**The Gray Wolf**



Brandon Hill

**Size and Life Span**

****

* **Largest wild dog species**
* **Males are usually larger than female**
  + **50 - 176 pounds**
  + **34 inches to 51 inches**
* **May live 13 years in the wild**
  + **Average is 5-6 years**
* **May live to be 15 years old in captivity**

**Coat**

** **

* **Depends on where they live**
* **White in the Arctic’s to white and gray, brown, cinnamon and black**
* **Their upper parts are usually darker and lighter on their bellies**
* **Their tail is tipped with black**
* **They have a thick under fur layer that acts like insulation**
  + **Like a winter coat**

**Habitat**

****

* **Wide variety of habitats**
  + **Arctic tundra to forest, prairie, and arid landscapes**

****

**-**

**Having a family**

****

****

* **Females choose their mate and form a lifelong bond**
* **The female digs a den to have a raise the puppies in**
  + **Can have between 5 – 14 pups**
    - **Usually only has 7**

**Behavior**

* **Wolves are very social**
* **They live in packs**
  + **Packs = 2 – 36 wolves**
    - **The size of the pack depends on habitat and the amount of food.**
    - **Territory of a pack ranges from 130 – 13,000 square kilometers and is protected against intruders**
  + **Most packs are made of 5 – 9 wolves**
    - **The alpha male and female and their kids**

****

* **Very dominant** 
  + **Have ranks or positions in their packs**
    - **1. Alpha male, 2. Alpha female,**
  + **A wolf’s rank in its pack determines which mate and which eat first.**

**Communication**

* **By body language and facial expressions**
  + **Crouching, chin touching, rolling over to show their stomach**

****

* **Vocalizations**
  + **Howling** 
    - **Where they are**
    - **When they should meet for pack hunts**
    - **Tell other packs where the boundaries of their territories are**



* **Scent marking**
  + **Done by the alpha male**
    - **To communicate with other packs**

**Prey**

* **Wolves are carnivores.**
* **They hunt on their own, in packs, steal the prey of other predators, or scavenge carrion.**
* **They find their prey by chance or scent.**
* **What they eat depends on where they live and what is available to them.**
* **They hunt in packs for large prey**
  + **Moose, elk, bison, musk oxen, and reindeer**
* **They hunt alone for smaller prey**
  + **Beavers, rabbits, and other smaller mammals**

****

* **Usually eat entire carcass**
* **Wolves may eat livestock and garbage when it is available.**

****

**Being the prey**

* **Few animals prey on gray wolves**
  + **They are top predators**
* **Wolves and coyotes are highly territorial. Wolves from other packs and coyotes will attack wolves that are alone or young. They will kill the pups if they find them.**

****

**Humans are wolves’ greatest enemy**

**Endangered**

* **U.S. Federal list**
  + **Endangered**
* **State of Michigan List**
  + **Threatened**
* **By the early part of this century man had almost wiped the wolf from the lower 48 states**
  + **About 2,600 exist now**
    - **2,000 in Minnesota**
* **The main cause of the decline in wolf numbers has been habitat destruction and humans killing them.**
* **Successful plans to rebuild the numbers has increase population**
  + **Alaska: 6,000-8,000**
  + **Canada: about 50,000**

**Classification**

**Kingdom: Animalia**

**Phylum: Chordate**

**Class: Mammalia**

**Order: Carnivora**

**Family: Canidae**

**Genus Species: Canis lupus**