

DINGO HISTORY

“Dingoes form a discrete evolutionary lineage, distinct and distinguishable from modern domestic dogs and wolves”. No one is sure where the dingo comes from. Even the Latin name is in dispute. *Canis lupus* which is wolf and *Canis familiaris* is domesticated dog. *Canis lupus dingo* and *Canis familiaris dingo* are both found in many different studies.



However, studies are ongoing to see if they descend from wolves or modern day Asian village or domestic breeds. The jury is still out for debate.



Descriptions of dingoes note that the animals “vary in coloring, have pricked ears, a long, narrow torso and a relatively large head,”. Male dingoes are often bigger than females in body size. They have different color coats ranging from a reddish-sandy color to white, and even black, but they all have the same undercoat which is white underparts, paws, and tail tip. The reddish-sandy color is the most common. Studies have shown that “the dingo apparently already had or quickly developed effective adaptations to the Australian environments,”



DINGO REPRODUCTION

The dingo reproduction period is usually in the springtime between March and June. They only have one time in the year to reproduce.

Reproduction happens only between the alpha male and alpha female in which “dominant pairs often mate for life,”. The period of gestation is 63 days then 4-6 pups are born but occasionally more up to 10. Dingoes are altricial in their pack. Both parents, siblings and other members in their pack help with the raising and caring of the young. Average weaning time of the pups is about 56 days and around 4 months, they begin to hunt small prey. Dingoes are fully grown around 7 months old. Male dingoes become sexually mature around year one and female dingoes mature at year two, some will disperse on their own or choose to stay with their parents for a while. Studies have shown that in the wild, dingoes can live 5-10 years and even longer in captivity, 5-20 years.

DINGO FENCE/KEYSTONE SPECIES

Fences can be considered a small threat to them as well. Dingoes have been called pests due to their hunting of sheep. As such the building of “fences to assist in the control of the dingo have long been a feature of the Queensland pastoral scene”. Their constant hunting of sheep and cattle brought about a giant outcry from these owners to do something about their huge losses in capital due to the hunting. So, a dingo fence was made. It is 5600km or 3488 miles long.

Dingoes are a keystone species for the continent of Australia. The fence seen from space makes this very clear. Erosion due to many grazing animals that the dingo preys on like sheep, kangaroos, and rabbits has caused widespread damage. Without the dingoes to keep vegetation grazing animal numbers down, erosion is expected to continue.

Dingoes are limited to the continent of Australia.

Sometime after they migrated to Australia, they remained isolated from the rest of the continents. There is no land bridge or any other land connecting them to the other continents. Dingoes live mainly in western and central Australia. They live in many different habitats. Dingoes are very adaptable to these different habitats.

They can be found in the forests, plains, rural mountain regions, coastal lowlands and in desert regions that lie across Australia. In some studies, “top predators are thought to synchronize their activity land use with those of preferred prey”. This could explain why the dingo is found in so many different landscapes.

APEX PREDATOR

The different landscapes dingoes can be found in lead to a large variety of prey for them. Dingoes are the apex predator animal and a keystone species in Australia with no animal hunting them. They are known to go after cattle, kangaroos, rabbits, birds, and even insects. But dingoes prefer the easier to catch “small and medium-sized prey, rodents Dingoes hunt in a variety of ways, studies found they “may hunt in socially integrated groups or alone”. Since they live in packs and alone, each hunting style adapted to work “in general, solitary dingoes kill small- to medium-sized prey, whereas cooperative hunting by a stable pack is required to subdue larger animals”. Due to the connectivity of Australia being cut off for so long, there is nothing that hunts the dingo.

