



It's National Wolf Awareness Week October 20-26 – How Much Do You Know?

For immediate release – (October 21, 2024): WeHowl, a non-profit focused on protecting wolves, is celebrating the wild ancestors of dogs this **National Wolf Awareness Week** (Oct. 20-26). WeHowl is asking Canadians to learn more about wolves to help ensure they remain a part of our shared landscape for future generations.

“Wolves play an essential role in maintaining biodiversity and ecosystem health, and the opportunity to preserve wolves and functional predator-prey systems is declining around the world,” says Sadie Parr, founder of WeHowl. “This puts Canada in a unique position to preserve wolves as part of the natural fabric of our country”.

Although most wolves around the world are Grey Wolves, *Canis lupus*, Canada also has various types of wolves with unique genetics and behaviours, including Coastal Wolves in British Columbia and Eastern Wolves in Ontario and Quebec.

Coastal Wolves, also known as Sea Wolves, are a subspecies of the Grey Wolf which is unique to the Pacific Coast. These animals walk the shores of beaches as they follow tidal zones seeking food from the ocean.

Eastern Wolves, *Canis lycaon*, are a distinct species, uplisted in status from *Special Concern* to *Threatened* this past Juneⁱ by the *Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada*. They are one of the last remnant populations in North America.

How much of the following do you know about wolves?

- Wolves are highly sentient beings with strong family bonds.
- Wolves promote species biodiversity by providing year-round food resources to many scavenger species (birds, mammals, insects).
- Wolves promote plant diversity and growth by facilitating ungulate movement across the landscape.
- Where wolf populations are heavily hunted, there is often a corresponding decrease in the complexity of ecological processes and species diversity.
- Predators, and specifically wolves, are the first line of defence in maintaining healthy ungulate populations. Chronic Wasting Disease is a fatal nervous system disease which affects animals in the deer family. It was first documented in the United States and is spreading across the continent. Due to wolves' selective removal of sick and infected animals when they hunt, wolves likely help slow and reduce the spread of this dangerous prion, which also poses concerns for human safetyⁱⁱ.
- In most situations, there is only one breeding pair in each wolf family. They have pups once a year.
- When a wolf is killed, the entire family is affected; often packs will split and go separate ways.
- Many wolf biologists believe that maintaining stable family groups is as important to wolf conservation as ensuring that populations are self-sustaining.
- Killing wolves can lead to increased levels of conflict with people and livestock.
- The main threats to wolves in Canada include habitat loss, misguided government-sanctioned wolf-kill programs, and liberal hunting and trapping regulations which WeHowl declare as outdated.

“Preserving wolves goes hand in hand with preserving overall biodiversity and ecosystem health”, explains Parr. “Unlike many other parts of the world, Canada still has an opportunity to get this right”.

Anyone interested in helping to protect Canada’s wolves is encouraged to visit WeHowl.ca. You can show your support by wearing "Live and Let Live" WeHowl Apparel, available through wehowl.ca.

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ⁱ <https://canadagazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p2/2024/2024-07-03/html/sor-dors135-eng.html>

ⁱⁱ <https://calgary.ctvnews.ca/chronic-wasting-disease-research-shows-potential-for-human-infection-1.6070935>