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# Wolves: Behavior, Ecology, and Conservation: Photo Section II


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Adult wolves are very attentive to the pups. Both parents feed and care for them. Any older siblings similarly participate in pup care and feeding. Kin selection is probably the best explanation for the latter behavior.  
*Top:* Photograph by Isaac Babcock. *Bottom:* Photograph by L. David Mech.

Wolves sleep for much of the day. After a long hunt, it may take the pack 12 hours or even more before they are rested enough for another long trek and hunting spree. Photograph by L. David Mech.



Although the main prey of wolves worldwide are large hoofed mammals, wolves sometimes supplement their diets with smaller prey. In the High Arctic of Canada, wolves consume large numbers of arctic hares. Photograph by L. David Mech.



When an adult wolf returns to the pups after obtaining food, the pups rush the animal and excitedly lick at its mouth. The adult then regurgitates a load of meat from its stomach, and the pups frantically down it. Photographs by L. David Mech.

As they attack other large prey, wolves harass muskoxen to try to get them running. If the muskoxen flee, the wolves follow, dashing into the herd to try to grab a calf or other vulnerable member. Photograph by L. David Mech.



Once separated from a herd, a young muskox calf can be caught and subdued. Calves and old bulls constitute the highest proportion of muskoxen killed by wolves. Photograph by L. David Mech.



Wolves quickly open a carcass and sort through the viscera to find the most prized parts. Generally, liver, heart, and intestines are consumed first, followed by the flesh, bones, and hide. Photographs by L. David Mech.

Wolves learn to carry food in their mouths at an early age. They continue to do so throughout their lives to transport food to a peaceful spot to eat it, to bury it for later use, or to bring it to the breeding female or pups or both at the den. Photograph by Isaac Babcock.



Pups find their parents and older siblings handy playthings. Adult wolves, except some male parents, tend to tolerate all kinds of indignities by the pups, including not only tail-pulling but also ambushing, being pounced on, and constant pestering. Photograph by L. David Mech.



Wolves seem to show great affection for pups. Regular touching and lying against one another may provide both comfort and bonding, or "affiliative ties." Usually only a tired father wolf just home from a long hunt disdains such overtures by pups. Photograph by L. David Mech.



When a pup strays too far from the den, when danger threatens, or when adults want to move the pups, an adult may pick a pup up in its mouth and carry it a long distance. Most often it is the mother wolf that carries pups. Photograph by L. David Mech.



*Bottom left:* Like most young animals, wolf pups are extremely playful. Since litters are usually large, pups can play in numerous ways with littermates. Tag, hide-and-seek, ambush, and tug-of-war are all common games. Photograph by Isaac Babcock.

*Top and bottom right:* Wolf pups grow and develop rapidly. After going through pug-nosed and kitten-like stages, the pups soon begin taking on an adult conformation, as this 11-week-old pup shows. Photographs by Isaac Babcock.



Parent wolves dominate their offspring to control them, and the male breeder dominates the female breeder, although he routinely yields food to her. Dominance is shown by a raised tail and hackles, whereas submission is demonstrated by a lower body position and lowered tail and ears. Photograph by L. David Mech.



Although most wolves are a mottled gray, their color can vary from black to white and can include almost any shade in between. Their markings also vary, as illustrated by this collection of pelts taken during a wolf control program in Alaska. Photo by Alaska Department of Fish and Game.



Captive-bred red wolves were reintroduced to northeastern North Carolina in 1987. Photograph by Melissa McCaw. Photograph supplied by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission.