



Pups Growing Up

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Vocabulary

Den A small area, well-sheltered by rocks or roots, or dug out of the ground, where the mother wolf has her pups.

Litter A group of wolf pups that were born from the same mother.

Rendezvous Site An area where the pups are moved to at about 8 weeks old, where the pups play, eat, sleep and are watched over by the adults.

Scent Marking A way that a wolf can communicate with other wolves through smell, usually to defend their territory.

Undercoat The second layer of a wolf's fur coat; the thick layer beneath the guard hairs that keeps wolves warm in the winter or cool in the summer.

When wolf pups are born, they're very weak, and they must rely on their mother and their pack mates in order to survive. The mother and other adult pack members provide the pups with food, shelter and warmth until they're old enough to become active members of the wolf pack.

Let's take a closer look at how pups spend the first year of their lives.

Wolf pups can't see or hear anything for the first two weeks after they're born, and they need their mother to give them a lot of attention. She feeds the pups milk and stays with them inside the den. Pups are born with only their undercoat, so they have to stay close to their mother to keep warm.

When they are 2 to 3 weeks old, their eyes open, and they can see. Their ears rise upright within a week or two after that, letting them hear the sounds around them.

Pups start moving around much more after this—walking, exploring outside the den and meeting their pack mates. Their mother and older brothers and sisters begin spitting up food to them when the pups are 3 weeks old.

After 8 to 10 weeks of age, pups stop drinking their mother's milk and rely on the food their adult pack mates bring them. At this point, the pups have grown strong enough to go farther distances from the den, and the whole pack moves to the rendezvous site, a protected area above ground where the pups explore and play together while the adults hunt.

By the time they are 6 months old, the pups look a lot like the adults—just a little smaller. They start to grow more slowly at this point, and they're full-grown at about 1 year of age. 1-year-old wolves will help defend the pack's land—called their territory—from other wolves. By the time they are a year old, the next litter may arrive, and it will be their turn to help raise the new pups. ■



Did you know?

Wolf pups lose their first set of teeth, called milk teeth, just like we do! It usually happens when they're about 4 to 6 months old, and their adult teeth come in soon after.



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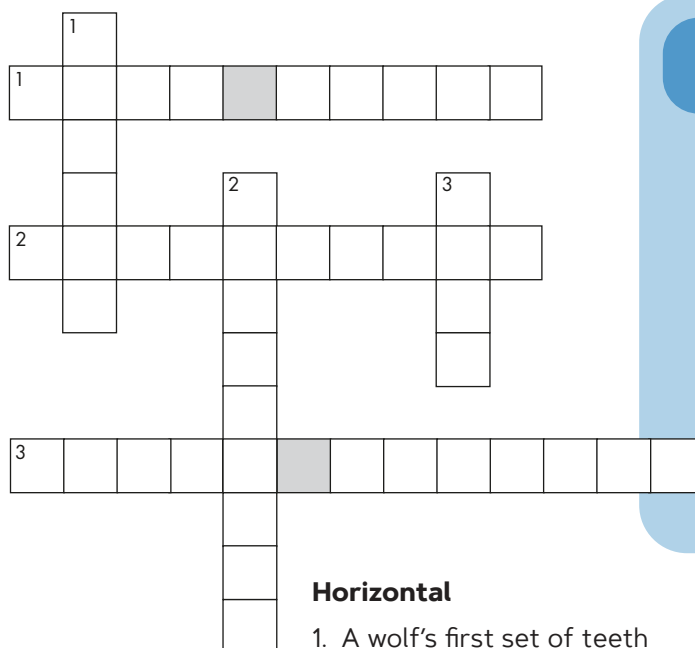
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Meet Grayson

Grayson is an Arctic subspecies of the gray wolf and joined the Exhibit Pack in 2016. Although he is very social with the Exhibit Pack, his strongest bond was with Aidan, our former pack leader. Grayson is keenly aware of his surroundings and prefers to seek some cover and be the observer rather than be the focus of the pack.



Cris Cross

Word Bank

Territory
Litter
Milk Teeth
Pups
Rendezvous
Scent
Marking

Horizontal

1. A wolf's first set of teeth
2. The site where younger wolves meet up with older wolves
3. A way wolves communicate through smell, usually to defend their territory

Vertical

1. A group of newly born wolves
2. An area that a pack of wolves defends from other wolves
3. Baby wolves are called ____.



Grayson

International Wolf Center