

Comparing Canids

After you discuss the differences and similarities between wolves and coyotes (two species of canids), indicate which characteristics you think might have some part in the decline of the wolf population.

Characteristics	Wolves	Coyotes
Primary prey	Large herbivores like elk, deer, mountain sheep, bison but will eat small animals and feed on carrion (dead animals)	Rabbits, rodents, frogs, snakes, birds and eggs, fruit, insects, young of elk and deer and will feed on carrion (dead animals)
Hunting strategy	Often hunt in cooperative groups consisting of all adults in a pack Rarely hunt alone Kills are shared with pack members	Sometimes hunt in pairs or small groups when chasing larger prey Most often hunt alone
Social structure	Live almost exclusively in packs Rarely leave to establish a new pack	Share a territory with a pack, but often are solitary or in pairs When solitary, some travel outside of packs
Territory	About 50 square miles	About 5 square miles
Survival rate	68% of population survives to the next generation	78% of population survives to the next generation
Pack size	Average 8 wolves/pack	Average 3–5 coyotes/pack
Maturity	Mature at 2–3 years old Stay with the pack for 1–4.5 years	Fully mature at 8 months old Sometimes stay with the pack
Reproductive strategy	Pairs mate for life Both parents care for pups until they can hunt on their own	Strong pair bonds between mates established months before mating Pups sheltered in dens until they are able to hunt
Litter size	6–8 pups	4–7 pups
Litter frequency	1 litter of pups per year per female	1 litter of pups per year per pack