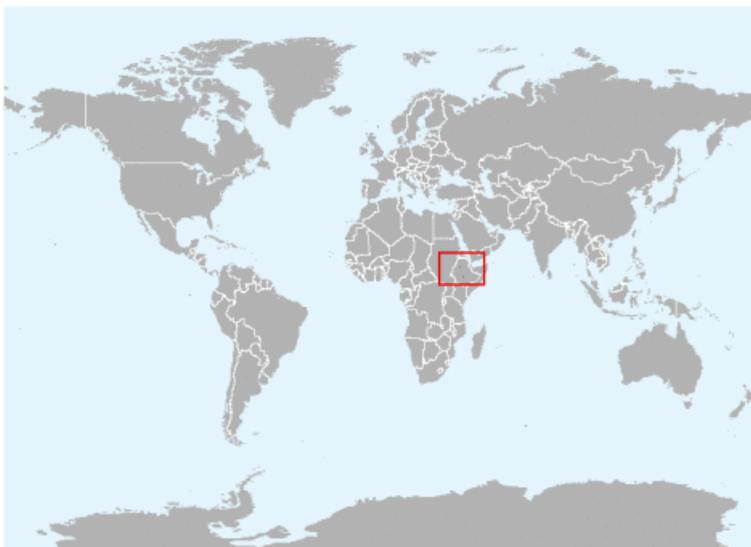


## The Ethiopian Wolf *Canis simensis*

Common names: Abyssinian fox, Red jackal, Simien fox and Simien jackal  
Head-body length: 84 - 100 cm, Shoulder height: 53 - 62 cm.  
Tail length: 27 - 40 cm, Weight 11 - 20 kg

The Ethiopian wolf is the only wolf species to be found in Africa. They number fewer than 500 in the wild, and has the unfortunate position of being the most threatened canid in the world. Native to the Ethiopian Highlands the species' current range is limited to seven isolated mountain ranges at altitudes of 3,000–4,500m, with the overall adult population having been estimated at 360-440 individuals. In the North of the Ethiopian highlands wolves are restricted to land above 3,500–3,800m by increasing agricultural pressure.



Wolf populations occur north of the Rift Valley in the Simien Mountains, Mount Guna, North Wollo and South Wollo highlands, and Menz. Recently extinct in Gosh Meda (North Shoa), and absent from Mt Choke, Gojjam, for a few decades. South-east of the Rift Valley there are populations in the Arsi Mountains (Mt Kaka, Mt Chilalo and Galama range) and in the Bale Mountains, including the Somkaru-Korduro range.

More than half of the species' population lives in the Bale Mountains, where wolf density is high for a social carnivore of its size. They are similar to the coyote in size and build, and are distinguished by their long legs, long and narrow skull. The fur is a bright tawny red colour, with whitish to ginger under fur, the under parts, chin, chest and the inside of the pointed ears are white, and the bushy tail is black. Unlike most large canids, which are widespread, generalist feeders, the Ethiopian wolf is a highly specialised feeder of Afroalpine rodents with very specific habitat requirements.



Ethiopian wolves live in close-knit territorial packs numbering between 3 and 13 adults. Prey includes the giant molerat (*Tachyoryctes macrocephalus*) and three species of grass rats. They hunt by skilfully stalking their prey out in the open or digging out burrows. The adults gather to patrol and mark the territory at dawn and dusk repelling any intruders, and rest together during the night, usually spent curled up in the open. Strong social bonds exist between members of the group, who greet each other excitedly. Male wolves seldom disperse, whereas many females leave their natal pack at maturity to seek a breeding opportunity elsewhere.



The dominant female of each pack gives birth between October and December, to a litter of two to six pups who spend their first three weeks of life inside a closely guarded den. Other members of the pack will assist with guarding the den from avian and terrestrial predators. They also regurgitate food for the pups for the first four months of their life.

The Ethiopian wolf is listed as Endangered by the IUCN, on account of its small numbers and fragmented range. Threats include increasing pressure from expanding human populations, resulting in habitat degradation through overgrazing and disease transference from free ranging dogs. Rabies is a potential threat to all populations, with canine distemper also a concern in Bale. Most of these threats are exacerbated by the wolves' specialization to life in the Afroalpine ecosystem. Its conservation is headed by Oxford University's EWCP (Ethiopian Wolf Conservation Program), which seeks to protect wolves through vaccination and community outreach programs. This project is aided by the UK Wolf Conservation Trust with the help of our members, annual funding is provided to help preserve this species for the future. There are no Ethiopian wolves in captivity.

