

Ethiopian Wolf

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Key Features of the Ethiopian Wolf

- **Specialized habitat and role:** The Ethiopian wolf is a **specialized rodent hunter** in Afroalpine ecosystems and unique African high-altitude regions.
 - These ecosystems, located mainly in the **Ethiopian Highlands**, exist at altitudes of **3,200 meters above sea level** and are characterized by **cold and harsh climates**.
- **Physical characteristics:** The wolf is about the size of a large dog, with a **reddish coat, white throat and chest markings**, and a **bushy black tail**.
- **Population status:** With fewer than **500 individuals remaining**, the Ethiopian wolf is **Africa's most endangered carnivore**.

- **Habitat specificity:** It resides in isolated “**sky islands**”, high-altitude regions above tropical forests, surrounded by drastically different lowland environments.

Ethiopian Wolf’s Role as a Pollinator

- **Interaction with Ethiopian red hot poker flower:** The wolf feeds on the **nectar** of the **red and yellow Ethiopian red hot poker flower**, a plant that produces **sweet nectar** attracting multiple pollinators.
 - As the wolf moves between flowers, **pollen dusts its muzzle**, potentially aiding in **pollination**.
 - **Behavioural observations:** Researchers observed wolves spending significant time in flower fields, with one wolf visiting **30 flower heads in 1.5 hours**.
 - This behaviour indicates that the wolf actively seeks **nectar**, a rare trait for large carnivores.
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Q1: What is pollination?

Pollination is the transfer of pollen grains from the male part (anther) of a flower to the female part (stigma) of the same or another flower, enabling fertilization and the production of seeds. It is essential for plant reproduction, biodiversity, and the production of fruits, vegetables, and seeds that sustain ecosystems and agriculture.

Wolves with a taste for nectar? How we discovered the first large carnivore that pollinates flowers

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