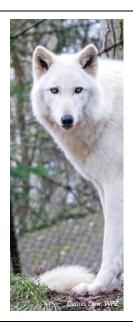# MEET OUR PACK!
YOUTH AND FAMILY ACTIVITIES
Summer 2020

MEET OUR PACK!

Woodland Park Zoo's three gray wolves are ten-year-old sisters Doba, Shila and Kaya. They were born on April 27, 2010 at New York State Zoo and moved to WPZ in September 2010. While tricky to tell apart, each of them has unique personalities and behaviors.

DOBA	**SHILA**	**KAYA**
Doba is the "alpha" of the pack. She is the most comfortable around keepers and new enrichment items. You will often see Doba front and center in the wolf habitat, where she can keep track of her sisters.	Shila is wary of people in her space. You will tend to see Shila lying a bit away from the pack or along the north end of the habitat, along the perimeter. Shila usually waits until her sisters have finished eating before foraging for the leftovers.	Kaya tends to be more wary around keepers. She has facial features similar to a German shepherd.

If you have visited the zoo, you may have seen a fourth wolf sister, Aponi. In their home ranges, it is not uncommon for wolves to leave their home territory to join an existing pack or start their own. Changing pack dynamics also occur for wolves in human care. In 2019, Aponi started to show increasing signs of incompatibility with her three sisters. In November 2019, Aponi moved to Wolf Haven International, just south of Olympia.

SIT SPOT

Wolves use their senses to find food, avoid threats and communicate within a complex social structure. Take time to sit quietly and reflect on wolf senses while participating in your own sit spot.

What you need: No supplies required

Time: 15 minutes

1. Find a place where you can safely and comfortably sit and observe nature.

2. Take a few deep breaths – in through your nose, and out through your mouth – to help you relax and prepare for your observations.

3. Spend a few minutes in quiet observation. Try to sit quietly for at least three minutes, and you might do as long as ten minutes. Here are some things to try as you sit and observe:

    - Start by closing your eyes and focusing on your sense of hearing.

        o   Wolves can hear up to six miles away in wooded areas and 10 miles in an open area. What type of area are you in? Listen carefully, what is the farthest sound that you can hear?

        o   One reason that wolves hear so well is the cupped structure of their ears, which helps funnel the sound. Use your hands to cup behind your ears, rounding them like a wolf's ears and spend a few more moments listening. How does this change what you hear? Do you notice any new sounds? Try pointing your ears in different directions. What different sounds do you hear?

    - Now let's explore our sense of smell.

        o   A wolf's strongest sense is its sense of smell. In fact, gray wolves can smell prey up to 1.75 miles away.

        o   Take a deep breath and inhale through your nose. What do you smell? Can you identify it? If not, can you describe it? Does it smell familiar? Does it smell sweet or musky? What other words might you use to describe what you are smelling?

    - Open your eyes and look around, allowing your eyes to adjust to the light and taking in what you see.

    - Pick one thing you can see and look at it closely. What do you notice that you may not have seen if you just glanced at it quickly?

    - Try and look at your surroundings through the eyes of a wolf. Would a pack of wolves have everything they need? Is there a stand of trees where prey might live? How about shelter or a place for a den? A source of water?

4. You can repeat this sit spot activity in the same place on a regular basis.

WOLF COMMUNICATION

Social animals communicate with each other in a variety of ways. Through this activity we will explore the use of body language in wolves and connect it to our own human communication.

What you need: No supplies required

Time: 20 minutes

Wolves are highly social animals who live in complex family groups where coordination, cooperation and the reinforcement of social bonds are vitally important. Gray wolves utilize various types of communication including vocalizations, scent communication and body language.

1. Start by thinking about ways that animals communicate using body language. Perhaps you have a cat who rubs up against your leg when you open the door or a dog who wags their tail when he is excited?

2. Gray wolves also use body language to communicate. Some examples of communication using body language are listed below.

   - A tail between their legs indicates non-aggression and submission to other wolves.

   - The omega, or lowest member in the pack, will crouch when approaching other wolves, indicating their low position.

   - An alpha, or pack leader, carries their tail high and straight.

3. Take some time to research and explore wolf communication further.

4. Think about the ways in which humans communicate. It's not so different! We communicate with our voices, and we use body language.

5. Play a game of body language charades with someone. Consider how you would convey the following states using only movements.

   - Hungry

   - Angry

   - Sleepy

   - Happy

   - Excited

   - Confused

6. Take a moment to try out another way to communicate the same states. What are some other messages you might be able to convey?

7. Were you able to communicate using only movements? Was it easy or hard? Keep an eye out for other ways that you use body language every day.

Consider this!

Next time you are at Woodland Park Zoo visit our gray wolves and see if you can observe them communicating. What do you notice? Can you tell who is the alpha and who is the omega based on their body language and interactions?

WHICH CANID DO I SEE?

Wolves, coyotes, and domestic dogs are all canids, or members of the dog family, Canidae. Compare photos and observe the differences between these three species.

What you need: No supplies required

Time: 10 minutes

1. Spend some time observing the three photos on the following page. Look for similarities and differences between the wolf, coyote and domestic dog.

2. As you observe, consider questions such as:

   - What do you notice about the shape and structure of their faces?

   - How are their ears similar and different?

   - How does their fur compare?

   - What do you observe about their overall body structure? How does the size of their body compare to the length of their legs?

GRAY WOLF *Canis lupis*	 Dennis Dow, WPZ
COYOTE *Canis latrans*	 Coyote by Jitze Couperus is licensed under CC BY 2.0.
DOMESTIC DOG *Canis familiaris*	 Black Labrador Retriever Lotte by Golden Retriever - Labrador is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

3. While comparing the photos, you likely spotted a number of similarities and differences between these species. These distinguishing characteristics or field marks, can be useful when attempting to identify an

animal. When using field marks, it's best to use more than one, since there can be individual variation and overlap between features that makes it difficult to rely on one field mark alone. Some key similarities and differences between these animals are:

	Gray wolf	Coyote	Domestic dog
Size (difficult to observe in photos)	5-6 ft. long; 2 ½ ft. tall; 70-120 lbs.	3 ½ - 4 ½ ft. long; 1 ½ ft. tall; 25-40 lbs.	Length and height vary widely by breed
Coloration	Buff-colored tans mixed with gray and black. Can also be black or white	Gray or reddish-brown fur, with rusty colored legs	Color varies widely by breed
Facial structure	Broad face with wide, blocky muzzle with large nose	Long, slender muzzle with small nose	Most have short snouts with high foreheads
Ears	Short, more rounded ears	Tall, pointed ears	Ears vary by breed, most have floppy ears that lack fur inside of their ears. Usually have large ears in comparison to head size.
Body structure	Narrower chest with legs closer together. Longer legs in comparison to body size.	Longer legs in comparison to body size.	Tend to have a broader chest with legs more widely separated. Shorter legs in comparison to body size.
Tail	Carries tail straight out when running. No curve to their tail.	Carries tail low when running. No curve to their tail. Tail may have a black tip.	May carry tail upward, especially when running or trotting. Many dogs have curved tails.