



The Mini Page

Betty Debnam, Founding Editor and Editor at Large



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From the Edge of Extinction

Return of the Wolf

Gray wolves once ranged throughout North America, from the Canadian Arctic through Mexico. But by the 1970s, humans had wiped out nearly all of them in the continental United States.

In 1974, people set about fixing their mistakes. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed the gray wolf as an endangered species. It set aside three areas, including Yellowstone National Park, as safe places where the wolves could recover.

In the mid-1990s, wolves were brought in from Canada to help repopulate the Yellowstone area.

It worked. In 2011, the gray wolf was taken off the endangered species list throughout the northern Rocky Mountain area.

In order to learn more about this important animal and its comeback, The Mini Page talked with an expert from the International Wolf Center.



photo by Gary Kramer, courtesy USFWS

Adult male gray wolves weigh from 70 to 130 pounds. Females weigh 50 to 85 pounds. Wolves stretch 4 to 6 feet long from their nose to the tip of their tail.



photo by Hilary Cooley, courtesy USFWS

A wolf pup peeks out from its den. Litters may include one to 12 pups.

In a small pack, the parents do all the hunting. But in a larger pack, aunts, uncles and older brothers and sisters might help out with hunting and baby-sitting.

Wolf packs

Wolves are social animals, and most live in family groups called **packs**. The parents are the leaders of the pack, which includes their pups and maybe some aunts and uncles.

People used to believe that the leaders of the pack were the strongest or smartest fighters. These were called the **alpha male** and the **alpha female**.

However, scientists got that idea from watching wolves in captivity. Animals act differently in the wild than when they are in strange, scary places. In captivity, the wolves were separated from their families and fought strange wolves for territory. But in the wild, pack members rarely fight with one another.

Pups

Wolves may leave the pack between the ages of 1 and 3. When it is ready, a wolf may go off alone, looking for a mate that has left its own pack. If they find mates, wolves form their own family packs.



photo courtesy USFWS

A male wolf may howl around the edges of a different pack, hoping to attract one of its females to run away with him.

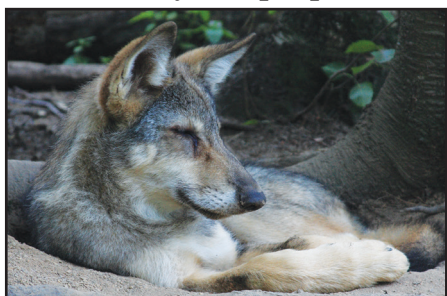
Treating Wildlife With Respect

Wanting to be left alone

In stories such as “Little Red Riding Hood” and “Frozen,” wolves often seem scary and as if they might attack humans. But these tales don’t show how wolves really act. People don’t need to fear healthy wild wolves if we act respectfully and leave them alone.

Most wild wolves will do anything they can to avoid people. They don’t want anything to do with humans.

In the last 100 years, there have been only about 20 wolf attacks on people, experts say. All but two people recovered from those attacks. In comparison, cows kill an average of 22 people a year in the United States, experts say. Animals such as deer and elk also may kill people.



Wolf jaws are four times more powerful than human jaws.

photo by Ann Rasberry, courtesy NPS

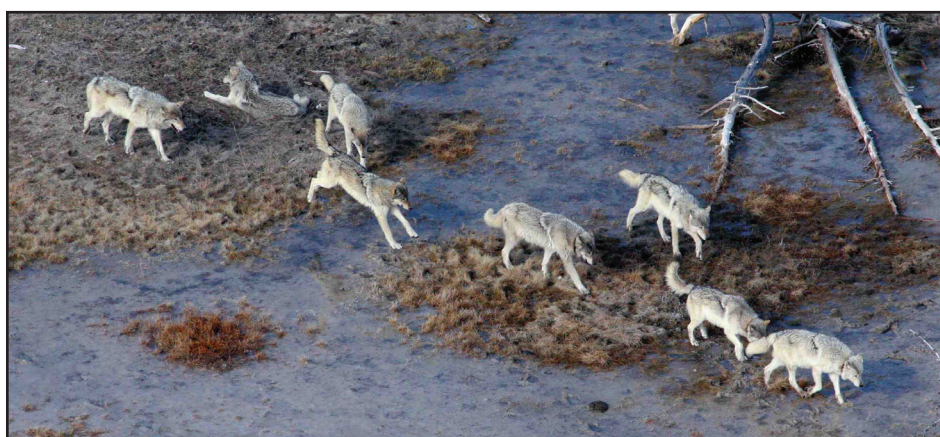


photo courtesy NPS

Each pack has its own territory. They mark the boundaries with urine and scat, or waste droppings. They sometimes howl to warn off other wolves.

Wild animals are not tame

When wolves do harm people, it is usually because people have been feeding them. Every one of the past attacks was by a wolf that had gotten used to being around people. For example, six of those attacks were by wolves that set upon Alaskan oil pipeline workers who’d been feeding the wolves their lunch.

Never feed any wild predators, such as bears or wolves. When people feed wild animals, they lose their natural fear of humans. This is when they can become dangerous.

Outside the park

Conflicts may arise between ranchers or farmers and wolves. Wolves do sometimes kill livestock or pets when wolves roam outside their protected areas. Many states allow people to hunt wolves outside of parks.

When a wolf is killed, it can affect the whole pack. Without its leaders, a pack may break apart.

Many experts urge ranchers and farmers to protect their stock with llamas, dogs and donkeys, which won’t usually kill the wolves.

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Ready Resources

The Mini Page provides ideas for websites, books or other resources that will help you learn more about this week’s topics.

On the Web:

- wolf.org/learn/wild-kids
- nps.gov/yell/naturescience/wolves.htm

At the library:

- “Julie of the Wolves” and “Julie’s Wolf Pack” by Jean Craighead George
- “NOVA: Wild Wolves With David Attenborough,” DVD
- “National Geographic Kids Mission: Wolf Rescue: All About Wolves and How to Save Them” by Kitson Jazynka



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**Try
'n'
Find**

Wolves

W	G	H	E	N	O	T	S	W	O	L	L	E	Y	P
F	O	R	O	K	Y	R	O	T	I	R	R	E	T	R
A	W	L	A	W	L	I	T	T	E	R	L	E	M	E
M	D	I	F	Y	L	K	R	A	P	H	H	L	E	D
I	F	E	L	L	W	A	P	W	A	J	U	K	A	A
L	U	L	N	D	V	L	A	I	C	O	S	N	T	T
Y	R	D	E	R	E	G	N	A	D	N	E	M	T	O
K	K	C	A	P	M	E	T	S	Y	S	O	C	E	R
P	U	P	Y	T	I	S	R	E	V	I	D	O	I	B

Words that remind us of wolves are hidden in the block above. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally. See if you can find: BIODIVERSITY, DEN, ECOSYSTEM, ELK, ENDANGERED, FAMILY, FUR, GRAY, HOWL, HUNT, JAW, LITTER, MEAT, PACK, PARK, PAW, PREDATOR, PUP, SOCIAL, TERRITORY, WILD, WOLF, YELLOWSTONE.



Mini Spy

Mini Spy is wolf-watching in Yellowstone National Park. See if you can find:

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> goose | <input type="checkbox"/> heart | <input type="checkbox"/> cat | <input type="checkbox"/> bell |
| <input type="checkbox"/> bird | <input type="checkbox"/> snake | <input type="checkbox"/> whale | <input type="checkbox"/> dragon |
| <input type="checkbox"/> net | <input type="checkbox"/> tooth | <input type="checkbox"/> letter D | <input type="checkbox"/> carrot |
| <input type="checkbox"/> seal | <input type="checkbox"/> word MINI | | |



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Rookie Cookie's Recipe Gran-Banana Snack

You'll need:

- 1 large banana
- 1 tablespoon creamy peanut butter
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 1/4 cup granola cereal
- 2 tablespoons raisins or cranberry raisins

What to do:

1. Peel and quarter banana by cutting lengthwise and across.
2. Mix peanut butter and honey with a fork to blend well. Spread mixture on banana sections.
3. Add raisins to granola cereal. Sprinkle on top of peanut butter and honey. Press gently with a fork to make the granola stick.

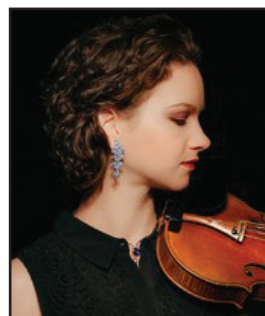
Serves 2.

You will need an adult's help with this recipe.

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Meet Hilary Hahn



© Michael Patrick O'Leary

Violinist Hilary Hahn won her third Grammy Award in February for her Deutsche Grammophon album "In 27 Pieces – The Hilary Hahn Encores." She shared the award with pianist Cory Smythe.

Hilary, 35, grew up in Baltimore, Maryland. When she was 3 years old, she began taking violin lessons in the Suzuki program. When she was 10, she entered a top music school in Philadelphia.

She writes a journal on her website. She also produces a YouTube channel, where she interviews guests from around the world. She posts pretend comments from her violin case about its life as her traveling companion. These are on Twitter and Instagram at @violincase.

Besides her many classical albums, Hilary has made two albums with an alternative rock band. She has toured with a folk-rock musician. She has also performed on movie soundtracks.

She enjoys reading, dancing, swimming, hiking, rowing and being outdoors.

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**Goldie
Goodsport's
Supersport**



**Height: 6-3
Age: 18
Hometown:
Port Wing,
Wisconsin**

Megan Gustafson

Megan Gustafson is good at getting buckets on the basketball court. In fact, no one has ever scored more points in Wisconsin girls high school basketball than Megan. A senior for the South Shore High School Cardinals, Megan broke an 11-year-old scoring record on Feb. 23 — a record previously held by a former South Shore player.

A forward, Megan entered the historic game against Chequamegon with 2,871 career points and trailed the record by just 10. Megan got off to a fast start, racking up 29 of her team's 33 first-half points en route to an 81-45 victory. She finished the game with 46 points, and became the state's leading scorer (38.8 points per game) and rebounder (19.1 rebounds per game).

Basketball is in the blood for Megan, who is headed to the University of Iowa in the fall. Her older sister, Emily, is currently a sophomore player at Upper Iowa University.



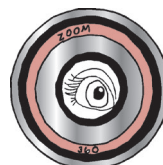
**Mighty
Funny's**

Mini Jokes

All the following jokes have something in common. Can you guess the common theme or category?

Cameron: What did the doctor say to the patient who had swallowed his camera?

Carrie: "Let's just see what develops!"

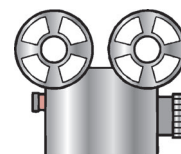


Chester: What is the best way to borrow a camera?

Cory: Someone lens it to you!

Charles: What do an old movie theater and an old camera have in common?

Cynthia: Film!



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Wolf World



photo courtesy NPS

A black-colored wolf pup and a gray-and-red-colored wolf pup play together. Gray wolf siblings may be different colors.

A wolf of a different color

Two species, or types, of wolves roam the world. When people think of wolves, they usually picture the gray wolf, also known as the timber wolf. Today the red wolf lives only in North Carolina and is endangered.

The gray wolf is usually gray, but not always. It can also be black or white. In the northern Arctic, wolf fur is often white.



photo by Steve Jurvetson, USFWS

A gray wolf pair snuggles together.



photo courtesy NPS

Wolves chase down an elk in the midst of a snowstorm in Yellowstone National Park.

Wolves have thick fur to keep them warm in the winter. Their big paws and long legs help them travel in deep snow.

A balanced ecosystem

Wolves play an important part in the ecosystem. They prey on hoofed animals such as elk and deer. Large numbers of elk and deer can damage the vegetation. Most other predators have a hard time killing animals as big as elk. Without wolves, their numbers can grow too large for the ecosystem to support.

During the winter in Yellowstone, about 90 percent of a wolf's diet is elk. They eat more deer in the summer. A wolf may kill an average of 18 to 20 deer each year. They also eat smaller animals, such as beavers, according to Yellowstone experts.

Wolf kills benefit other animals as well. For example, ravens, magpies, foxes and coyotes eat the meat after wolves have eaten their fill. Bears may chase the wolves away and dine on the wolves' successful hunts.

Healthy habitats

A variety of plants and animals, or **biodiversity**, is healthier for an ecosystem. Ecosystems need large predators to keep everything in balance, experts say.

About the same time that the wolves returned to Yellowstone, bear numbers went up, and cougars came back as well, Yellowstone experts say. The return of the large predators into the Yellowstone Park area has made the whole ecosystem healthier.

Trees such as willows and aspens are recovering. There are more songbirds and beavers.

Before the wolves and other **carnivores**, or meat-eaters, returned to Yellowstone, there were so many elk that they were damaging the ecosystem.

Experts don't know exactly how much the return of the wolves has helped the vegetation recover. There are other influences as well. For example, climate change is affecting the growing season and snowmelt.

Next week, The Mini Page learns about autism.

Look through your newspaper for stories about wild animals.

The Mini Page thanks Tara Morrison, International Wolf Center, for help with this issue.

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