



African Wild Dogs

African Wild Dogs, or painted hunting dogs (*Lycaon pictus*) are the most threatened relative of the domestic dog in the wild today. The wild dog is one of the world's most endangered mammals. Formerly widespread throughout Africa, today only 3,000 to 5,000 wild dogs remain in the wild. A recent survey of 32 African countries found that wild dogs are extinct in 19 countries, very rare in 7 countries and present in only 6 countries: Tanzania, South Africa, Kenya, Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe (see distribution map below).

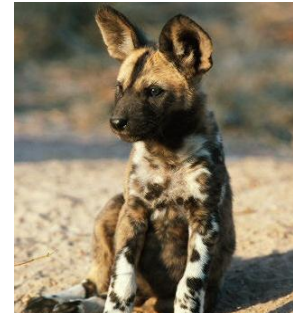
Major threats to the survival of wild dogs include accidental and targeted killings by humans, viral diseases like rabies and distemper, habitat loss and competition with larger predators like lions. Conflicts occur when wild dogs come in contact with people whose livelihoods rest largely on livestock and agriculture. Problems arise when expanding human activities decrease the habitat for available prey for wild dogs.



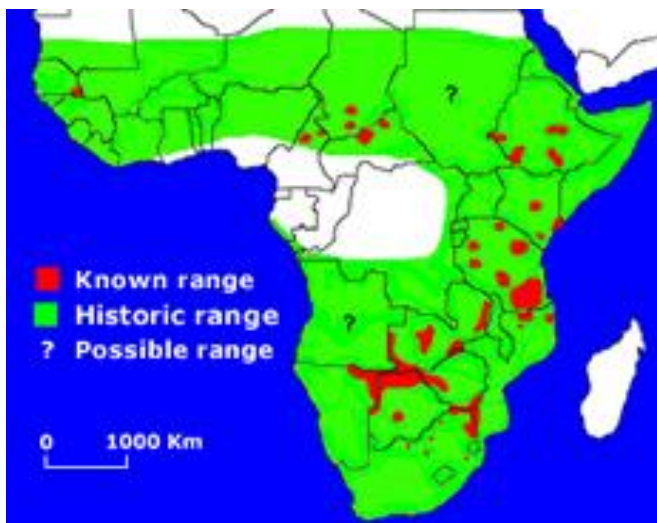
Female African Wild Dog with her pups (at right). Only the dominant female breeds though all pack members help her to raise the pups. © 2006 National Geographic Society/ Chris Johns



WWF staff and Selous Reserve guards searching for signs of wild dogs in the Selous Game Reserve. © WWF/ Philipp Goeltenboth



The future for this African wild dog pup is uncertain, due to threats like diseases and habitat loss. © Ron O'Connor/ Naturepl.com



African wild dog known range is highlighted in red, in contrast to the historic range highlighted in green throughout southern Africa.

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Wild Dog Biology

African wild dogs are highly sociable and exhibit a very unusual social system. Within their packs, dogs of the same sex are closely related to each other but not to individuals of the opposite sex. Packs vary in size from 2 to 27 individuals and new packs are formed when subgroups of the same sex disperse and join up with a subgroup of the opposite sex. Only the dominant male and female will breed.

Wild dogs are integral to keeping the whole ecosystem healthy and balanced by controlling the population of certain herbivores – so they do not destroy the natural habitat. Wild dogs benefit hundreds of other species and help maintain the natural balance of the ecosystem.

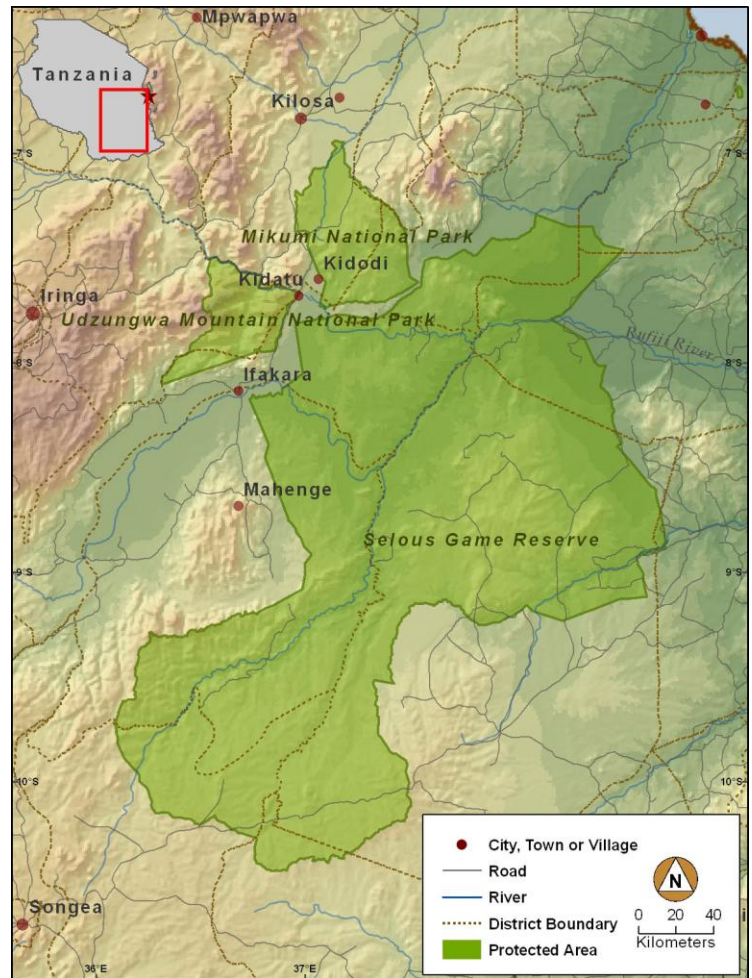
WWF's newly established Wild Dog Survival Program:

The Selous Reserve in Tanzania is home to **one third of all the wild dogs in the world**. A study of radio collared wild dogs from 1991-1997 in gave clues to their needs and threats. There has been no information on wild dogs since then, limiting effective management strategies.

WWF started wild dog management in the Selous Reserve in 2007 – monitoring, assessing threats and managing the dogs with the help of local communities through funding provided by the Gibbs Family from Oregon.

Next steps include:

- Training guards and communities in wild dog management to reduce habitat fragmentation of the Selous
- Conducting anti-poaching patrols
- Reducing the deliberate killing of wild dogs through education and snare eradication programs with communities
- Monitoring the status and distribution of African wild dogs by radio collaring and tracking dog movements and hunting success
- Controlling domestic dog populations and vaccinating them to protect wild dog populations from serious infections like rabies



Map of the Selous Game Reserve in southern Tanzania. Within the 50,000 sq. km reserve, part of the largest remaining unfragmented wilderness area in sub-Saharan Africa, elephants, black rhinoceroses, wild dog, eland, wildebeest, giraffes, and hippos roam. © 2007 WWF/ A. Shapiro



African wild dog. © Tony Heald/ Naturepl.com

Be a Force for Nature:

We need your involvement to create this last frontier for the wild dogs and many other species to survive. Please get involved and become a force for nature.

- Visit the Selous Game Reserve in Tanzania and see the wild dogs
- Visit our website and support the efforts of WWF to help wild dogs survive for the benefit of present and future generations

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