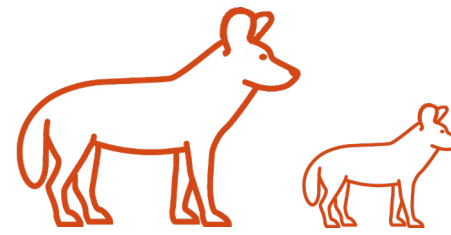
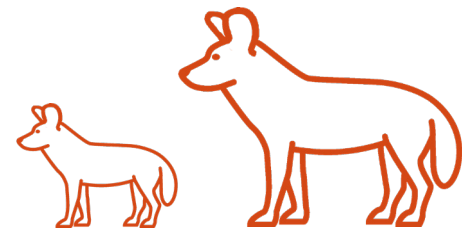


# PAINTED DOG



Painted dogs, also known as African wild dogs, Cape hunting dogs or painted wolves, are neither dog nor wolf, despite belonging to the *Canidae*\* family.

**LATIN NAME:** *Lycaon pictus*

**POPULATION:** Approximately 6,500 remaining in the wild.

**WHERE TO FIND THEM:** Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Senegal, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

**HABITATS:** Grassland, savanna, forest, shrubland, desert.

**IUCN STATUS:** *Endangered\**

The IUCN Red List is a critical indicator of the health of the world's biodiversity.

EX	EW	CE	EN	VU	NT	LC
EXTINCT	EXTINCT IN THE WILD	CRITICALLY ENDANGERED	ENDANGERED	VULNERABLE	NEAR THREATENED	LEAST CONCERNED

**LIFESPAN:** Seven years in the wild and up to 13 years in captivity.

**SIZE:** 65-75cm from the ground to the shoulder, 75cm-110cm from nose to base of tail. They weigh between 18-36kg.

**DIET:** Painted dogs are *carnivores*\* and will hunt for antelope such as impala and kudu, large wildebeest and small prey such as dik-dik and hare.

**PREDATORS:** The painted dogs' natural enemies are lions and spotted hyena; because the dogs are such good hunters scavenging hyenas are always hot on their tails. The dogs are also smaller than lions and hyenas, so they are always sure to keep a safe distance.

## COMMUNICATION:

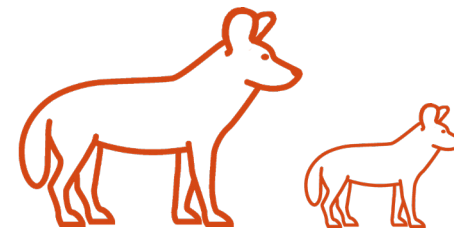
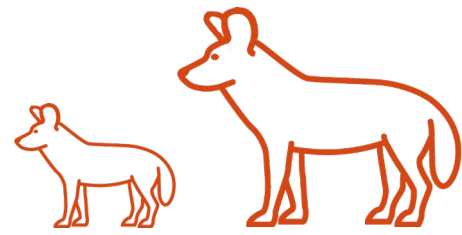


**FOR YOUNG READERS:** Painted dogs don't bark; they make twittering and whining noises as well as a 'hoo call' which can be heard a long way away.

**Calls:** painted dogs make various calls including the 'hoo call', twittering and whining sounds, unlike pet dogs they don't bark.

**Other ways to communicate:** the dogs also communicate using the positioning of their bodies, scent marking and their ears.





# PAINTED DOG

## FOR YOUNG READERS:



**Painted dogs live in groups called packs. They work as a team to hunt, to protect themselves from predators and to raise their puppies. If one of the dogs is sick and can't keep up with the hunt, the other dogs will bring food back from the hunt to make sure their packmate doesn't go hungry.**

**Painted dogs need lots of space to find food, hunt and raise their puppies.**

**No two wild dogs have the same spotted patterns—these are unique to each individual.**

## BEHAVIOUR

**Teamwork:** painted dogs are incredibly social animals and live in packs, usually between 6-30 dogs but sometimes more, they work brilliantly as a team. Before they go hunting the dogs all greet each other excitedly, they may also roll in poo to disguise their smell. When hunting as a pack, the dogs take it in turns at the front of the chase so that no one gets too tired. In this way they can run for a very long time after prey, until they finally exhaust the antelope that they are chasing. Whilst working as a team they can take down animals up to 10 times heavier than they are, such as wildebeest (which can weigh 250kg), they will also hunt in pairs or alone for small prey. Using this strategy, they are the most successful hunters in Africa catching around 80% of the animals that they hunt. Unfortunately, they do lose a lot of their kills to lions and hyenas, who will steal the food from the dogs, so they have to eat fast to ensure they don't lose their hard-earned meal.

**Leaders of the pack:** the pack is led by an *alpha*\* male and alpha female dog.

It is the alpha female who makes the decisions for the pack, for example when to hunt and where to go.

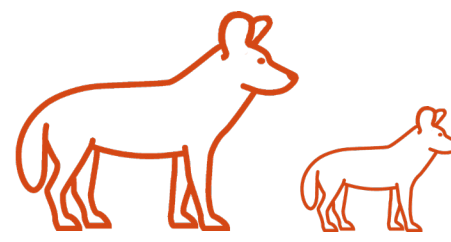
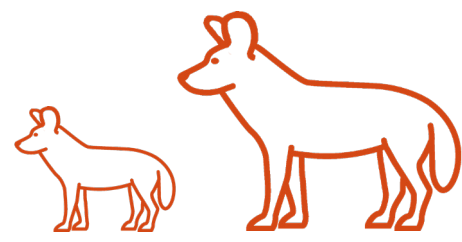
**Crepuscular:** painted dogs are crepuscular, mainly hunting when it is cooler, at dusk or dawn, this also helps them to avoid lions. During the heat of the day they can be found resting under a shady tree.

**Teammates:** painted dogs are as good as the weakest member of the pack. Healthy dogs will *regurgitate*\* meat for sick, old, injured and nursing packmates. Painted dogs always allow the pups to eat first after a kill. They share food and do not show aggression towards their packmates.

**Territory:** painted dogs have large territories which they scent mark. When the dogs are not denning and looking after puppies, they travel large distances to find prey. A single painted dog pack's territory can be up to 5,000km<sup>2</sup>, although during breeding season their range can be as small as 150km<sup>2</sup> so that they can stay near the pups.



# PAINTED DOG



## LIFECYCLE:



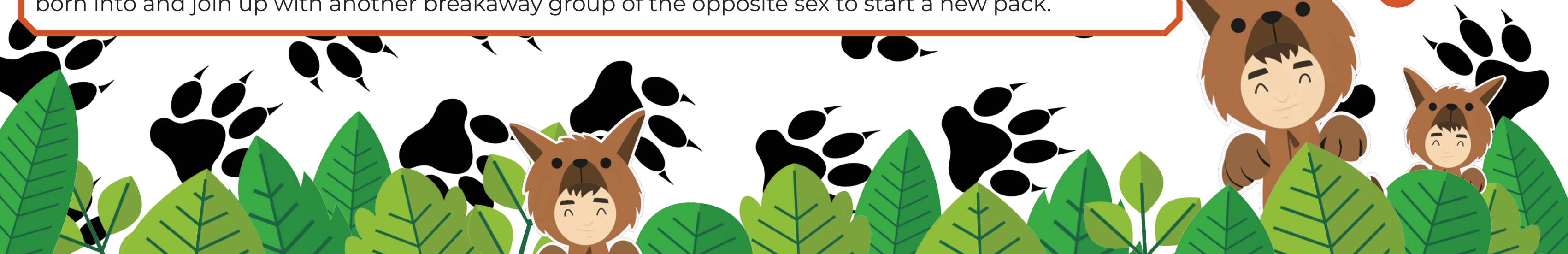
**FOR YOUNG READERS:** There is one top female dog and one top male dog in each pack, and they are the ones that have puppies. The puppies are born in a den underground, there can be as many as 16 puppies in a litter and all of the dogs in the pack help to look after them.

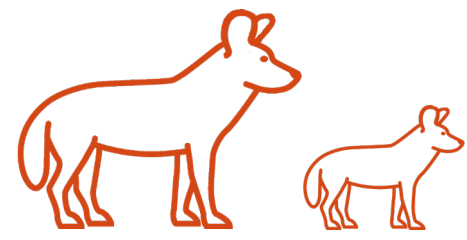
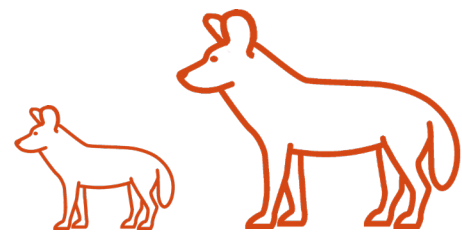
**Breeding:** the alpha pair are the only dogs in the pack who will breed. The breeding season is during the drier months when the dogs have more successful hunts. The alpha female will choose the spot where she will make the den to have her pups and the other pack members help her to dig it out. On average she will have 10 pups, but litters can number anything from 2-16 pups. For the first few months the pups remain in the den, occasionally the mother will move den sites, if she feels threatened or the den becomes too smelly. The pups are cared for by the whole pack, including feeding and pup sitting! The more dogs there are helping to raise the pups, the more pups will survive to become adults, but ideally a minimum of 4-6 dogs are needed to successfully raise puppies. When the pack go hunting one dog remains behind to puppy sit.

**Puppies:** the female is pregnant for 69-72 days, from five weeks old the puppies stop drinking milk from their mother and eat meat which is brought back by pack members who regurgitate it for the pups. From 12 months old they will take part in hunts with the rest of the pack.

**Leaving the pack:** usually at about two years old, siblings of the same sex leave the pack they were born into and join up with another breakaway group of the opposite sex to start a new pack.

All the dogs within the pack contribute towards the care of the newly born pups, as the pups are vital for the future survival of the pack.





# PAINTED DOG

## ADAPTATIONS:



**FOR YOUNG READERS:** Painted dogs are really good at hunting, their long legs help them to run fast and for a long time. Their coats are camouflaged helping them to blend in with the background.

**They use their large ears to listen out for danger, to the sounds of their pack and to hear the noises of animals that they like to hunt.**

**Teamwork:** is one of the most important *adaptations*\* for survival that the painted dog has - they all look out for one another and work together to hunt, raise their young and to defend themselves against *predators*.\*

**Camouflage:** painted dogs have magnificent coats with patches of black, red, brown, white and yellow. These patches help to break up the outline of the dogs so they can blend in with their surroundings. Each dog has a different pattern of patches, this helps scientists to tell them apart.

**Speed and endurance:** painted dogs can run fast for long periods of time, they have a *streamlined*\* body shape and long legs which enable them to reach speeds of between 60-72km/hr.

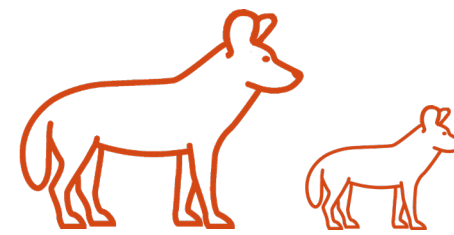
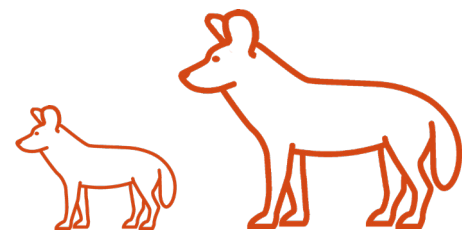
**Ears:** painted dogs have very large, rounded Mickey-Mouse ears which can be moved independently, this helps them to pick up the sounds of the African savanna. Their large ears may also help them cool down in the African heat.

**Sense of smell:** with their long muzzles, painted dogs have an excellent sense of smell, this helps them to locate prey.

**Water:** they have a large long intestine which helps them to absorb more moisture from their food, this is helpful at times when there is not much water around, such as during the dry season.







# PAINTED DOG

## WHY PAINTED DOGS ARE IMPORTANT:

### FOR YOUNG READERS:



Painted dogs help to keep the places where they live healthy by keeping the numbers of grazing animals down.

**They are very special, there are no other animals quite like them.**

**Balancing the ecosystem:** painted dogs play a vital role in the *ecosystems*\* they inhabit by keeping antelope populations down. If antelope, like kudu, impala and gazelle, were able to increase in number, they would overgraze (or browse) areas destroying the balance of the ecosystem.

**Unique:** painted dogs are unique, they are the only surviving member of the *Lycaon* genus.

**Tourism:** tourists travel to see painted dogs, by doing this they bring in money to the local economy, providing employment for local people in hotels, parks and as guides.

## WHY DO PAINTED DOGS NEED OUR HELP?



**FOR YOUNG READERS:** Painted dogs need lots of space to live and hunt, but they are losing large parts of their homes to people. They also get stuck in traps that are set by people to catch animals for food and can catch diseases from our pet dogs.

**Habitat Loss:** painted dogs need large areas of habitat to live and hunt in. Sadly, they are losing their habitats to human development.

**Competition for prey:** less habitat means that painted dogs live more closely to lions and hyenas who they compete with for prey.

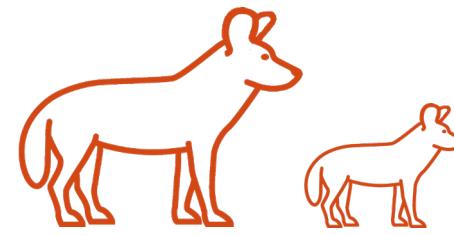
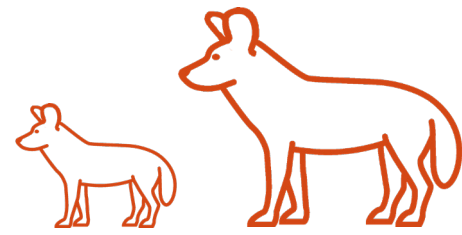
**Shot by farmers:** farmers worry that painted dogs will attack their *livestock*\*, so they shoot them to protect their farm animals.

**Climate change:** painted dogs do not like to hunt in the heat of the day and will not hunt when temperatures get too high. Climate change is causing changes in weather patterns and increasing temperatures around the world, researchers are worried that painted dogs will not be able to survive the temperature increases.

**Diseases:** because of habitat loss, painted dogs are living nearer to people and pets. This means that they are more likely to pick up diseases from pet dogs, such as canine distemper or rabies, once these diseases infect a pack it can kill many of the dogs.

**Snares:** poachers put out illegal *snares*\* to catch wild animals for bushmeat, because painted dogs travel large distances, they are more likely to get stuck in these snares.

**Roadkill:** with more roads now crossing important painted dog habitats the dogs are more likely to be hit by cars.



# PAINTED DOG

## HOW DOES DSWF HELP?

For over 20 years, DSWF has been supporting a programme that teaches children in Zimbabwe about painted dogs and why they are so important.

DSWF also helps fund anti-poaching teams, who are protecting painted dogs by removing harmful snares, and fitting the dogs with anti-snare collars.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP:

**ADOPT** - by adopting a painted dog you will directly fund DSWF's ground-based work protecting painted dogs.

**USE YOUR VOICE** - to let others know about the problems painted dogs are facing and how you can help protect them.

**BE MORE GREEN** - there are lots of things that we can all do to help the planet and it's incredible wildlife, [click this link](#) to find out what you can do!

## \*GLOSSARY:

- *Adaptations*: a change which occurs over time which makes an organism better suited to its environment.
- *Alpha*: the leader or most dominate animal in the pack, the top dog.
- *Canidae*: a biological family of dog-like carnivores, including domestic dogs, wolves, foxes and painted dogs.
- *Carnivores*: an animal that eats meat by hunting other animals.
- *Ecosystem*: living things interacting with one another and their environment.
- *Endangered*: at risk of extinction.
- *Livestock*: farm animals.
- *Predator*: an animal that preys on others.
- *Regurgitate*: to bring swallowed food back up to the mouth.
- *Snare*: trap for catching animals or birds.
- *Streamlined*: giving little resistance to the air, allowing the dogs to move more quickly.

World  
Painted Dog  
Day is  
celebrated  
annually on 26  
August.