

Wolf or Dog?

The wolf is the progenitor of all dog breeds and some of them resemble the wolf. Dogs inherited intelligence and social behaviour from wolves. In Saxony wolf evidences should be reported to the Kontaktbüro Wolfsregion Lausitz and in Brandenburg please report to the Environment Agency (Landesumweltamt). (For addresses please see the back)

WOLF (Canis lupus)

Characteristics

- ✓ grey-yellow to grey-brown fur, a dark area at shoulders and back
- ✓ long legs with large paws
- ✓ straight and bushy tail
- ✓ broad head with light coloured area around the muzzle
- ✓ triangular, rather small ears

Wolf Scat

- ✓ Wolves often leave their droppings on paths. It often contains hair and pieces of bones and is approximately 2.5 - 4 cm thick.

Paws/Tracks

- ✓ regular shaped, longish paws with blunt claws
- ✓ front paws large
8 - 10 cm long, 7 - 9 cm wide
- ✓ hind paws smaller
7 - 9 cm long, 6 - 8 cm wide
- ✓ typical way of walking is a steady jog trot
- ✓ the track is very straight and directed with few swerves



Summer coat



Winter coat



Droppings



Straight line trot: The wolf puts its hind paw in the imprint of the front paw.



Skewed trot: The wolf puts its hind paw in front of the front paw

Wolves on Both Sides of the Border

The survival of the small German-Polish wolf population is anything but certain. They need our protection!

The IFAW has therefore established a transboundary project. They closely collaborate with LUPUS Wildlife Consulting and Federal State Authorities on the German side, in Poland with "WOLF" Nature Conversation Association. On both sides of the border information on the wolves is being collected. Please support the monitoring by reporting evidence of wolves to the institutions below. The results help to develop and implement measurements to ensure a long-term survival of the wolves and a peaceful coexistence with human beings. For all questions and requests concerning the wolf, feel free to contact the Kontaktbüro Wolfsregion Lausitz. (For address see right)

Please report wolf sightings or signs to:
for Brandenburg:
Landesumweltamt Brandenburg
Naturschutzstation Zippelsförde
Rägelsdorf 9, 16827 Zippelsförde, Germany
Phone (+49) 339 33 / 708 16 oder 901 73
Fax (+49) 339 33 / 901 72

Landesumweltamt Brandenburg
RS7, von-Schön-Straße 7, 03050 Cottbus, Germany
Phone (+49) 355 / 49 91 13 43
Fax (+49) 355 / 49 91 10 74

Amt für Forstwirtschaft Peitz (Südbrandenburg)
(Forestry Office in Peitz [Southern Brandenburg]),
Address please see right

for Saxony and Brandenburg:
Wildbiologisches Büro LUPUS
(LUPUS Wildlife Consulting)
Dorfstraße 16, 02979 Spreewitz, Germany
Phone (+49) 357 27 / 577 62
Fax (+49) 357 27 / 57 90 94

Kontaktbüro Wolfsregion Lausitz,
Address please see right

MASTHEAD

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Bank Code 251 205 10
Keyword "WOLF"

For donations from outside Germany
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U. Anders

Wolves on our doorstep

In the border region of Germany and Poland



Why are Wolves important?

In our woods and forests, the principal food of the wolf — hooved game — is so common that agriculture and forestry occasionally have to deal with large damages.

In these cases the presence of wolves may have a positive effect. Wolves usually prey on young, inexperienced, old and weak game, meaning that animals are rarely captured. Because of the natural selection, wolves have a positive effect on their prey species and have played an important role in the ecosystem since primeval times.

Wolves and deer share the same habitat. Here they use the same watering place — even though at different times and for a different reason.



How do Wolves live?

A wolf pack usually consists of the parents and cubs from the previous and current year. The wolves hunt, eat, rest and play together. But they also often travel on their own. At an age of approximately two years, a young wolf reaches sexual maturity and leaves his/her pack. In the search of a non-related mating partner wolves have been known to travel great distances.

Because of their size and their nutritional requirements only a few wolves can live in the same area. The size of a pack is commonly between five and ten animals and every pack has a territory that is defended against other wolves. Dependent on the food supply, the size of a territory usually ranges between 250 to 300 km². Wolves normally feed on wild hoofed animals. In eastern Germany these are red deer, roe deer, boars, mouflon and fallow deer. They also prey on European hare, rabbits, birds, mice and other small mammals. In autumn they sometimes feed on fruits.



B. Stöcker



The drive to exterminate wolves, that started in the outgoing Middle Ages, almost led to the complete extinction of the wolf population in Germany by 1850. In 1904, Germany's "last wolf" was shot near the town of Hoyerswerda.

Forty years later single wolves started emigrating from Poland and were again sighted in Germany. However all were shot. Since 1990 wolves have been strictly protected by law in unified Germany and since 1998 they are protected across the whole of Poland. They are no longer subject to legalised shooting. Since 1992 wolves have enjoyed the highest protection in the European Union — apart from some countries except-

the populations are now recovering and the animals are gradually returning to their former territory. In the middle of the 1980s some wolves were able to settle and raise cubs in western Poland — far away from their traditional territory in the east of the country. Several years later, in spring 2000, wolf cubs were again born in Germany close to the Polish border in the northeast of Saxony.

Current distribution and spreading tendencies of wolves in Europe



Are Wolves Dangerous?

Walkers, cyclists, joggers and horse riders will usually not even catch a glimpse of the animals. Wolves will notice human beings early and flee instantly. Young wolves sometimes react less shyly than more mature animals.

People searching for mushrooms or berries in the deep thicket of a forest could very well encounter a resting wolf. They should try and keep calm and give the wolf a chance to retreat. Dog owners should leash their dogs in wolf territories because wolves may react aggressively to dogs which run loose. People living close to wolf packs may occasionally hear the howling of wolves. With howling, the animals get in the mood for hunting and at the same time declare their territory towards other wolves. If you see an injured wolf in the wild, leave it alone and report sightings to the institutions mentioned on the back of this leaflet or to the nature conservation authority in charge. Hunters have no right to kill an injured wolf without official legitimization issued by the Nature Conservation Authority or the Regulatory Agency. Wolves are not subject to legal or permitted hunting.

Rivalling Hunters?

Hunters and foresters in wolf areas must include into their hunting plans that wolves will eat some of the game. On many occasions the wolf can act as a partner for hunters by helping to regulate high densities of game.

The nutritional needs of a wolf are estimated at about 1 400 kg per year, whilst a cub eats about 700 kg. The dietary composition of the Lusatian wolves can roughly be derived from the analysis of faeces. Assuming that the half of his prey consists of young animals, an adult wolf eats about 62 roe deer and 9 red deer each year. With a territory size of about 300 km², a pack of eight wolves (half of which are cubs) will need about 1.2 roe deer, 0.3 wild boar and 0.2 red deer per 100 hectare annually.

Are Farm Animals Threatened?

Since wolves are mainly specialised feeders on hoofed animals, they cannot distinguish between “permitted” wild animals and “not permitted” farm animals such as sheep and goats. Measures are clearly needed to protect the latter from wolf attacks.

A well maintained and completely closed electric fence that ends close to the ground offers an extensive amount of security. The attachment of a barrier tape about 20-30 cm above the fence offers additional protection. To prevent wolves digging under wire mesh fences farmers can install an additional electrical wire or embed the wire mesh fence into the ground. Suckler cow herds and horses are less threatened because of their size and defensiveness. In Saxony and Brandenburg a team of wolf experts and sheep farming experts examine the cause and extent of the damages following attacks on livestock. If they determine that a wolf was responsible for the attack, the owner of the livestock will be compensated for their loss.



Wolves in Lusatia

Currently, four wolf packs are living in Lusatia (2007). The first pack was founded by wolves emigrating from Poland in 2000. One of the female offspring started her own family after mating with a polish wolf in 2005. In 2007 a third pack took hold in Saxony and another one in southern Brandenburg. So far cubs have been born in the Lusatian packs every year. More than 30 young wolves have already migrated. The foundation of new packs is therefore expected in Saxony and Brandenburg.



With plenty of game the landscape in Lusatia offers good conditions for the future of the packs and their descendants. The Oberlausitz military training ground and other federal forest areas are important for wolves to rest during the day and provide ample opportunities for the animals to build litter dens.

How do We Live With the Wolf?

The return of the wolf enriches our natural heritage. This is one of the most sensational events in the field of European nature conservation in recent years. Experiences in Poland and other European countries have shown that cultivated landscapes can also offer a suitable habitat for wolves and conflicts rarely arise. Wolves thrive in many environments and don't need a natural and wild landscape.

Living permanently with these carnivores in Germany, requires a clear strategy in dealing with so-called problematic wolves that predate on livestock despite defensive measures and show aggressive behaviour towards human beings. On behalf of a peaceful coexistence between human beings and wolves the removal of such animals from nature should be considered only as a last resort. There is no reason to fear that the coexistence of wolf and man is more difficult in Germany than in other European countries with a similar structure.

Is There a Future for Wolves in Germany?

The few packs and single animals that live in Germany and western Poland right now are a small and highly endangered population.

Several factors may threaten their future:

- ✓ Road killings
- ✓ Illegal killings
- ✓ Diseases such as mange and rabies
- ✓ Dissection of habitat due to motorway and railway lines
- ✓ Hybridisation with dogs — when wolf numbers are low there is a lack of mating partners

