

Low Elevation Forest Tanoak Zone

Wolf / Ikkâavnamich / *Canis lupus*



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Cultural Importance

Wolves once inhabited Karuk territory, but by the 1920's were decimated by Euro-American hunting, trapping and poisoning. Federal protections have led to an increase in wolf populations and wolf has returned to California and has been observed just east of Karuk Territory. Karuk people welcome the return of the wolf as an animal that is important to tribal spiritual practices and ecosystem stability.

Life Cycle & Habitat

Ikkâavnamich habitat tends to be more prey dependent than land cover dependent. In the West, wolves are known to follow large ungulate herds from their lowland wintering grounds to their upland pastures.

Ikkâavnamich creates its own den in meadows near water, rock outcroppings, under tree roots, or even old beaver lodges. To succeed as a pack, wolves need large, remote areas free from much human disturbance (Snyder 1991)

Ikkâavnamich and Fire

In Karuk territory, deer and elk would be the primary prey of ikkâavnamich. Given that these ungulates benefit from the effect of fire on plant communities, ikkâavnamich indirectly depends on burns to sustain the dietary and habitat needs of its primary prey species (Snyder 1991). High intensity fire that destroys large stands, however, can reduce the cover needed by elk and deer, and force them to relocate, straining the herd. Given their small numbers, wildfire can also affect the wolves directly if individuals, particularly pups, are subject to high-intensity wildfire

Effects of High Severity Fire Across Time

Immediate	2-Year	Long-Term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wildfire could kill pups in the den or elsewhere if they lack fast mobility. Given the small population numbers, the impact of this loss could be significant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Burns that destroy entire stands may force ungulates to seek new forested areas, straining the herd and thus affecting wolves' diets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The conversion of forest to shrub or meadow habitat could benefit the prey and subsequently wolves.
Sources:	Sources: Snyder 1991	Sources:

Effects of Karuk Cultural Burning Across Time

Immediate	2-Year	Long-Term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Areas with known dens can be avoided during the pack's most vulnerable times to ensure survivability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Woody encroachment of meadows is controlled, protecting elk wintering habitat and therefore promoting prey abundance for wolves. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meadows, tan oak groves and quality browse is maintained, ensuring healthy ungulate populations that can sustain wolves long-term.
Sources:	Sources: Snyder 1991	Sources:

Effects of Federal Fire Management Strategies on Species' Climate Change and Fire Resilience

Prior to Fire	During Fire	After Fire
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suppression compromises ungulate habitat and diet, thereby reducing prey availability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Longer climatically driven changes in the precipitation (snow depth) and fire regimes could affect prey (e.g. elk) and wolf populations.
Sources: Snyder 1991	Sources:	Sources: Hebblewhite 2005