

Howls Return! New Wolf Pack Arrives at Woodland Park Zoo

SEATTLE—Howl about this? A new pack of gray wolves has just arrived at Seattle's Woodland Park Zoo and guests will be able to see them in the Living Northwest Trail as early as today!



The four 6-year-old male wolves, all brothers, were born at the California Wolf Center in southern California and have just arrived at Woodland Park Zoo. Zoo team members will be taking time to get to know them and look forward to sharing more on each brother soon.

"The zoo is a new environment for these wolves so it will take them some time to acclimate to their new surroundings and routine," said Pat Owen, Animal Care Manager at Woodland Park Zoo. "As they adjust, they may be a bit shy and difficult for guests to spot. We kindly ask our guests to avoid howling at the wolves as it can cause stress for the animals."

The new family group represents a subspecies of the gray wolf, known as the Mexican gray wolf (*Canis lupus baileyi*), a relative of gray wolves found in the Pacific Northwest. Critically endangered, Mexican gray wolves are part of a collaborative recovery initiative through the Association of Zoos and Aquariums called [SAFE](#) (Saving Animals From Extinction). This is a program that protects species from the risk of extinction by identifying and tackling threats, developing and implementing action plans and monitoring success. These wolves have a distinctive, richly colored coat of buff, gray, rust and black, often with distinguishing facial patterns.

"We are thrilled to bring wolves back to the Living Northwest Trail for guests to enjoy and learn from," said Owen. "As a subspecies of gray wolves, these brothers will be excellent ambassadors for their wild cousins facing ongoing threats here in the Pacific Northwest and across North America."

As conservation ambassadors, these four furry fellas will highlight the complex history, ongoing challenges, and opportunities for species recovery that wolves across the continent face.

"It's an incredible opportunity for people of all ages to connect with wolves at the zoo and learn about this remarkable species. There is so much to discover about the challenges these apex predators face in the wild, their contribution to our ecosystems, and the beauty and complexity of wolf dynamics," said Owen.

The gray wolf (*Canis lupus*) is listed and protected as endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act and by the state of Washington.

The Mexican gray wolf is the rarest and smallest subspecies of gray wolf in North America. Once common throughout portions of the southwestern United States, the Mexican wolf was eliminated from the southwestern U.S. by the mid-1900s. Wolves in the Pacific Northwest and across the continent were historically hunted almost to extinction in the U.S., with the exception of Alaska and Minnesota.

In 1976, the Mexican gray wolf was listed as endangered. Since then, ongoing conservation efforts are making slow progress; there are now an estimated 286 Mexican gray wolves living in the wild in Arizona and New Mexico, and a much smaller number in Mexico.

Wolves are the largest members of the dog family and are very social animals, forming tight-knit family groups made up of around six to 10 usually related individuals, or sometimes smaller or larger numbers. The groups are led by a breeding pair, who typically mate for life. All adults in the group may take part in caring for young pups by bringing them food and sharing “baby-sitting” responsibilities.

Woodland Park Zoo supports wolf recovery in Washington state because wolves have ecological, cultural and intrinsic value. We believe wolves should be legally protected in Washington until science shows that we have a sustainable and ecologically effective wolf population inhabiting all the state’s recovery areas. In keeping with our work to advance coexistence, we endorse nonlethal means for preventing and managing wolf-livestock conflict. We also advocate science-based decision-making for the conservation of wolves in Washington and elsewhere in the U.S.

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