



# COEXISTING WITH WOLVES IN THE ECOTOURISM INDUSTRY

Remote and relatively undeveloped areas like Clayoquot Sound are our last opportunities to preserve the highly biologically and culturally rich relationships found between grey wolves (*Canis lupus*) and their environment. In many areas within the wolves' range, populations have been decimated, making BC's Pacific coast a stronghold for the species.

The fringe where land meets the sea overwhelmingly defines these wolves' environment. BC's coastal wolves are considered a distinct taxonomic subspecies. Their behaviour, physical adaptations, and pack traditions have been shaped by the marine-dominated rainforest and they are vital to maintaining the health of the coastal ecosystem. These sea-faring mammals are excellent swimmers with high endurance, and travel between islands, beaches, and rocky shorelines. Coastal wolves are smaller than interior wolves in physical and pack size, and are designed for long-distance travel and running at speeds of up to 70kmph.

Coastal wolves are highly sociable and intelligent creatures with cooperative hunting techniques and keen senses of vision, smell, and hearing. Coastal wolves in this area prey primarily on deer, river otters, raccoons, and seals but are known to prey opportunistically on intertidal creatures, salmon, birds, bears, small mammals, and marine mammals such as whales, sea lions, and sea otters. Although natural foods are richly available, human foods are also becoming increasingly available to wolves, threatening their existence and ultimately the entire ecosystem. While many wolves appear shy of people they are also curious and social animals. Some animals have shown an ability to become habituated and food-conditioned fairly quickly.

*Are you a guide?* Lead by example and instruct clients on proper safety etiquette while camping, recreating, or wildlife viewing in wolf country! While it is an incredible experience to see a wolf in real life, the key to your safety and the continued survival of these animals is for you to teach wolves to be fearful of humans. As wolves are clearly adapting to our presence, we must learn to adapt to theirs. Reducing the risk of conflict with large carnivores requires us to learn to live with them.

## PREVENTING CONFLICTS

- Space is safe! Keep as much distance as possible (ideally 100m+) from large carnivores.
- Do not leave food, garbage, compost, pet food, or items smelling of food outside, in kayak hatches, tents or available to wildlife. Properly store all attractants in locked wildlife-proof storage containers if available, in vehicles, or secured high in a tree.
- Never approach, entice, feed or take "selfies" with wildlife of any kind.
- Cook and eat meals far enough from your sleeping area.
- Pack out all garbage and compost.
- If you are approached by a wolf or cougar, scare the animal away immediately by being as big and loud as possible, staying in a group, and maintaining eye contact.
- If you encounter wolf pups or a kill site, leave the area immediately.

## For more background information on wolf ecology and safety, please refer to:

Pac Rim NPR: Living with Wildlife. <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/bc/pacificrim/visit/visit7/visit7c.aspx>.

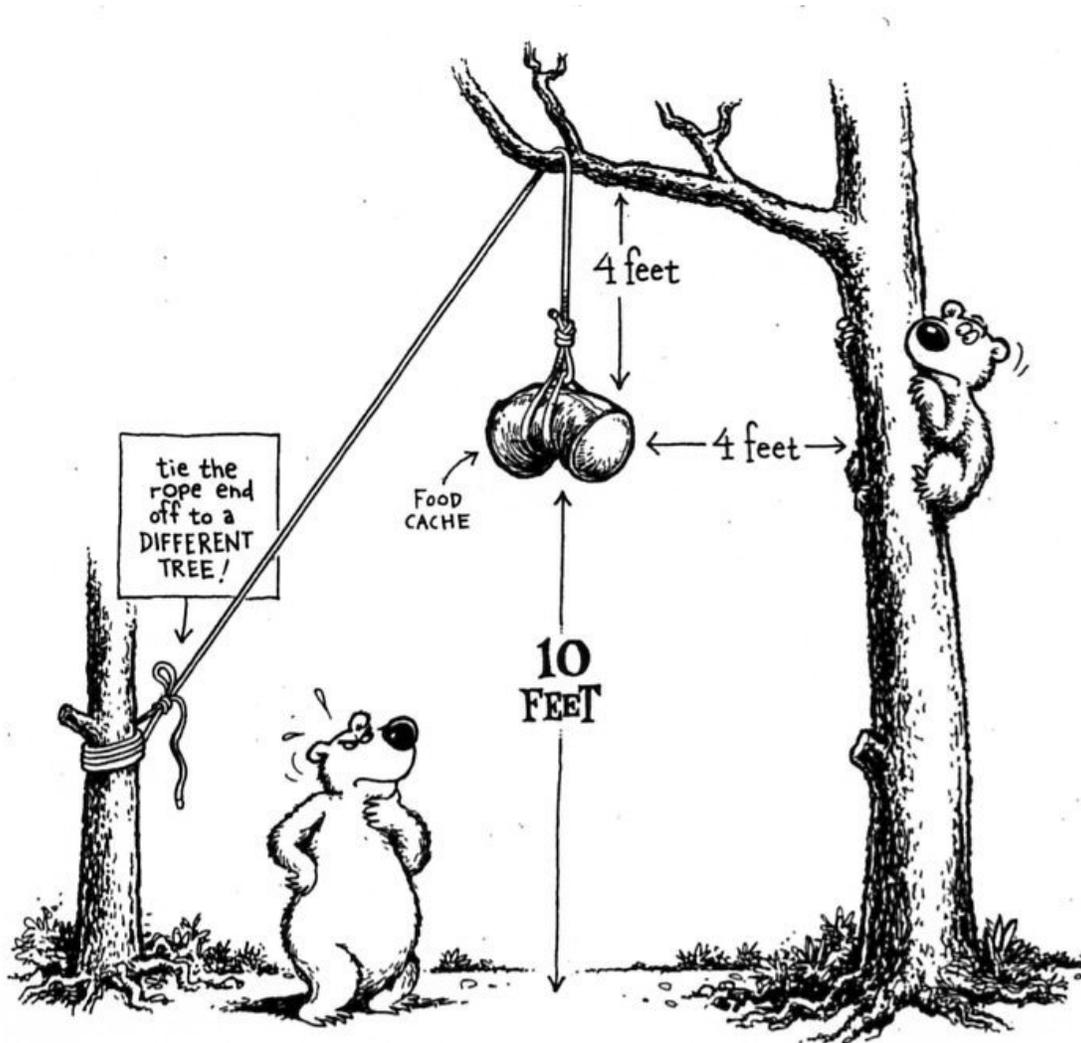
Carnivores of British Columbia (Royal British Columbia Museum)

Wildcoast Project Primer and Guidelines (Parks Canada, EKOS)

Wildlife of the Pacific Northwest (David Moskowitz)



# Bear/Wolf Food Hang



## What should go in a food hang?

- Food items (including sealed containers/cans)
- Toiletries (toothpaste, deodorant, etc)
- Garbage (empty food wrappers, etc)
- Chapstick/sunscreen
- Tampons, etc
- Cooking pots, utensils