

Gray wolves (*Canis lupus*) are large canines that vary in color from white-gray to brown, black, cream, tawny and white. As adults, they generally weigh 70 to 120 pounds, with females averaging 75 pounds. Wolf packs are complex social structures, usually consisting of a breeding pair and their offspring from one or more years. Wolves are native to Oregon, but were extirpated in the early 1900s. The wolves in Oregon now are descendants of wolves from Canada that immigrated into Montana in the 1980s, and that were reintroduced in Idaho and Wyoming in the mid-1990s. Wolves are more common in the forests of northeastern Oregon, though they are expanding west.

WHY ARE WOLVES IMPORTANT?

Wolves are a keystone species. This means their presence influences many other species. Gray wolves prey on a variety of animals. A large amount of their diet comes from ungulates such as elk and deer, and occasionally other smaller species. Though proposed for delisting throughout Oregon, gray wolves found west of Highways 395, 78 and 95 in Oregon are listed as endangered under the Federal Endangered Species Act. Wolf packs known to occur within federally protected areas include the White River Pack and Rogue Pack in the Cascades, and they are expanding quickly into other areas. Wolves in Oregon are also protected by the Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan and Oregon statute. They are also an Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation Strategy Species.

WHAT ABOUT WOLVES AND FORESTRY?

In general, wolves are compatible with most contemporary forest management activities. Forestry operations that enhance habitat for elk and deer are beneficial to wolves. Wolves are highly mobile, and regularly move throughout their home range. They are sensitive to forest management during denning season, when pups are not yet mobile (April - June). Forest management activities that benefit wolves include:

- Maintaining forests as forests
- Protecting meadows and forest openings that wolves may use during breeding season
- Maintaining forests for use by ungulate species
- Minimizing forest activities near active den and rendezvous sites during the breeding season
- Reporting wolf sign or sightings to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW)

WHAT ARE SOME THREATS TO WOLVES?

- **Habitat loss:** Forest conversion to urban landscapes and major highways reduces and fragments wolf habitat.
- **Illegal killing:** It is illegal to hunt wolves in Oregon. Report any suspected illegal taking of wolves to the Oregon State Police (OSP) at 800-452-7888.
- **Conflict with livestock:** Wolves can be lethally removed for chronic livestock depredation. Producers can implement measures to reduce the vulnerability of their livestock grazed on large forest pastures.
- **Introduced diseases:** Parvovirus is a disease that poses risk to wolves. Wolf pups are particularly susceptible.



Rogue Pack OR7 male. Photo by USFWS.



Rogue Pack pups in downed wood. Photo by USFWS.



Rogue Pack pups on logging road. Photo by USFWS.

WHAT DO I DO IF I SEE A WOLF?

Wolves are likely to flee if encountered by humans. However, if you see a wolf, do the following:

- Remain calm. Use a loud and firm voice to encourage the wolf to leave.
- Move away calmly and slowly, facing the animal.
- Allow the wolf a way to escape.
- Do not try to feed or catch a wolf.
- Pick up small children, while maintaining eye contact.
- Leash and keep pets close.
- If the wolf does approach, raise your arms above your head and look as big as possible. Shout and throw any available objects, picking them up while maintaining eye contact.
- Report all wolf sightings and encounters to ODFW.

HOW DO I IDENTIFY WOLF TRACKS?

Wolf tracks can be difficult to identify because they can be confused with other species such as coyote, domestic dog or mountain lion. The photo below (from ODFW) shows a wolf print. Note the size: more than 4 inches long. Tips for identifying wolf prints include:

- Claws evident
- General oval shape
- Track is longer than wide
- Four symmetrical toes
- Single lobe on the front of the main foot pad

For more information on track identification:

https://dfw.state.or.us/Wolves/docs/Wolf_track_identification.pdf.



Silver Lake wolves in open canopy. Photo by USFWS.



Walla Walla wolf in front of log pile. Photo by ODFW.

SOURCES & MORE INFORMATION

www.odfw.com/wolves

- Oregon distribution
- Gray wolf ID quiz
- Report wolf sightings
- Wolf and track photos

<https://www.wolf.org>

KnowYourForest.org

For more information, contact your local ODFW biologist. Phone numbers can be found at www.odfw.com/agency.



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