

Early Ontogenetic Diet in Gray Wolves, *Canis lupus*, of Coastal British Columbia

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Bryan, Heather M., Chris T. Darimont, Thomas E. Reimchen, and Paul C. Paquet. 2006. Early ontogenetic diet in Gray Wolves, *Canis lupus*, of coastal British Columbia. *Canadian Field-Naturalist* 120(1): 61-66.

Within populations, different age classes often consume dissimilar resources, and provisioning of juveniles by adults is one mechanism by which this can occur. Although the diet of Gray Wolves (*Canis lupus*) has been studied extensively, the diet of pups is largely unknown. We examined faeces deposited by altricial pups and adult providers during the first two months following birth at two den sites over two years on the central coast of British Columbia, Canada. Pups and adult wolves consumed similar species, and Black-tailed Deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) constituted most of the diet for both age groups. Pup and adult diet, however, diverged. Specifically, adult deer occurred significantly less frequently in the diet of pups than in the diet of adult wolves, which suggests that adults selectively provisioned pups. We speculate that this may relate to adaptive strategies of adult wolves to provide their offspring with food of optimal nutritional value or reduced parasitic burden, and/or logistic factors associated with provisioning such as prey transportability and availability.

Key Words: Gray Wolf, *Canis lupus*, Sitka Black-tailed Deer, *Odocoileus hemionus*, provisioning, pups, diet, British Columbia.