

# The Wolf:

## A Howling in America's National Parks

The silence engulfs you as you move through the timber. Suddenly, the quiet is broken by a faraway call. Your pulse quickens and you wonder if your ears are playing tricks on you. It sounded like . . . couldn't be . . . no, another . . . and another.

Goose bumps form as you recognize the unmistakable howls of a wolfpack. You catch yourself looking back across your shoulder. Your eyes strain for a fleeting glimpse of one of nature's most misunderstood creatures.

What is this animal that fires our imagination so, at once repelling and attracting us? Can we distinguish between the reality of the wolf and the legends we have created? Can we accept this fabled predator as a part of our lives, occupying its well-earned niche in the scheme of things? If so, where will it live? Can we allow it to hunt again in remote areas where it has been eliminated? Can we enjoy its howl again in some of our national parks where it once roamed free?



### Meet *Canis Lupus*— The Gray Wolf

The wolf is the largest member of the canine family and is the common ancestor of all domestic breeds of dogs.

The Northern Rocky Mountain wolf (*Canis lupus irremotus*) is the specie of wolf that historically ranged throughout the Northern Rockies.

The Northern Rocky Mountain wolf can weigh up to 100 pounds for the adult males, and 85 pounds for the adult females. From

nose to tail tip, they can measure from five to six feet in length.

Often tan or buff in color, wolves can be streaked with gray and black. Some are all black or solid white.

Wolves mate in February and March. In about 63 days, a litter of from four to seven pups is born.

Wolves live in packs, the core of which is formed by the offspring of a breeding pair (the dominant male and female). Pack size is from two to eight animals in the lower 48 states, and slightly larger in Canada and Alaska.

Wolves are highly intelligent and communicate with each other by scent marking, vocalizations, and facial and body posturing.

Wolves howl to keep track of each other, establish territory, assemble the pack, defend a kill, and perhaps just for the fun of it.

The National Parks and Conservation Association would like to know more about the people who are interested in the wolf. Please share answers to the following questions about yourself with us:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Male: \_\_\_\_\_ Female: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Education: High School \_\_\_\_\_ College \_\_\_\_\_ Post Graduate \_\_\_\_\_

Please help the National Parks and Conservation Association in its campaign to assist with wolf recovery by answering the following questions:

Do you agree that wolves should be restored to their natural habitat in some national parks? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If Yes, please give your reasons: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you be willing to write the appropriate decisionmakers who must approve wolf restoration?

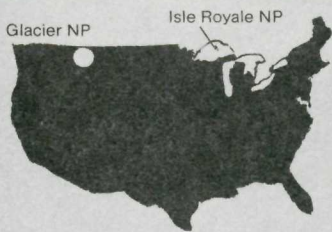
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If No to either question, please state your reasons: \_\_\_\_\_



# The Wolf:

## Where Do They Live in the Lower 48?



Originally, wolf populations spread from the Arctic to Mexico. Today they occupy only about one percent of their former range.

A small but viable wolf population has re-established itself in Montana's Glacier National Park.

Eastern timber wolves, numbering over 1,000, live in northern Minnesota. Small populations are found in Wisconsin, and an estimated 25 more live in Isle Royale National Park.

### What Threatens Their Survival?

Ever-shrinking habitat in which wolves can reproduce, hunt and roam without interference is the largest threat to their survival. Studies indicate that a wolf pack uses from 40 to 120 square miles.

Illegal hunting takes many of the animals. Some researchers believe that as many as 25 percent of Minnesota's wolves are killed illegally every year.

In areas of large wolf populations (Alaska and Canada), wolf hunting and trapping seasons are still allowed.

### Should Wolves Be Restored to The National Parks?

Wolves were a natural part of the western national parks. Restoration of wolves into those parks will help regain the wildness that was lost with their destruction.

Proponents of a restoration program view Yellowstone National Park's 2,219,822 acres as sufficiently large to support a vigorous wolf population without threatening livestock operations on nearby ranches. Financial restitution to ranchers and controlled hunting of those animals roaming outside the park are seen as necessary elements in restoration operations.

Opponents believe the wolves will move into ranching country outside Yellowstone's boundaries and cause economic losses for the area's cattle and sheep ranchers. Hunters view the re-establishment of wolves in Yellowstone as a move to reduce the num-

ber of large game animals available for hunting, and as a precursor of further restrictions on hunting.

In 1986, a wolf pack moved south into Glacier National Park from Canada's British Columbia Province. The pack selected a den site and raised the first litter of pups born in the national park in decades. Their presence is generating much excitement and controversy.

While many Americans know what an important role the wolf has in the natural environment, fears about "the big, bad wolf" still linger.

### What Can You Do?

Learn more about the wolf. A short list of recommended readings is provided below. Then, decide whether or not you believe the wolf should be restored in appropriate national parks and let your voice be heard!

Available Educational Materials:

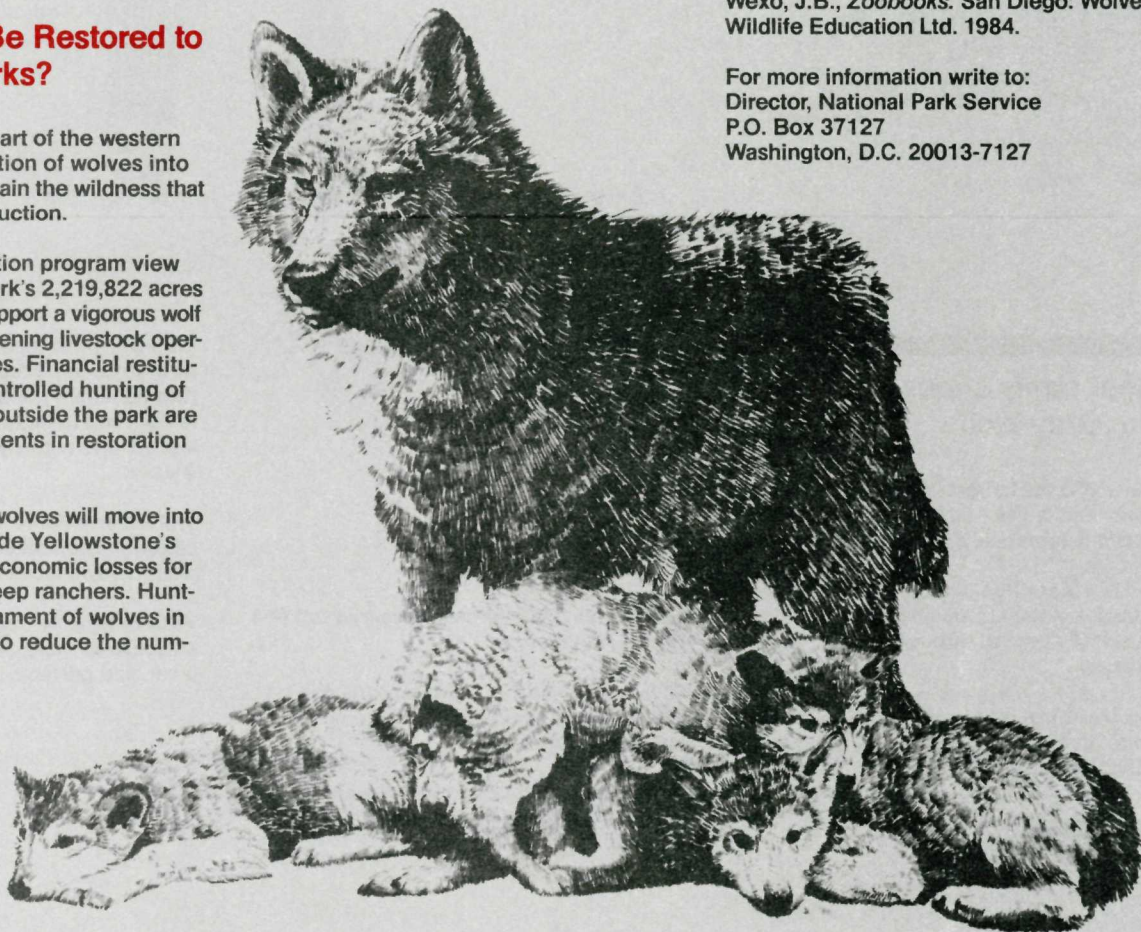
Video Cassette. "A HOWLING"

Recommended Reading:

Lopez, B.H., *Of Wolves and Men*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1978.

Wexo, J.B., *Zoobooks*. San Diego: Wolves, Wildlife Education Ltd. 1984.

For more information write to:  
Director, National Park Service  
P.O. Box 37127  
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127



## Do You Want to Learn More About the Wolf?

If you'd like to learn more about the wolf and how you can help assure its place in America's wildlands, just fill out this detachable sheet and mail it in an envelope to:

National Parks and Conservation Association  
1015 Thirty-First Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20007

Several additional publications will soon be available to explain the role of the wolf in natural ecosystems. If you would like more information by purchasing one or more of these, please check here \_\_\_\_\_. We will send you details on costs and ordering.

A 34-page booklet, illustrated with color photos, based on *Twilight Hunters*, by Gary Turbak and Alan Carey, will provide in-depth information on life cycles of the wolf.

A 29-by-30 inch wolf poster with a rendering by noted wildlife artist John Seerey-Lester.

A 25-minute video narrated by Robert Redford on the history and life cycle of the wolf.

