



International Wolf Center

# Ethogram

Ely, Minnesota, USA  
Teaching the World about Wolves  
[www.wolf.org](http://www.wolf.org)



## The Exhibit Pack: Grizzer, Maya, Aidan and Denali

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### Grizzer

Grizzer was born May 5, 2004 at the Minnesota Wildlife Connection in Sandstone, Minnesota. The Center chose two littermates, a male, Grizzer and a female, Maya, and a pup born a week later, a female named Nyssa. All three were great plains subspecies of the gray wolf, (*Canis lupus nubilus*), although Nyssa was unique with a black pelage.

Grizzer is almost identical to his littermate Maya. However, he is distinguished by his size; males are commonly larger than females. In addition, the dark gray coarse hairs on his forehead are somewhat more abundant than those on Maya's forehead, and he has prominent dark lines in the middle of his face. He has a bold personality when it comes to the other wolves. If there is a grayish wolf riding up or grabbing the tail of another wolf, it is usually Grizzer.

After the 2008 pup introduction, we saw a remarkable change in Grizzer's behavior. He was very calm, a bit food obsessive, and very interested in the pups through the gate. We were uncertain if this was a 2nd ranking male looking for the next pecking order, or if there was more to it. During the spring of the year, it's a natural process for both male and female wolves to cycle an increase in prolactin hormone during the pup whelping season. Grizzer seemed to be under the influence of his hormonal urges. When the pups were finally introduced, he rolled over for them, sought them out for social interaction, and allowed them to climb, chew, pull and grab. He was even observed allowing Denali to lie on his stomach when he was flat on his back. By the winter of 2009, the pups (now yearlings) were well over 100 lbs. Grizzer continued to show tolerance, and that best describes Grizzer's personality trait, tolerant.



1/29/2005



2008 Pup Introduction



8/8/2008



8/14/2008

9/28/2008

10/6/2008

9/5/2004

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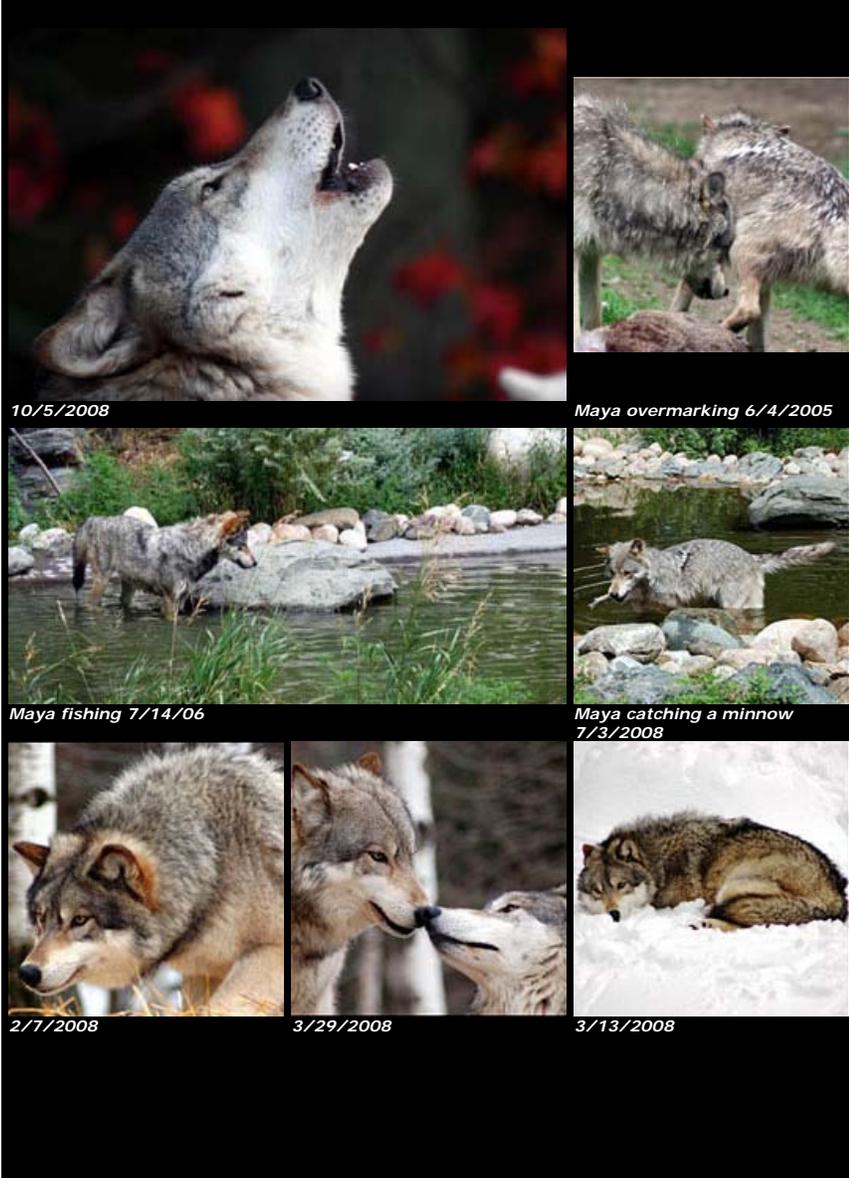
### Maya

Maya was born May 5, 2004 at the Minnesota Wildlife Connection in Sandstone, Minnesota. The Center chose two littermates, a male, Grizzer and a female, Maya, and a pup born a week later, a female named Nyssa. All three were great plains subspecies of the gray wolf, (*Canis lupus nubilus*), although Nyssa was unique with a black pelage.

Maya is grayish brown and is best distinguished by the more slender face characteristic of a female wolf. She has more brownish coloration on her face and a slight reddish tinge around her neck hair.

Maya is the sole female of the Exhibit Pack and prior to Shadow's retirement, had pair bonded with Shadow. When Shadow began showing physical weaknesses that ultimately led to his retirement, Maya began to establish new bonds. At the time of this DVD publication, she has a unique relationship with Aidan. Maya may display a behavior called Parallel gating, where a dominant male and female walk shoulder to shoulder in a ritualized bonding behavior. Another notable behavior for Maya is an over mark. If there is food, a cache or a foreign smelling object, Maya will do a modified raised leg urination on the spot, multiple times in some cases. She is alert to the actions of the other wolves, and displays stalking and ambush behavior daily.

Maya has been a good disciplinarian to the 2008 pups Aidan and Denali, although she has not shown the same level of tolerance and play with them that Grizzer has.



10/5/2008

Maya overmarking 6/4/2005

Maya fishing 7/14/06

Maya catching a minnow 7/3/2008

2/7/2008

3/29/2008

3/13/2008



6/10/2004

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### Aidan

The 2008 pups were born on April 27, 2008 at the Wildlife Science Center in Forest Lake, Minnesota. The litter represented the northwestern or rocky mountain subspecies of the gray wolf, (*Canis lupus occidentalis*) and the Center chose two males, Denali and Aidan. Once again, this is a unique time in captive wolf management as it is the first time the Center has managed three subspecies within a pack representing three age structures. The introduction to the pack was very smooth and the pups have formed strong social bonds with their new packmates.

Aidan was nicknamed "Attila" when he arrived at the International Wolf Center in 2008. As a pup he was aggressive, ready to pounce, curious and very independent. He exhibited dominance and predatory behavior earlier than his littermate Denali.

Aidan integrated into the pack, showed appropriate submission to the adult wolves. As of October 2008, Aidan had developed a strong alliance with Shadow. After Shadow's retirement, Aidan began to display more dominant postures, and increased social behavior with Maya.

Aidan is easily distinguished from his littermate as he has developed gray guard hairs and is slightly smaller than Denali.

The photo sequence to the right and down shows Aidan's development from one month to five months old.



10/8/2008



5/30/2008



6/17/2008



7/20/2008



7/27/2008



8/11/2008



9/8/2008

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### Denali

The 2008 pups were born on April 27th, 2008 at the Wildlife Science Center in Forest Lake, Minnesota. The litter represented the northwestern or rocky mountain subspecies of the gray wolf, (*Canis lupus occidentalis*) and the Center chose two males, Denali and Aidan. Once again, this is a unique time in captive wolf management as it is the first time the Center has managed three subspecies within a pack representing three age structures. The introduction to the pack was very smooth and the pups have formed strong social bonds with their

new packmates.

Denali, littermate to Aidan, is the larger of the two males. From his first days at the International Wolf Center, Denali ate well and gained weight faster than Aidan. While Aidan was an intense predatory pup that was easily distracted during mealtime, Denali was easy going and calm, and would focus on food, no matter what happened. But, that doesn't mean that Denali wouldn't defend himself.

Although Aidan could be very intense during interactions, Denali would ultimately defend his position if Aidan got carried away. When the pups were introduced into the main enclosure Denali continued to be the more relaxed of the two. Denali, in general, didn't submit to dominance as quickly as Aidan did, acting more independently.

Denali's successful integration into the pack and the benefits of his robust size were summarized well in the wolf logs of 9/15/2008:

*"Denali's coat is very sleek, with long reddish guard hairs. He is developing well and is as tall as Maya. His ability to guard food is tremendous and he has the courage to take on any wolf except Shadow. Denali and Grizzer continue to be social companions, although Grizzer spends time with both pups."*

The photo sequence to the right shows Denali's development from one month to five months old.



Denali at five months

8/25/2008



5/22/2008



6/16/2008



7/20/2008



8/4/2908



8/12/2008



9/29/2008

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