

TEACHING MATERIALS - THE WOLF

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Class level:	Secondary education, 6th -7th class
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Methods:	Information and practice materials

Objectives:

- Know the characteristics and lifestyle of a strictly protected domestic mammal
- Getting to know the reasons for the current species extinction
- Conflicts and challenges in maintaining a strictly protected species on the example of the wolf
- Ability to gather information for a specific topic and understand the essential statements

Process:

1. In the first part of the lesson basic information about the wolf will be given, for which a range of related tasks are available. In order to introduce the topic, a short movie about the wolves or an audio file of wolves howling could be played.
2. The second part deals with the threat to wolves by humans. Through maps the decrease in the wolf population is illustrated over the last few centuries

The Wolf



A wolf is quite similar to a dog, as he is their ancestor. However, unlike our favourite pet, wolves are wild animals and not domesticated. They are predators. A wolf's weight can range between 20-75kg, their length can vary between 90-150cm and they can grow as high as 1 meter. Wolves in the wild will usually not get older than ten years. However in captivity they can live for over 20 years.

The colour of their fur can be very different. There are some with yellowish gray fur but also brown and black animals. The colouring of the coat, their weight and the size is depending on the place they live. For example, they are very large and heavy in particularly cold areas, such as in Canada or Alaska, so they can survive the long and cold winter.



Eastern timber wolf



Artic wolf

Spread & Habitat

Wolves are spread over many continents. They live in North America, northern Asia as well as in Europe.

Wolves do not have very specific demands for their habitat. They can really live anywhere, as long as there is enough prey and a few spots where they can raise their pups. Therefore they are able to live in very cold, arctic regions as well as in the deserts of Central Asia. Most wolves inhabit grasslands and forests.

Where can we find the wolves?

Task: *Highlight on the map the spreading of the below listed wolf subspecies. Use different colors for the different subspecies.*

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| 1. Arabian Wolf | Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman |
| 2. Buffalo Wolf | Eastern and Northeastern Canada, Alaska |
| 3. Eurasian Wolf | Europe, Scandinavia, Russia, China, Mongolia |
| 4. Iberian Wolf | Spain and Northern Portugal |
| 5. Indian Wolf | Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India |
| 6. Italian Wolf | Italy |
| 7. Canadian Wolf | Canada |
| 8. Caspian Sea Wolf | Between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea |
| 9. Mackenzie Valley Wolf | Alaska, Northern Rocky Mountains, western Canada |
| 10. Mexican wolf | Central Mexico, West Texas, Southern New Mexico & Arizona |
| 11. Arctic Wolf | Arctic, Greenland |
| 12. Russian Wolf | Central Russia |
| 13. Eastern timber wolf | Southeastern Canada, Eastern United States |
| 14. Tundra Wolf | Northern Russia, Siberia |

Spreading of the wolves



Spreading of the wolves – Worldwide

Task: Highlight the spreading of the various wolf subspecies with different colors.



Nutrition

Wolves hunt prey to survive. They are predators and eat meat preferably. They have very strong jaws and a powerful bite with their 42 teeth. In one day, an adult wolf requires approximately 2-3 kg of meat.

Mostly their menu consists of large to medium-sized hoofed animals. In Europe and Asia, red deer, roe deer, wild boar and reindeer are the main prey. In North America, wolves feed mainly on moose, white-tailed deer, beaver, elk and birds. But they can be satisfied with rabbits, squirrels or mice. From time to time they even eat carcass, fallen fruit and berries.

However, it can also happen that wolves eat the livestock of people. This can happen if sheep or cattle are not adequately protected by electric fences and guard dogs.

Now that we know that wolves have other dietary options besides wild hoofed animals. Although, what is ultimately on the menu is determined by what they can find in their environment each season.



Wapiti



Wild boar



Moose

Which wolf eats what?

Task: *Match the below mentioned prey of the wolf to the various countries.*

Wild boar, hare, wapiti, red deer, white-tailed deer, squirrels, deer, moose, reindeer, beaver, birds, mouse

Canada: _____

Russia: _____

USA: _____

Poland: _____

Way of life - strong together!

Wolves live in packs. A pack of wolves usually consists of four to ten animals. This includes parents, children and newborn pups. So a pack is like a big family.



The older siblings, also called the "juveniles", stay for some years with the pack and help in the rearing of the pups. Either they hunt or they stay with the little ones and care for them. When the juveniles become sexually mature, they leave the pack and start their own family.

With their pack, they control a fixed territory. The size of the territory is about 200-300 square kilometer.

Task: *What are the advantages of living in a pack? List at least two reasons!*

1. _____

2. _____

Task: *Create a profile of the wolf!*

Weight: _____

Length: _____

Height: _____

Set of teeth: _____

Diet: _____

Age: _____

Pack size: _____

Spreading: _____

Spreading of the wolves in Europe - In the past



Spreading of the wolves in Europe – 2007



Task: Why do you think the wolf population has decreased so drastically?

A hunted hunter - The Wolf

Long ago, wolves could be found almost everywhere in the northern hemisphere. Today, this is no longer the case. As a result of livestock and agricultural development, the wolf population in Europe has continuously decreased.

The people were afraid of the wolves. In particular, they feared for their animals in the fields, because wolves sometimes prey on sheep and cattle. Therefore, people thought it safer to simply kill the wolves.

For centuries, the animals were brutally persecuted. Eventually there was hardly any found in Europe. Several subspecies of the wolf died out completely. In less than 300 years, people have reduced the worldwide territory of wolves by about half, and their number by about 80%.

Another reason for the extreme drop in the population of wolves was the change in the landscape. In time more and more settlements and cities emerged. The forest areas were getting smaller and smaller. Above all, road traffic has presented itself as a major problem; many wolves die when crossing roads.

Today one tries to protect the wolf. In many European countries it has been forbidden to hunt wolves for some years now.

In addition, many animal protection organisations try to help the wolf. For example, the WWF offers information and excursions in which you can learn many things about the wolf and its way of life, in order to overcome the fears and the prejudices.

When people are educated they realize that the fairy tale of the "big bad wolf" is not true. This way, people can learn to live with the wolf again. Specifically, farmers are being supported and trained. They will receive financial support to protect their herd animals, with fencing and well-trained guard dogs among other resources.

Tip

Just watch - Do not stroke!

If you should encounter a wolf, remember that it is a wild animal!

Wild animals cannot be touched or fed. This includes deer, foxes, badgers and wolves.

But you should take the opportunity to observe them. If you don't feel entirely comfortable in the presence of a wolf than you can scare him easily by talking loudly or clapping your hands.

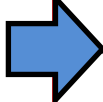
How can we help the wolf?

Task: How do you think we can help the wolf? List different ideas!

Some people are very afraid of wild animals such as bears, lynx and wolves. They still believe in the fairy tale of the big bad wolf, which ate Little Red Riding Hood's grandmother. But that's nonsense. You also no longer believes in the Easter Bunny, right? Unfortunately, some people stay with their prejudices against wolves. And they also believe untrue stories that are spread about wolves.



There are people who do not want to live near wolves. They are afraid or they fear that wolves will eat their pets. When these people encounter a wolf, they may even kill the wolf because of their fears, even though it is actually prohibited.



Wolves often have to travel long distances when they look for food. The young wolves are for hundreds of miles on the road when they are looking for a new territory. They have to cross many streets and that often ends in their death.

