



THE WOLF IN FRANCE



- ❖ At the end of the 18th century, there were between 10,000 and 20,000 wolves in France. The species ranged from sea shores to mountains.
- ❖ After an organised persecution the species disappeared during the 1930's. The last wolves lived in Dordogne, Charente, and in the Vienne region. The species disappeared 30 years ago from the French Alps.
- ❖ The first confirmed observation was made in November 1992 in Mercantour National Park. Wolves were not reintroduced, they came back naturally after spreading to the Alps from the Abruzzi mountains in central Italy over a period of 20 years.
- ❖ This return was due to multiple factors :
 - Legal protection
 - Large population of wild ungulates to prey on
 - In Europe wolves benefited from the expansion of roe deer and wild boar populations
 - Farming decline has been favorable to both prey and predator. Forests have grown.

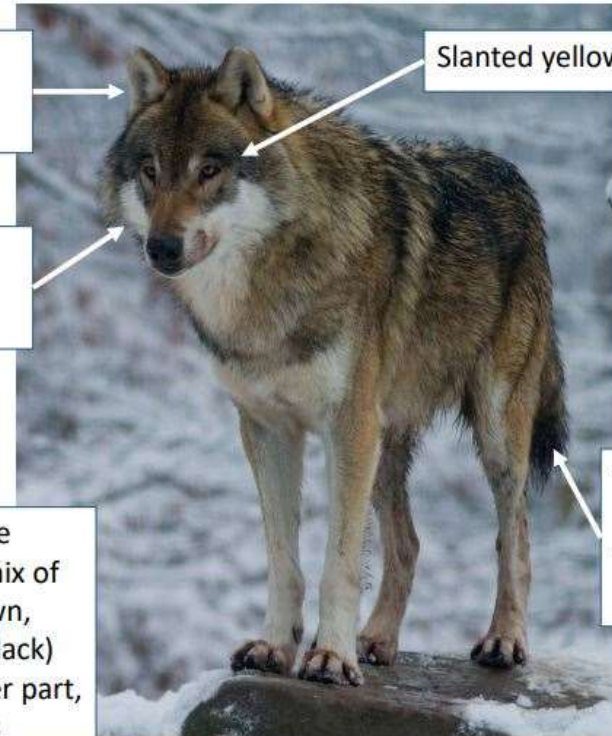




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Average size:
 Body length : 110 cm
 Height : 65 - 75 cm
 Weight : 25 - 35 kg

Recognising the grey wolf in Europe



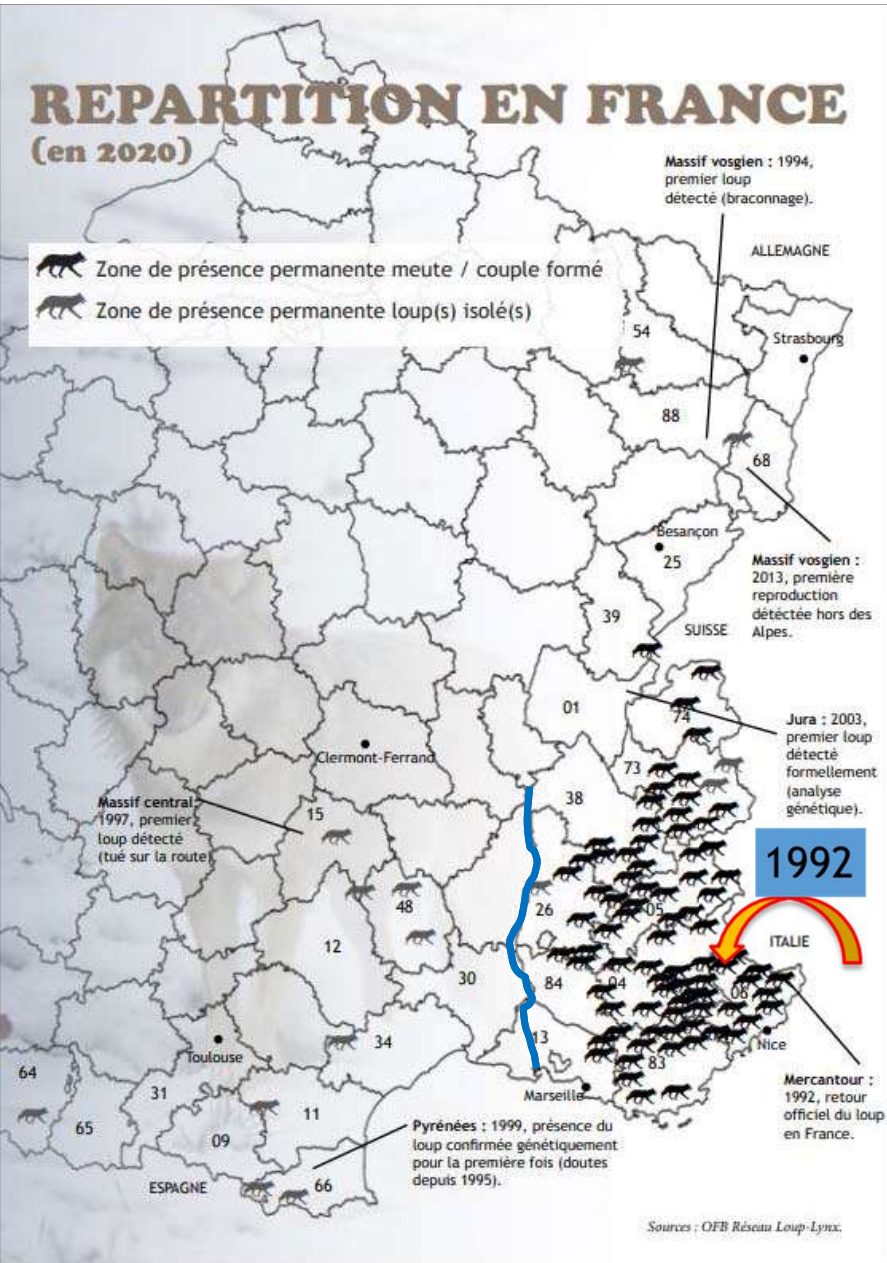
Short & slightly rounded ears

Slanted yellow eyes

Labial mask spreading to the cheeks

Colour is quite homogeneous (mix of beige, grey, fawn, anthracite and black) darker on the upper part, lighter flanks

- Short tail (never under the tarsus)
- Black brush



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WOLF PROTECTION AND POPULATION STATUS IN FRANCE

Protection status

The species is strictly protected under the 1992 European Union Habitat Directive (HD), and in France by government decree since 1993. Consequently the French government is legally obligated to ensure its full protection.

Population status and management

Most recent population estimates range between 400 and 800 wolves / 106 packs (source OFB - French Office of Biodiversity). All of the reproducing packs live in the Alpine region. Amazingly, after 30 years of presence, there is still no known reproducing pack outside of the Alps, except 2 packs in the Jura.

In 2004 the French government began using a provision of the HD which allows for lethal removal of wolves under specific circumstances (significant livestock losses). Overtime this policy has evolved into a systematic killing of wolves: in absence of damage, even in absence of livestock and also during wild ungulates hunting season. Population's annual growth has drastically decreased from 22% to 8%, due to lethal removal, keeping the species' status as vulnerable (no favorable conservation status).

Per governmental decision up to 118 wolves can be killed in 2021. FERUS has engaged legal action against this policy which we consider a breach of the HD. As of today 88 wolves have been killed in 2021.

