

ETHIOPIAN WOLF *Canis simensis*

Plate 42

Simien Jackal, Abyssinian Wolf, Simien Fox

HB ♀ 84.1–96cm, ♂ 93–101.2cm; T 27–39.6cm;
SH 53–62cm; W ♀ 11.2–14.2kg, ♂ 14.2–19.3kg

Rich tawny-rufous with white underparts and bright white markings on the lower face, throat, chest and lower legs. Tail has a white base, darkening to a chocolate-brown tip. Hybrids with domestic dogs have a stockier build and lighter, duller coat. Despite its confusing array of common names, the species is most closely related to Coyote and Grey Wolf. **Distribution and Habitat** Restricted to seven isolated populations at 3000–4500m in Ethiopia. Inhabits open highland habitats, especially montane grassland, heath and shrubland. Avoids agricultural areas, which reach 3500–3800m in parts of its range. **Feeding Ecology** Feeds almost exclusively on small diurnal mammals, especially mole rats, rats and Starck's Hare. Infrequent prey includes Rock Hyrax, juvenile Grey Duiker, Reedbuck and Mountain Nyala, as well as birds including Blue-winged Goose goslings, francolins and eggs. Foraging largely diurnal and solitary, with most kills made by individual wolves stalking rodents or digging them from burrows. Small packs of 2–4 sometimes cooperatively pursue prey, especially hares and young antelopes. Rarely kills sheep lambs; does not kill cattle calves, and often forages among herds, which may assist hunting by flushing rodents and providing cover. Appropriates kills from raptors and scavenges, including from livestock carcasses. Caches surplus food in shallow holes. **Social and Spatial Behaviour** Forms packs of 2–13 adults that defend small stable territories from other packs. Pairs or small packs

occur where prey availability is low. Males rarely disperse, so packs contain up to eight related adult males, as well as 1–3 adult females that may or may not be related; some females remain in their natal pack, while others disperse for breeding opportunities. Average territory size from 6km² in productive habitat to 13.4km² in poor habitat. Estimated densities include 0.1–0.25 wolves/km² in poor habitat or unprotected areas, to 1–1.2/km² in optimum protected habitat. **Reproduction and Demography** Seasonal. Mating August–November; births October–January. Gestation 60–62 days. Litter size 2–6. Reproduction is largely by the pack's alpha pair, but the dominant female also mates with visiting males from neighbouring packs. All pack members provision pups at the den, and subordinate females sometimes assist in suckling (it is unclear if extra-nursing females are pseudo-pregnant or absorb/abandon their own litters). Pups weaned from 10 weeks, and accompany the pack from 6 months. Sexual maturity at 18–24 months. **MORTALITY** Most mortality is anthropogenic and natural factors are poorly known; predation has not been observed, but may occur on pups by Spotted Hyena, Golden Jackal and large eagles. **LIFESPAN** 12 years in the wild. **Status and Threats** Endangered, with approximately 500 adults remaining in seven disjunct populations. Extreme pressure on habitat for agriculture and livestock is the chief threat, combined with exotic disease from domestic dogs; rabies epizootics reduce populations by up to 75%, e.g. in Bale. Roadkills, persecution and hybridization with dogs are lesser threats. Red List EN.

DINGO *Canis lupus dingo*

HB ♀ 70.3–101cm, ♂ 750–111cm; T 20–37cm;
W ♀ 8–17 kg, ♂ 7–22kg

Usually tawny-tinger; pale sandy, pure white (not albino) and black-and-tan variants occur. 'Sable' (Alsatian-like), brindled and piebald colouration indicates hybridization with dogs. Dingoes arose from Asian wolves in SE Asia some 6000–10,000 years ago, probably via domestication by humans; they colonized Australia with humans starting 3500–4000 years ago. **Distribution and Habitat** Australia (the only place where Dingoes live wild), SE Asia and New Guinea (only associated with humans). Inhabits desert, grassland, woodland savannah, wetland, alpine moorland and forest. Occurs in rural habitats, but avoids intensive agriculture. **Feeding Ecology** Very broad diet; 177 prey species recorded from Australia, with mammals comprising around 75%. At least one macropod (especially Red Kangaroo, Euro, and Swamp, Agile and Red-necked Wallabies) features prominently in the diet across its range. Other important prey includes wombats, brushtail possums, introduced European Rabbit and Magpie Goose. Other birds and reptiles form a small proportion of the diet. Kills sheep and cattle calves. Foraging mainly nocturno-crepuscular, but diurnal where it is free from persecution. Forages alone or socially; large prey such as kangaroos is usually hunted cooperatively in packs, which increases hunting success, e.g. from 5.5% (alone) to 19% (packs) when hunting Red Kangaroos. Scavenges, including from livestock carcasses and human refuse. **Social and Spatial Behaviour** Free from persecution, lives in stable packs of 2–12 adults and their pups in enduring home ranges.

Territorial, but often shares important resources such as waterholes with neighbouring packs. Under persecution (most of its Australian range), social structure is fractured so that packs are smaller and less stable. Individuals associate in loose 'tribes', sharing a range that is not defended and tending to forage alone. In stable packs, breeding is usually restricted to the alpha pair, and other pack members help raise pups by provisioning and guarding. Size of pack territories from 4–55km² (moist cool forest) and 32–126km² (Simpson Desert), to over 300km² in SW Australian desert. **Reproduction and Demography** Breeding generally seasonal, most strongly in arid C Australia. Mating April–June; births June–August (births outside this period are attributed to the presence of hybrids). Gestation 61–69 days. Litter size 1–10, averaging 5. Females first breed at around 24 months; males sexually mature at 12 months, but breeding is limited by social dynamics. **MORTALITY** Most mortality is anthropogenic, including from introduced disease (especially distemper) and parasites (especially heartworm). Occasionally killed by Water Buffalo, Red Kangaroo and Wedge-tailed Eagle (pups). **LIFESPAN** 10 years in the wild, 13 in captivity. **Status and Threats** Widespread in Australia, but intense persecution in concert with hybridization from domestic dogs threatens the species. Pure Dingoes are most common in C and N Australia, rare/possibly extinct in S and NE Australia, and probably extinct in SE and SW areas. Protected in national parks, World Heritage areas and Aboriginal reserves, but legally regarded as pests elsewhere. Without intensive conservation effort, the pure Dingo is unlikely to persist. Red List VU.



Pack at den

ETHIOPIAN
WOLFBlack
formTypical
form

DINGO

Pale
form