dusk when wolves are most active. Keep dogs on leash or under voice command when walking in areas where wolves may be present. If an encounter occurs, bring your dog to heel at your side as soon as possible. Standing between your dog and the wolf usually ends an encounter. To avoid any risk of injury to yourself, do not try to break up a physical fight between a wolf and your dog.

LIVESTOCK

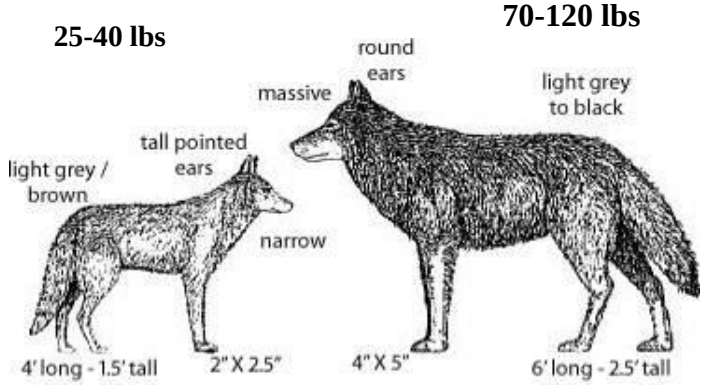
Wolves sometimes kill livestock. Livestock owners are encouraged to contact FWP to report wolf presence and for assistance. Fencing options or other deterrents may be helpful in certain situations. In the event of dead or injured livestock, call USDA Wildlife Services (WS) for an investigation. If a wolf depredation is confirmed, WS is often authorized to remove offending wolves immediately on site. FWP will work closely with the livestock owner and WS to find the best solution to prevent further losses.

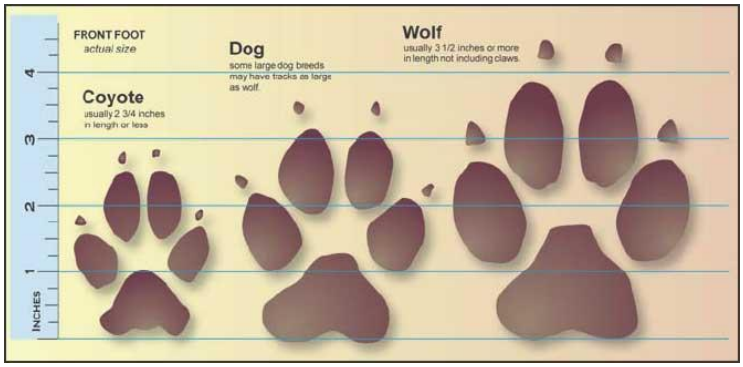
COYOTE

25-40 lbs

WOLF

70-120 lbs





WHO DO I CONTACT?

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

To get information about wolves and wolf management & to report wolf sightings

- Kent Laudon—Wolf Management Specialist, Kalispell, 406-250-5047 klaudon@mt.gov
- Liz Bradley—Wolf Management Specialist, Missoula, 406-865-0017 lbradley@mt.gov
- Nathan Lance—Wolf Management Specialist, Butte, 406-425-3355 nlance@mt.gov
- Mike Ross—Wolf Management Specialist, Bozeman, 406-581-3664 mikeross@mt.gov
- Abby Nelson—Wolf Management Specialist, Livingston, 406-600-5150 abnelson@mt.gov
- Ty Smucker---Wolf Management Specialist, Great Falls, 406-454-5868 tsmucker@mt.gov

To report a dead wolf or possible illegal activity

- 1-800-TIP-MONT or contact your nearest game warden

http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/management/wolf/

- **Annual, weekly, and flight reports**
- **Report wolves and wolf sign**
- **Learn more about wolf management**

USDA Wildlife Services:

To request investigations of dead or injured livestock

- Kraig Glazier—Western District Supervisor, Helena, 406-458-0106
  Kraig.L.Glazier@aphis.usda.gov
- Mike Foster—Eastern District Supervisor, Billings, 406-657-6464
  Mike.Foster@aphis.usda.gov