

## **Not the Wolves...But the Wolfdogs**

Ranchers and livestock owners have fought centuries-old battles with wolves. Three species of wolves, the southeastern red wolf (*Canis rufus*), the gray wolf (*Canis lupus*), and a subspecies of the gray wolf called the Mexican gray wolf (*Canis lupus baileyi*) currently roam regions of Texas. In the early 19th century, Oklahoma supported a large population of the red wolf, but people only hear about rumors of wild wolves in Oklahoma today. In the whole world, only two recognized species of the wolf exist, the gray and the red wolf. Scientists and conservationists consider the rest subspecies of the two. (1)

The red wolf is on the federal endangered species list and protected by federal law. Genetic testing in 2011 found that the red wolf is a possible hybrid between gray wolves and coyotes. (2) Gray wolves roamed throughout the lower 48 states and are ancestors to domestic dogs. (3) The Mexican gray wolf at one time was found from central Mexico throughout the southwestern U.S. (4)



Grey Wolf

## **Wild Wolf Survival**

Wolves living in the wild need three resources to survive and maintain a stable population:

1. Adequate population and density of prey for their food source.
2. A habitat large enough to support their pack and their food source.
3. Tolerance from humans. (5)



Red Wolf

### **Wild Wolf Endangerment**

The wolf, the only species humans purposely and methodically forced to extinction, almost disappeared from the earth by the mid-1960s. For centuries, an estimated 250,000 to 500,000 wolves lived in the U.S. peacefully with Native Americans and the numerous ecosystems within it. (6) Worldwide efforts and campaigns have saved them for future generations. Science has discovered the wolf's high value in respect to conservation and wildlife management in the last 40 years.



Mexican Grey Wolf

### **Wolfdogs Become the Losers**

What is a wolfdog? As Cesar Millan explained in a 2010 episode of Dog Whisperer on [wolf-dog hybrids](#), there is a world of difference in that tiny fraction of DNA that separates dogs from wolves — about 1% in the case of the former, versus nearly 2% in the case of humans and apes. “The more wolf in a hybrid, the wilder the animal,” Cesar says, “and more problems for the humans who believe they can tame them.” (7)

Two wolfdogs currently own me, Waya Agali who is almost eight years old, and Yuma Boudreaux who turns three in March. I love what this guy, [Jon Bastian](#), teaches the public about wolf behavior. Bottom line: hybrid wolves are not domesticated dogs and experience abuse because they are so beautiful but not domestic or end up in the dogfighting ring or euthanized in the dog pound.

The first wolfdog who owned me was an Australian dingo. I found her all beat up and bloody. She had lost her last dogfight, and her owners would have normally shot her dead at the end of the fight, but for some reason, they showed her mercy and dumped her on I35 in Valley View, Texas. Her owners had one of her pupils surgically removed and spayed her. She was probably born in the U.S. Australians consider dingoes hybrid wolves and feral. My dingo was every bit a wolf in nature and I learned invaluable lessons from her.

I believe that humans should never have bred wolves with domestic dogs, but since wolfdogs are here, with thousands living in nonprofit wolfdog sanctuaries and many euthanized in kill shelters because they are not adoptable, we must take care of them. When I became disabled, I found possible homes for mine just in case I could not afford them. I learned to buy all the heartworm and summer bug-away necessities in the winter, and I can afford their food and treats.

### **Most Dog Lovers Do Not *Really* Want a Woldog, But . . . If You Do . . .**

From the [Wolfdog Alliance](#) website: The main problem is that people buy wolfdogs not understanding what they really are. Those people do not do the research. Having a wolfdog is a full-time job. Most people realize this only when a wolfdog becomes bigger and older. One statistic shows that almost 65% of all wolfdogs purchased from a breeder end up in a rescue or are euthanized by the age of three. . . All in all, having a wolfdog is more like having a wolf than having a dog.

Hybrid wolves take a gentle hand and positive reinforcement because negative punishment will break the trust the wolfdog has built with a human or humans. That does not mean you cannot be firm. I have plenty of arguments with my wolves, and I must win them, but I have never punished them.

### **Are You Willing to Keep All Food and Garbage Locked Up?**

Resources are of the utmost importance to a wolfdog, and they know how much food you buy and when you buy it. When Waya is low on dog food, she goes to the 50-pound bag and punches its sides down on top of the food with her nose in order to

store it, and then she guards it from Yuma. Yuma guards the water bucket in retaliation. Sometimes they fight about who is to go out the door first.

Waya was born with a sweet tooth and loves marshmallows. She taught Yuma to love them too. Wolfdog parents need garbage cans that they can lock or hatch tightly. Granted, I bind up my refrigerator with bungee cords because Waya taught Yuma how to open it. I accidentally left it unlocked after Thanksgiving this year and went to the store. Waya and Yuma threw their own Thanksgiving party.

If Waya or Yuma sees that I have not put away their bags of marshmallows and any other tempting groceries, they quickly take them into their “den”, hide them under the blanket, and slowly eat them. My brain stocks hundreds of wolfdog and wolfdogs with food stories; some hilarious and some scary.

### **What Kind of Companionship Can You Expect From a Wolfdog?**

High content wolfdogs do not bark and become fiercely loyal with time. They do not behave like guard dogs. They love all the creature comforts that a poodle relishes and will climb in bed with you nightly if you allow that. They do not accept anyone, including the people they love, near their faces. They let you know by growling or other means that you crossed a line. My wolves live inside, and they can get on the bed, but they cannot sleep with me. We conduct howling sessions several times a week.

Wolfdogs can live outside happily, but like with any animal, you must provide for their needs. This is what the [St. Francis Wolf Sanctuary](#) in Montgomery, Texas, provides for their outdoor rescues: All enclosures have houses, wooden platforms to lounge on, large water tubs to wade in, and trees and other sources of shade. During the hot summer months, there is a misting system to bring down the temperature, and during the winter we provide our animals with straw to keep warm.

A wolfdog’s body stance and ear and tail positions alert their parents to what they may be planning to do. Every wolfdog parent needs to [learn their body language](#). I can tell what Waya is about to do by looking at her body stance and ear position, and at times I can feel that she is about to aggress.

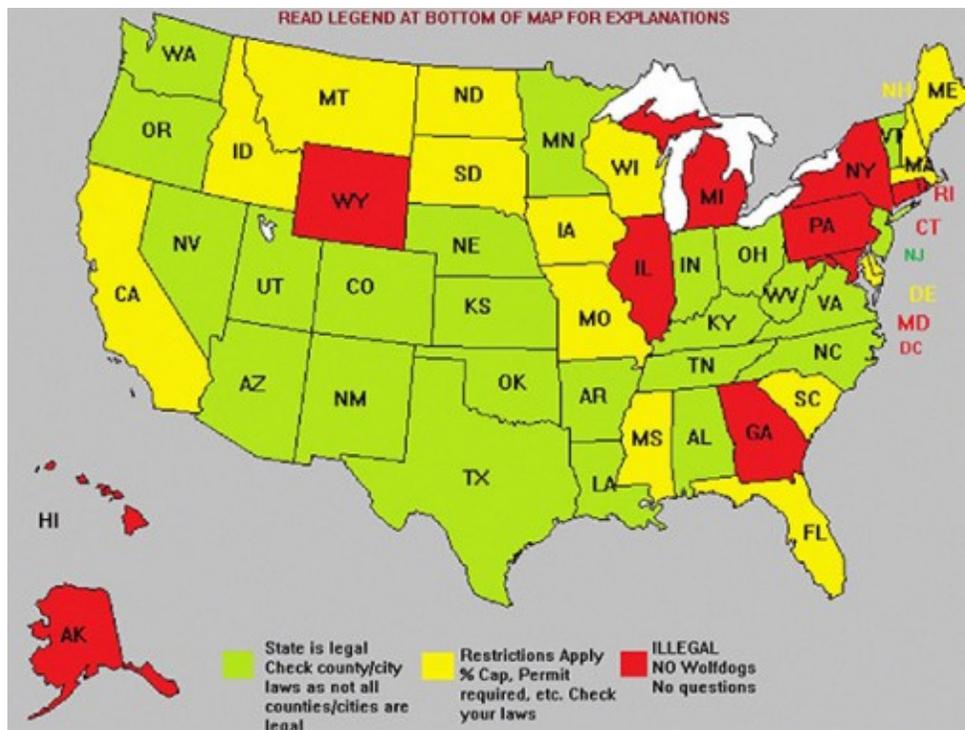
Each wolfdog develops his or her own unique personality. Waya’s most formative years between age five weeks and three years brought on arguments like you might expect from your teenager. Waya loves men and will let them in her territory without showing aggression, but she quickly becomes wary of fast movements and any movement that suggests harm. She does not like women and children. Yuma trusts no one, and it takes three months for him to warm up to people. He likes to get behind new people and sniff at them and then run if they try to touch him. He is aggressive, growls easily, and will fight. He loves to kiss me. Waya loves to smell my breath.

## Legalities and Wolfdogs

Check with your state and local authorities to find out what statutes apply to wolfdog ownership in your area. The regulations widely differ in all regions. I posted the most recent map I could find of the states which do and do not allow wolfdogs. I do not allow a wolfdog near anyone under the age of 18 because of liabilities. No one should leave a child alone with one. Wolfdogs need a long-term commitment from their parents because they can live to be 18 or 20 years old. They do not belong with a family who stays away from the home for more than four hours if the animal cannot go with them.

High content wolfdogs are more difficult to control than low or mid content wolfdogs. Waya is 75% timber wolf (a grey wolf mix with malamute and German shepherd), and Yuma is about one-third timber wolf and two-thirds king German shepherd. He will obey sit and stay commands as long as there are no other animals or food around him. I find it more challenging to manage Waya than Yuma.

You can leash train wolfdogs. It only took Waya one session in downtown Grapevine, Texas, to leash train her at six months of age. You need a solid fence. Wolfdogs can learn to undo latches and climb chain link fences. They instinctively want to territorialize 50 to 500 acres. Owners should invest in a large indoor or outdoor kennel. Wolfdogs like them and feel at home in them like the kennel is their den.



No Publish Date Available

**Please Do Not Buy a Wolfdog from a Breeder**

If you seriously want to adopt a wolfdog, please think about all the wolfdogs that need rescuing. If you type wolfdog or hybrid wolf adoption into a search engine, numerous nonprofit rescue groups and sanctuaries from around the world pop up. They are not adoptable from most pounds, but thousands await permanent homes. Waya came from an irresponsible wolfdog breeder who could not take care of the puppies. Please do not look for a hybrid wolfdog breeder, but take care of the ones without homes first.

### **Wolfdog Adoption Requirements**

Every wolfdog rescue organization maintains a set of rules for adoptive wolfdog parents. Many of them require training and education and home visits before and after adoption. Most will not adopt to families with young children, and sometimes not to families with other animals. They do not adopt wolfdogs out to people that expect the animal to become a guard dog.

Many of these charities sponsor visits, Boy Scout and Girl Scout adventures, and even camping experiences, plus some of them sell merchandise to support the wolfdogs. Most of them desperately need volunteers and funds. Some have no property and rely solely on foster families. Some wolfdog sanctuaries do not adopt out their dogs, but they keep them for life, serve to protect them, and educate the public.

### **Wolfdog Surf for Yourself**

Take a look at this application to adopt or foster from Wolfdog Rescue in England: <https://www.wolfdogrescue.co.uk/adopt/>

Check out the Texas Wolfdog Project beautiful adoptable wolfdogs: <https://texaswolfdogproject.org/>

See the problems with surrender options from Grey Wolf Central Wisconsin Wolfdog Rescue: <http://www.thegreywolf.org/page2.php>

You can camp at the Wild Wolf Spirit Sanctuary in Ramah, New Mexico: <https://www.wildspiritwolfsanctuary.org/>

Resources for natural remedies from the Lake Tahoe Wolf Rescue: <http://www.laketahoewolfrescue.com/Natural-Remedies.html>