Wolves Return to Yellowstone



Read the passage. Then answer the questions in full sentences.

Name _____ Date _____

Wolf packs once roamed from the Arctic tundra all the way to Mexico. By the early 1900s, though, wolves had disappeared from most of the United States. They had lost their habitat, the wild places where they lived, and people had set out to kill them.

In 1973, the northern Rocky Mountain wolf was listed as an endangered species. This means it was in danger of dying out. The area around Yellowstone National Park was named one of three places where the wolves could recover. From 1995 to 1997, 41 wild wolves from Canada and northwest Montana were released in Yellowstone.

Wolves live in family groups called packs. In Yellowstone, the average pack size is 11.8 wolves. A pack defends its territory from other packs by howling and by marking it with scent.

In winter, 90 percent of the prey that Yellowstone's wolves hunt is elk. Many other animals share the meal. When wolves kill an elk, ravens and magpies arrive almost right away. Coyotes come soon after and wait nearby until the wolves are full. Bears try to chase the wolves away, and they usually succeed. Many other animals, from eagles to tiny creatures without backbones, eat what is left.

About half of Yellowstone's wolves are black, and most of the rest are gray. January 12, 2025, marked 30 years since wolves returned to the park.

1. **How many wolves were released in Yellowstone from 1995 to 1997, and where did they come from?**

2. **What does "habitat" mean in the first paragraph, and which words help you tell?**

3. **What happens, in order, after wolves kill an elk?**

4. **Do you think bringing wolves back helped other animals in Yellowstone? Give a reason from the passage.**

Answer key

Wolves Return to Yellowstone

1. How many wolves were released in Yellowstone from 1995 to 1997, and where did they come from?
   41 wild wolves, from Canada and northwest Montana.

2. What does “habitat” mean in the first paragraph, and which words help you tell?
   The wild places where an animal lives. The words right after it, “the wild places where they lived,” explain it.

3. What happens, in order, after wolves kill an elk?
   Ravens and magpies arrive almost right away. Coyotes come soon after and wait until the wolves are full. Bears try to chase the wolves away. Many other animals eat what is left.

4. Do you think bringing wolves back helped other animals in Yellowstone? Give a reason from the passage.
   Sample answer: yes. When wolves kill an elk, ravens, magpies, coyotes, bears, eagles and smaller creatures all get food from it.