

# 'Queen of the Wolves'—one of Yellowstone's oldest—dies after rival pack fight

January 9 2025, by Brooke Baitinger

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Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

One of the oldest and most beloved wolves in Yellowstone National Park died after a fight with a rival pack in late December, park officials said.

Wolf and wildlife advocates are mourning the loss of the [wolf](#), officially named 907F but known as "Queen of the Wolves" among her fans and followers.

She was the longtime leader of the park's Junction Butte pack, where she had 10 litters of pups—the most recorded for a wolf in the park, biologist Kira Cassidy told McClatchy News in an email on Jan. 8. One of her sons is now the alpha male of the Mollie's pack.

She was born into the pack in 2013 and inherited the leadership role when her aunt died, Cassidy said. Wolf societies are matrilineal, so the territory is passed down through the female line.

Leadership switched between [adult females](#) every year or two between 2017 and 2023—and sometime during this period, 907 lost her left eye to an unknown cause, Cassidy said.

At 11.7 years old, 907 was the fifth-oldest wolf ever recorded in the park, Cassidy said. She died after defending her pack against the neighboring Rescue Creek pack in late December.

"Life in the wild, even in a protected place like Yellowstone, is dangerous and it is extremely rare that wolves die of old age," Cassidy said. "On average, wolves only live to be 3–4 years old and only one out of about every 250 born reach 11 years old."

Only five other Yellowstone wolves have reached 11 years old since 1995, and the oldest in the park was 12.5, officials said. The oldest wild wolf ever recorded was 13.75 years old and lived in Idaho.

Park staff and wildlife advocates alike took comfort in knowing 907 died naturally and not at the hands of a human or a car—unlike the park's other famed matriarch, [grizzly bear](#) 399. The bear known as

"Queen of the Tetons" was hit by a car and killed in October, McClatchy News previously reported.

In fact, Wolf 907F stayed far away from danger, including humans, roadways and other predators. It is likely why she survived for as long as she did, Cassidy said.

"She generally lived in a large pack ranging from 10–35 members. This reduced her risk of being killed by a neighboring pack during a territorial fight (the leading cause of death for wolves in Yellowstone)," Cassidy said.

"She also had many pack mates to help hunt large prey like elk and bison (second leading cause of death). She also avoided humans, being cautious about road crossings and avoiding hikers and hunters outside of Yellowstone (third leading cause of death.)"

Dan Stahler, a biologist with the Yellowstone Wolf, Cougar, and Elk Projects, marveled at the wolf's strength.

"Wolf 907F's story and resiliency were admired by many visitors, wolf watchers and biologists who observed her all these years," he said in a statement. "Even in her death, defending her family and territory from a rival pack, 907F embodied what Yellowstone is all about—a place where these carnivores have a chance to live a successful life, and die the way of the wolf."

Wolf technician Taylor Rabe had recently celebrated the legendary wolf on Instagram.

"What an absolute queen," she said in a post in September. "...The sweetest old girl. I wish I could hear the stories and experiences she's had over the years. 11.5 is not an easy feat on such a dangerous,

unpredictable landscape."

Tributes poured in across [social media](#) from those who knew and admired 907's life and legacy.

Wildlife photographer Deby Dixon, who also followed grizzly bear 339, wrote on Facebook that she was "grateful for the wild life 907 lived and that she passed naturally, albeit violently."

"She wasn't killed by a hunter. She wasn't killed by a car. She never got into any trouble," Dixon told KTVQ. "She got to live and die as a wild wolf."

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Citation: 'Queen of the Wolves'—one of Yellowstone's oldest—dies after rival pack fight (2025, January 9) retrieved 13 March 2025 from <https://phys.org/news/2025-01-queen-wolves-yellowstone-oldest-dies.html>

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