

FIELD GUIDE TO NORTH AMERICAN MAMMALS

**Coyote**  
*(Canis latrans)*

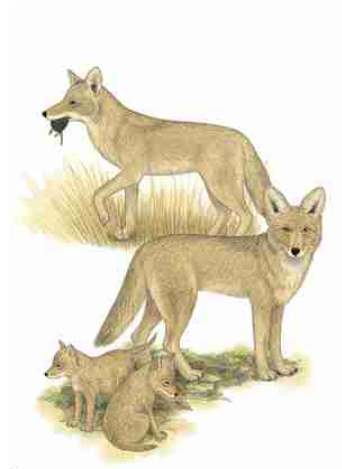
ORDER: Carnivora  
FAMILY: Canidae

Coyotes are among the most adaptable mammals in North America. They have an enormous geographical distribution and can live in very diverse ecological settings, even successfully making their homes in suburbs, towns, and cities. They are omnivorous, eating plants, animals, and carrion. Socially, coyotes live in a variety of arrangements. Some live alone, others in mated pairs, and others in packs, which may consist of one mated pair, their new young, and offspring from the previous season that have not yet left their parents. Packs are an advantage when preying on larger mammals such as deer, or defending food resources, territory, and themselves.

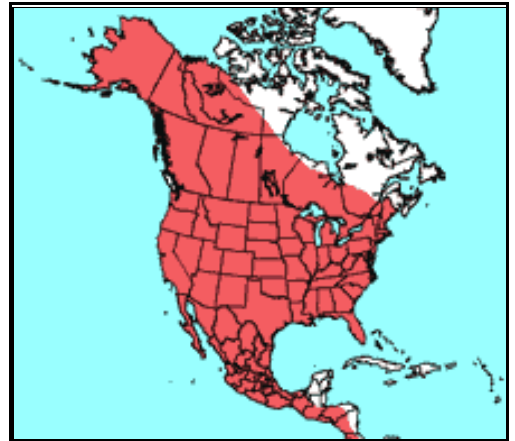
**Sexual Dimorphism:**  
Males are larger than females.

**Length:**  
Range: 750–1,000 mm

**Weight:**  
Range: 8–20 kg males; 7–18 kg females



*Canis latrans* – eastern animals are larger (top); typical western animal and pups are shown below  
Credit: painting by Consie Powell from Kays and Wilson's *Mammals of North America*, © Princeton University Press (2002)



**FIELD NOTES**

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Gray Wolf  
(*Canis lupus*)

ORDER: Carnivora  
FAMILY: Canidae

Gray wolves usually live in packs, led by an "alpha pair." The pack includes some of the alpha pair's offspring and may include some unrelated wolves. A pack's territory can be as large as 13,000 square km. Howling probably helps advertise who "owns" a particular piece of territory. When pups are born, the mother stays near them for the first three weeks, and her mate and others in the pack bring food to her. The pups are weaned when they about nine weeks old. As adults, they may travel as far as 72 km a day with their pack and run as fast as 70 km per hour.

Also known as:

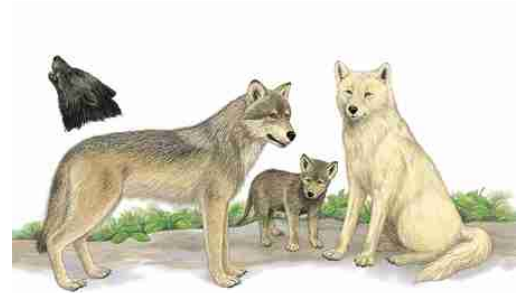
Wolf, Timber Wolf, Tundra Wolf, Lobo, Prairie Wolf, Mexican Wolf, Arctic Wolf

Length:

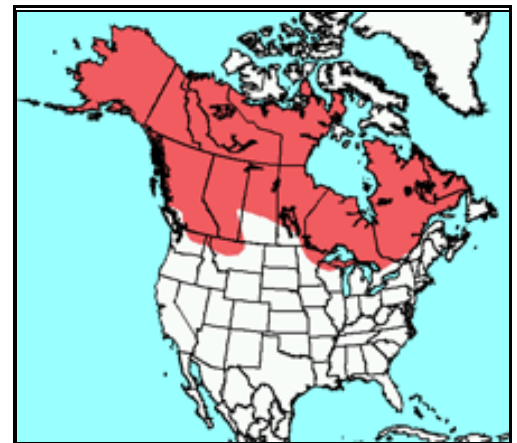
Average: 1,100 mm males; 1,050 mm, females  
Range: 1,000–1,300 mm males; 870–1,170 mm females

Weight:

Average: 55 kg males; 45 kg females  
Range: 30–80 kg males; 23–55 kg females



*Canis lupus* – typical coloration, standing left; black variant, inset; white variant, standing right; juvenile, center  
Credit: painting by Consie Powell from Kays and Wilson's *Mammals of North America*, © Princeton University Press (2002)



FIELD NOTES

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**Common Gray Fox**  
*(Urocyon cinereoargenteus)*

ORDER: Carnivora  
FAMILY: Canidae

Gray foxes are adept at climbing trees. They are active at night and during twilight, sleeping during the day in dense vegetation or secluded rocky places. Nursing mothers and pups use a den— a hollow log, abandoned building, tangle of brush, or cracked boulder—for shelter. When she is nursing small pups, the female stays within a few hundred meters of the den, but otherwise adults may range over a 2—5 square km area. Pups begin to forage on their own at about four months of age, and maintain close ties with the mother until they are about seven months old. By about ten months, both males and females are old enough to reproduce, and most females will have a litter annually from then on.



*Credit: painting by Consie Powell from Kays and Wilson's Mammals of North America, © Princeton University Press (2002)*

**Also known as:**

Zorra, Zorra Gris, Gato de Monte

**Sexual Dimorphism:**

None

**Length:**

Range: 800–1,130 mm

**Weight:**

Range: 3–7 kg



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FIELD GUIDE TO NORTH AMERICAN MAMMALS

**Kit Fox**  
*(Vulpes macrotis)*

ORDER: Carnivora  
FAMILY: Canidae

The kit fox has been thought by some to be a subspecies of the swift fox. This fox currently inhabits desert and semi-arid regions between the Sierra Nevada Mountains and the Rocky Mountains and on down into Baja California and the North Central states of Mexico; it is also found in the San Joaquin Valley of California.

Several features distinguish the kit fox from the swift fox. Kit fox ears are larger and set closer together than the swift fox. The head of the kit fox is slightly broader between the eyes and the snout is narrower. The kit fox has a longer tail, relative to the body, than the swift fox.

Their diet consists of the most readily available small mammals in the region, especially rodents and rabbits. The relationship of kit fox populations to populations of banner-tailed kangaroo rats (*Dipodomys spectabilis*) in the San Joaquin Valley and to black-tailed jack rabbits (*Lepus californicus*) in Utah have been well documented.

**Length:**  
Range: 730–840 mm

**Weight:**  
Range: 1.4–2.7 kg



*Vulpes macrotis* – Kit Fox

Credit: painting by Consie Powell from Kays and Wilson's *Mammals of North America*, © Princeton University Press (2002)



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FIELD GUIDE TO NORTH AMERICAN MAMMALS

**Swift Fox**  
*(Vulpes velox)*

ORDER: Carnivora  
FAMILY: Canidae

Swift foxes are primarily nocturnal, but can sometimes be seen sunning themselves near the entrance to a den. They live on prairie grasslands just east of the Rocky Mountains. Like other foxes, they face many dangers: coyotes prey on them, and they are susceptible to trapping, poisoning, and being hit by automobiles. Disease, den cave-ins, and starvation also cause mortality. Habitat destruction has greatly reduced their available habitat. In Canada, swift foxes are protected as an endangered species and attempts are being made to reintroduce them in the Canadian prairie provinces.



*Vulpes velox* – swift fox

*Credit: painting by Consie Powell from Kays and Wilson's Mammals of North America, © Princeton University Press (2002)*

**Also known as:**

Northern Kit Fox, Prairie Kit Fox, Swift Kit Fox

**Sexual Dimorphism:**

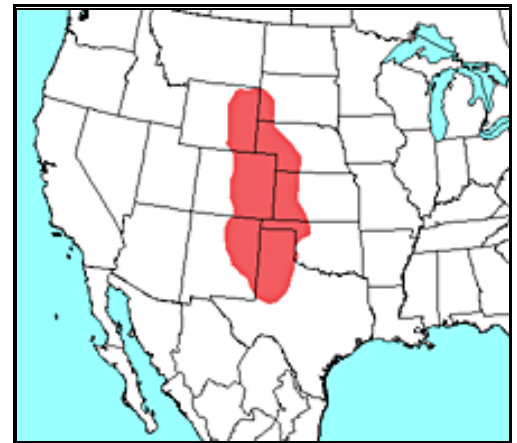
Males are larger than females.

**Length:**

Range: 740–820 mm males; 680–750 mm females

**Weight:**

Range: 1.4–3.0 kg



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FIELD GUIDE TO NORTH AMERICAN MAMMALS

Red Fox  
(*Vulpes vulpes*)

ORDER: Carnivora  
FAMILY: Canidae

Red foxes are the most widely distributed wild carnivores in the world, occurring in North America, Asia, Europe, and North Africa. They are also widespread in Australia, where they were introduced in about 1850 so that fox-hunters would have something to hunt. Their range in North America has expanded since colonial times as their competitors, wolves, were eliminated, but their range has also contracted in areas where they are in competition with coyotes. Red foxes prey on voles, rabbits, hares, and other small mammals, and also eat birds, fruits, and invertebrates even beetles and earthworms. A male female pair typically inhabits a territory, and older, usually female, siblings help care for the younger offspring by bringing them food. Red foxes are among the main carriers and victims of rabies.

**Sexual Dimorphism:**

Males can be 15%–25% heavier than females.

**Length:**

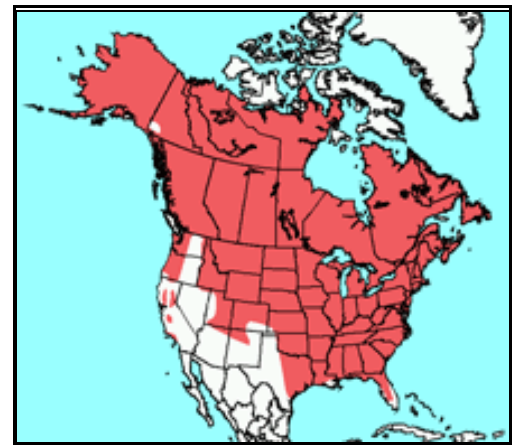
Range: 827–1,097 mm

**Weight:**

Range: 3–7 kg



*Vulpes vulpes* – typical coloration, top; silver fox, lower left; cross fox, lower right  
Credit: painting by Consie Powell from Kays and Wilson's *Mammals of North America*, © Princeton University Press (2002)



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