

MANED WOLF

An Educational Bulletin from the
Maned Wolf SSP Management Committee

THE MAGNIFICENT MANED WOLF

South America is home to a wild dog unlike any other on earth. A rare daytime glimpse reveals what looks like a “fox on stilts”, a spectacular rust-red **canid** with a long, pointed muzzle and dark shoulder hairs, sauntering through the long grass on tall, thin, black legs. Brazilians have named it **lobo guará**, the

Maned wolf, for its wolf size and black shoulder mane that bristles when it is alarmed.

Standing three feet tall and weighing 50 pounds, the Maned wolf is South America’s largest wild dog. Chromosomal studies indicate it is neither fox nor true wolf, but a distinct species. Its body and behavior, shaped by two million years of life on the Brazilian plains, suit it superbly to its tropical tall grass environment.





The Maned wolf roams open forest, savannah and marshland from northeastern Brazil south through Paraguay and northern Argentina and west to Bolivia.

A **monogamous** pair shares a 10 square mile territory but the male and female travel and hunt alone. They join each other only for breeding and raising their young.

The pair mark the territory as their own using strong odors, loud sounds and menacing postures; signals that other wolves can easily recognize at a distance. Each partner deposits powerful smelling urine and feces on hillocks and termite mounds along the border of their territory. These personal scents serve as "no trespassing" signs to other wolves.

Around dusk Maned wolves emit loud barks, or **roar-barks** to let their mate know where they are and to warn other wolves to stay out of their hunting and living space. Neighboring wolves usually respect each other's boundaries. Should trespass occur, the defending wolf adopts a threat posture. It stands bolt-upright with back arched and shoulder hairs erect, suddenly appearing larger and more powerful, a sight often sufficient to scare off an intruder.



A Maned wolf frequently travels 20 miles in search of food to satisfy its wolf-size appetite. To save energy while traversing its large territory it uses a relaxed pacing gait, moving the legs on the same side of the body together instead of alternately.

Maned wolves **forage** mainly from dusk to dawn feed-

ing primarily on small mammals and a variety of fruits. They are much more **omnivorous** than their northern wolf cousins, and do not hunt large prey. The Maned wolf supplements its diet with insects, amphibians, small reptiles, birds and occasionally fish.

As it slowly stalks its concealed prey, the Maned wolf sniffs the air for telltale scents and rotates its ears, listening

THE MAN *Chrysocyon*

highly sensitive nose to sniff out
small prey in the tall grass

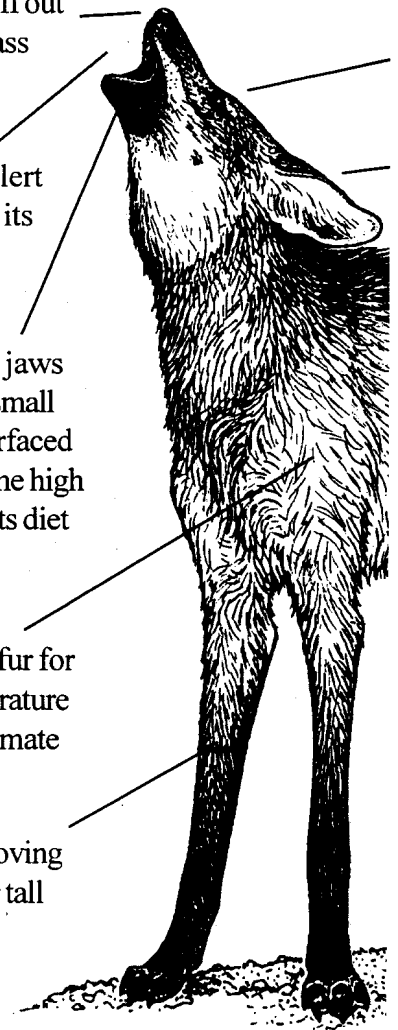
roar-barks carry far to alert
other Maned wolves to its
presence

small teeth and weak jaws
confine it to hunting small
animals. Has large surfaced
molars for processing the high
proportion of fruit in its diet

soft coat lacks underfur for
more efficient temperature
control in the hot climate

extremely long legs for moving
through and seeing over tall
grasses

toes spread sideways
to increase the area of contact
with marshy ground





for squeaks or rustling in the grass. It flushes its prey by tapping the ground with one front foot and catches the fleeing animal by using a stiff-legged pounce. Sometimes the Maned wolf digs out rodents with its feet.

The most important fruit in the Maned wolf's diet is **lobeira**, which is available year round. Passage of lobeira seeds through the Maned wolf increases their chance of

germinating, making the wolf important to the survival of a food source on which many grassland species depend. It has been suggested that lobeira's medicinal properties may protect the wolf against the **Giant kidney worm**, a potentially deadly **parasite** that infests fish or crustaceans the wolf eats. However, more research is needed to determine the accuracy of this claim. During the rainy season other fruits such as figs, bananas, guava and sugar cane are also consumed.

What is known of its breeding habits has been learned from observing captive Maned wolves. Between April

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brachyurus

big forward-facing eyes for accurately judging distances

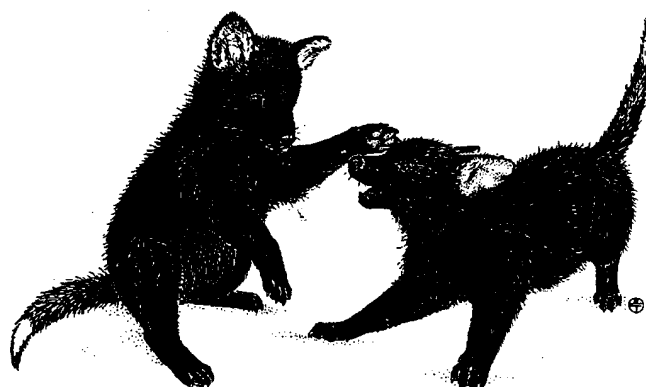
7 inch long ears held erect provide excellent hearing and can be moved in different directions for pinpointing prey

long hairs on back of neck and shoulders are raised in a threat display to make the Maned wolf look larger and more fearsome

urine and feces carrying a powerful skunk-like odor are deposited to scent mark its territory

longer back legs let it climb slopes with speed but make going downhill difficult

rough footpads and strong claws for gripping the ground



and June the Maned wolf pair come together to mate. About 65 days after mating the female gives birth to 1-5 black pups in a nest in a secluded thicket. From age 4 to 10 weeks the pups acquire the red adult coat. The long legs of the adult develop when the pups are 4 to 6 months old. The pups are nursed until their fourth week when **regurgitated** food is gradually introduced. The male sometimes provides food for the pups. In captivity the extent of his participation in pup-rearing seems to depend on the female. Although no one knows for sure, it is likely that pups leave the parents' territory when they are about one year old.

Though disease and parasites afflict Maned wolves, people are by far the Maned wolf's worst enemy. Humans kill Maned wolves for their body parts which are believed to have magical properties, and take over land the Maned wolf needs to live.

Maned wolves are extremely shy and stay away from people if they can. Unfortunately, conversion of their grassland habitat to crops and cattle grazing land is forcing them into contact with humans and their domestic animals. A taste for farmers' chickens gets Maned wolves shot.



People are also the **endangered** Maned wolf's best hope. The Maned wolf is protected by law in Brazil and Argentina. However, there is a need for protection to be extended beyond the parks and reserves.

North American zoos have established a **Species Survival Plan** for the Maned wolf. Zoos are breeding captive wolves and working with conservationists in South America to study the wolves in the wild, to safeguard areas where the Maned wolf lives, and to educate people to the importance of protecting such a beautiful and integral link in South America's grassland **ecosystem**.

Wouldn't you like to help the Maned wolf? You can by supporting organizations that are working to protect the Maned wolf and the grasslands it needs to survive.



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ZOOCABULARY

- Canid** - member of the dog family
- Chrysocyon brachyurus*** - scientific name for the Maned wolf - means golden dog with a short tail
- Ecosystem** - communities of living organisms interacting with the environment in which they live
- Endangered** - so reduced in number that unless conditions improve the species may soon disappear from the earth
- Forage** - search for food
- Giant Kidney Worm** - *Diectophyme renale* infects and damages or destroys the right kidney
- Lobo Guar** - Brazilian name for the Maned wolf
- Lobeira** - literally fruit of the wolf, a softball-size tomato-like fruit of a tropical everbearing plant *Solanum lycocarpum*
- Monogamous** - having the same mate for life
- Omnivorous** - eats both plants and meat
- Parasite** - an organism that lives in or on another living thing, feeding off it, often doing damage
- Regurgitated** - partially digested food brought back up
- Roar-bark** - a deep throated bark that carries long distances
- Species Survival Plan** - a cooperative effort by North American zoos and aquariums to conserve an endangered species through captive breeding, research, public education, field projects and reintroduction


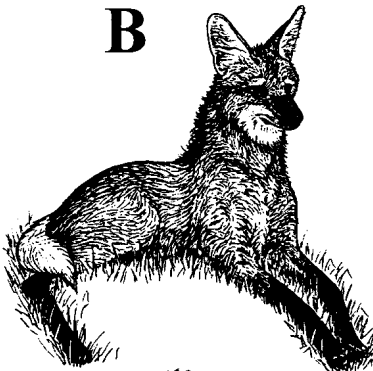
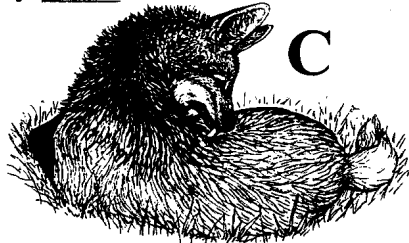

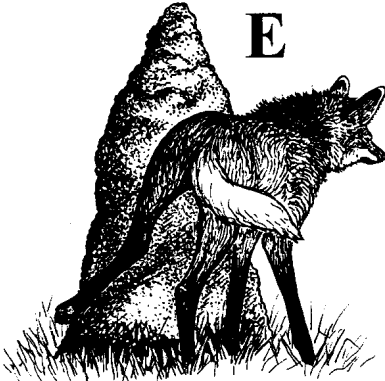


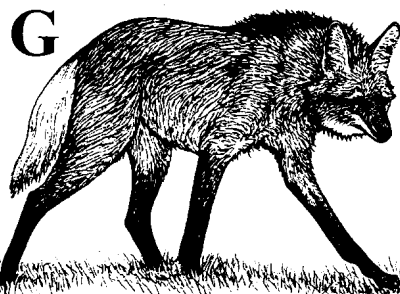





WOLF WATCHING

By watching Maned wolves you will discover that they don't behave like the Gray wolves we are more familiar with.

To learn more about these fascinating animals study the Maned wolf pictures below and match the pictures to the descriptions of what the Maned wolf is doing.

1. Using a Pacing Gait _____	A 	B 
2. Rotating its Ears _____		D 
3. Marking its Territory _____	C	
4. Threatening _____		E 
5. Roar-barking _____		F 
6. Self-grooming _____	G 	H 
7. Pouncing _____		
8. Resting _____		

