

The Gray wolf (*Canis lupus*)



The **Gray wolf** (*Canis lupus*) is an intelligent and resourceful predator found throughout Alberta's foothills, mountains and boreal forest. It is the largest member of the wild dog species (*Canis*) and can weigh up to **60+ kgs**. Typical prey includes moose, elk, deer, bison and smaller animals. They typically hunt at night as a pack, which can range from 2 - 20+ wolves. Populations in Alberta are considered stable.

Wolves and People

Myths and stories have been told throughout history about wolves. While some have been positive many have negatively portrayed wolves, often as a result of conflict with people. Livestock depredation is one such example. Normally, wolves are wary of people and will generally keep their distance and stay hidden. However, wolves that have been directly or indirectly fed by people (i.e. garbage, carcasses, etc.) and become food conditioned, or have learned to hunt livestock, are more likely to become problematic and pose livelihood and safety risks.

Be WolfSmart and adopt best management practices on your farm!

Reducing and preventing conflict between wolves, people and livestock can be achieved by being **WolfSmart**. Best management practices include:

- Removing and properly storing attractants such as dead carcasses, other food sources and garbage.
- Plan your breeding season, as the scent of birthing mothers and new born calves are strong attractants for wolves. Also remove afterbirth or still borns, and time castration and branding so calves can heal, thereby reducing smells, before they are released into pastures.
- Use defined storage areas at least 200m from calving or feeding areas to reduce hiding cover. Also, plan your pasture sites, avoiding areas of thick vegetation, creek beds, etc.
- Using pens, electric fencing, or guard dogs (e.g. Anatolians or Great Pyrenees) for livestock. Also increase the routine presence of people checking on livestock, at various hours.
- Using hazing or scaring devices, such as fladry, strobe lights, or sirens to scare wolves away or alert people. Fladry combined with electric fencing has been particularly effective—use a series of bright cloth flags (red or orange) tied at 18-inch intervals on fencing to deter wolves.

Some resources that may be helpful include:

<http://www.watertonbiosphere.com/projects/carnivores-communities/>

<http://www.ablamb.ca/images/documents/management-modules/Predation-Management.pdf>

<https://www.bcac.bc.ca/sites/bcac.localhost/files/WPLP%20Best%20Management%20Practices%20for%20Cattle.pdf>

<http://www.albertatrappers.com/>

Wolves can also be hunted or trapped in Alberta, subject to provincial regulations. Further information is available at MyWildAlberta.com

If a wolf approaches, growls or snarls:

- Show the wolf you are not easy prey—make yourself look bigger by waving your arms, and gather children or others close to form one large body.
- Always leave the wolf an escape route—never corner it.
- Back away slowly, looking for a safe place, and never turn your back.
- Carry and use **bear spray**. This is also advantageous for other species (i.e. bears, cougars).
- Make lots of noise and throw rocks, sticks or other objects if the wolf approaches.



Report wolf encounters by calling a local Fish and Wildlife at 310-000. After regular business hours use the Report A Poacher line at 1-800-642-3800.