



WOLVES

OF MONTANA



What is the advantage of a large wolf pack?

Wolves are territorial animals, which means they defend their home areas from other wolf packs to protect their resources, like food and den sites. Large packs are better able to defend their territory than small packs.

Wolves often hunt in packs and larger packs are able to take down larger prey animals, like moose or bison. Large packs can better provide food for pups compared to small packs. All the wolves in a pack help feed pups by killing prey and carrying scraps back to the pups.

Why would each pack want its own territory?

Wolves defend their territory to protect their resources, like food, mates, and shelter. By defending a territory, a pack makes sure they will have resources to survive. Wolves defend their territory and communicate with each other through howling, scent marking (leaving wolf messages through scat and urine) in key places like territory edges, and sometimes fighting.

Can you create a food web for a wolf?

Wolves are carnivores (meat eaters) that eat ungulates (hoofed animals) like deer, elk, moose, and bison. They will also sometimes eat fish, berries, snowshoe hares, and other small mammals. Many other animals like fox, bobcats, bears, ravens, eagles, skunks, and shrews, also feed on wolf kills.

Why would biologists want to know how old a wolf is?

Biologists keep track of individual wolves in some areas to decide the total number of wolves across a larger area – like Montana. This total number of wolves helps people make decisions on how to manage wolves (through hunting, for example), while making sure enough wolves will remain on the landscape.

Knowing the age of a captured wolf helps biologists tell if a wolf is an adult that has had puppies, a sub-adult (like a teenager), or a pup. Adults with puppies, called “breeding” adults, will usually stay in the area where they were captured. Young wolves will usually leave the territory where they were born so they can find a mate and mark their own territories.