



TRAVEL

For over a year, I planned a Porsche trip to Yellowstone National Park and Cody, Wyoming. I wanted to uncover the story of the introduction of Canadian Grey Wolves in Lamar Valley, known as the American Serengeti. My Porsche's versatility on city streets and open highways made it the perfect companion for this journey of discovery.

Story by Edward Quan

Canadian Grey Wolves of Yellowstone

In the mid-1990s, Canadian grey wolves were introduced into Yellowstone National Park to help restore ecological balance. They served as top predators, managing the rapidly growing elk population that was overgrazing.

Yellowstone National Park, founded in 1872 as the world's first national park, is frequently referred to as America's "Big Country." Covering nearly 9,000 square km across three states, it is about a third larger than Banff National Park. The park sits atop North America's largest super volcano, offering breathtaking scenery and unique geological features that provide a captivating experience.

The Canadian wolves program began with 31 wolves captured east of Jasper National Park and relocated, ending a 70-year absence and helping restore ecological balance. The wolf population is now about 100, attracting wildlife photographers and reviving a vital part of the park's heritage.

This project, a key part of the Endangered Species Act, restored a vital apex predator, underscoring nature's resilience and the role of predators in healthy ecosystems.

In the 1930s, local wolves were hunted to extinction in Yellowstone, eliminating a major elk predator. Without the wolves, the elk population surged, and the Park could not support such large numbers. This led to the annual culling of thousands of elk until 1967, when political pressure mounted to end the hunt.

Consequently, the elk population rebounded, but severe winters left thousands of elk dead on the northern range. The park recognized the need for a new solution.

The arrival of the Canadian wolves marked a turning point. Yellowstone now hosts eight to 10 wolf packs, all thriving in the park's northern region.

The best place to view the wolves is in Lamar Valley, a broad, open meadow in Yellowstone's northeast corner. This is now the habitat of the Junction Butte and the Lamar Canyon Wolf Packs.



Often called the American Serengeti, the valley is accessible via Highway 212, with paved pullouts where you can stop and view vast herds of bison and elk, as well as bears, coyotes, and other wildlife grazing along Soda Butte Creek. By day, it's a spectacular sight.

When driving in the park, watch for "Bison Jams," where traffic stops. Bison often rest near the road, tempting selfies, but it's safest to stay inside your vehicle, as they are wild and unpredictable.

Wolves are crepuscular, meaning they are most active at dusk and dawn. They hunt under the cover of darkness or twilight.

That summer afternoon, I was lucky enough to spot a pair of wolves with

stunning grey and dark fur moving gracefully along Soda Butte Creek. Seeing how perfectly they adapted to their wild, natural surroundings was truly awe-inspiring.

Wolves generally steer clear of traffic and humans, so winter is the best season to see them. Highway 212 stays open, and the snow improves visibility, making it easier to spot wolves during daylight hours.

During my visit to Yellowstone Park, I stayed in Cody, Wyoming, just a one-hour drive from the Park's East entrance. The town offers a welcoming variety of accommodations and dining options, lively rodeo events, and a vibrant spirit of the American Wild West that truly comes to life.