

SibFU scientists counted the Evenki wolves and told about what is threatening them

For the first time since the 1990s, scientists from the School of Ecology and Geography of Siberian Federal University conducted a comprehensive study of the wolf population living in the north of Krasnoyarsk Territory in Evenkia. To obtain accurate data on the number of predators, their sex and age structure and geographical variability, the scientists studied 242 wolves, 676 skulls and wolf fangs.



It was confirmed that the subspecies of the East Siberian Evenkia forest wolf (*Sapi lupus orientalis* Dybowski, 1922) is represented by two geographical populations. They differ in the peculiarities of biology and ecology. The boundaries in which the forest wolf of Evenkia lives are determined by its food supply — the North taiga wolf is influenced by the range of deer of the Taimyr tundra population, and for the middle taiga wolf it is forest reindeer and moose.

"An analysis of the characteristics of forest wolves has shown that the size and body weight of these animals increase towards the north and decrease towards the south. In the middle taiga of Evenkia, record—breaking heavy forest wolves were harvested - up to 80-90 and even up to 112 and 118 kg. We have compiled new and redesigned existing maps of the indigenous wolf habitat in the municipal area. It is obvious that seasonal migrations of non-territorial wolves, not tied to their lairs, are caused by the migration of wild ungulates from summer pastures to winter pastures and vice versa. The specialization of the nutrition of the Evenk Middle Taiga wolves with wild forest deer and moose is clearly traced. The Putoran wolf hunts tundra deer, removing up to 2-5% of the population. The Middle Taiga wolf eats up to 16% of the resources of the forest deer and 7% of the moose," said **Anatoly Suvorov**, head of the study, senior researcher at the School of Ecology and Geography of Siberian Federal University.



Scientists have clarified the important issue of the number of gray predators. Official data from the winter route surveys (WRS) show an increase in the number of wolves in Krasnoyarsk Territory from 6.4 thousand in 2017 to 10.9 thousand (8.8 thousand in Evenkia) in 2020. However, this is not consistent with the dynamics of its production and the number of wild reindeer and moose. The SibFU scientists believe that these data are significantly overestimated (by about 3.4 times).

"The calculation of the wolf population in Evenkia according to the brood sites where the lairs of territorial wolves are located showed that its population is 2,600. The North Taiga has 790 individuals (on 80 indigenous sites), and the Middle Taiga Evenki has 1,810 individuals (on 131 sites). Unfortunately, the root areas of the wolf's stay in Evenkia are not currently being identified. Their counting and mapping are not carried out. Wolf harvesting does not come down to real regulation of its numbers (this requires a clear system of government measures and financing of regular work), but only to the spontaneous extermination of the wolf as a harmful predator. This approach seems to us irrational and even dangerous for both deer and wolf populations, this animal is important for the ecosystems of Yenisey Siberia,"



said **Alexander Savchenko**, Head of the Department of Hunting Resource Studies and Conservation at SibFU.

Photo: *Roman Afanasyev*, Sayano-Shushenskiy Nature Reserve, graduate of the SEG SibFU

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