

News and Notes

MI about



THE DISPERSING WOLF FROM CAMP RIPLEY, MINNESOTA, which was mentioned in previous News and Notes, was illegally killed east of Camp Ripley. The perpetrator sank her collar in a mud hole, but it continued to send a few transmissions to the satellites. By tracking the transmissions, biologists were able to find the collar and determine many details about when and where the wolf was killed. Conservation officers have narrowed the range of suspects but have not yet made an arrest.

TWO WOLVES WERE SEEN KILLING A COW MUSK-OX ON ELLESMERE ISLAND during one of the few such observations ever reported. Wolves prey regularly on musk-oxen in the

High Arctic, but rarely does anyone get a chance to watch them. After the pair killed the musk-ox during a five-minute attack, the female wolf gorged herself and then headed off to regurgitate into caches over a mile away from the kill. The incident was detailed in the October-December 1999 issue of *Canadian Field Naturalist*.

WOLF NUMBERS AND DISTRIBUTION IN LITHUANIA were assessed by Petras Bluzma, Institute of Ecology, Vilnius, Lithuania. Bluzma's findings indicated wolves were widely distributed throughout this Baltic country. Wolves permanently inhabit about 20 percent of the forested area, and because of conflicts with humans, Bluzma believes that their numbers should be held to 100 to 300 animals. Bluzma's article was published in *Acta Zoologica Lithuanica* volume 9 (1999).

WOLVES AND RAILROAD TRAINS have not been getting along well in Montana. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, at least three wolves have been killed by trains in the Wolf Prairie area. Apparently wolves find railroad tracks easy to walk along and because they never evolved with such a hazard, lack the ability to deal with the concept of a train bearing down on them. Entire packs in Minnesota have been similarly wiped out by trains.

A WOLF INCREASE IN NORWAY has been accompanied by an increase in wolf biologists. At least 12 Norwegians attended the International Wolf Symposium in February to exchange information with other wolf workers. Norway now has 62 to 78 wolves, and their main prey, summer and winter, is moose. However, they also prey on domestic sheep, a trait that is causing great concern among local farmers.

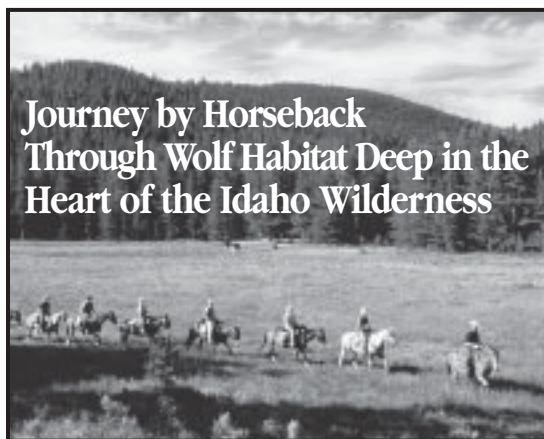
ISLE ROYALE WOLF NUMBERS are up again to 29, according to Dr. Rolf Peterson, Michigan Technological University, who just returned from his annual aerial count of wolves and moose on this Lake Superior island. The wolves live in just two packs. Some 850 moose were also counted.

ALPHA WOLVES are the subject of a recent article in which arguments are made that the term "alpha" is not usually appropriate; instead such animals should be called "breeders" or simply "parents." See "Alpha Status, Dominance, and Division of Labor in Wolf Packs" in *Canadian Journal of Zoology* 77: pp. 1196-1203. ■

Dove Mech



Wolves prey regularly on musk-oxen in the High Arctic. Two wolves (not those shown here) were recently seen killing a cow musk-ox on Ellesmere Island.



**Journey by Horseback
Through Wolf Habitat Deep in the
Heart of the Idaho Wilderness**

- One night hotel stay, with meals
- Base camp in the wilderness with canvas cooktent and individual pop-up tents to sleep in for privacy.
- Fully prepared home cooked meals
- Trips begin in mid-July and end in late August

Mile High Outfitters of Idaho, Inc.
P.O. Box 1189, Challis, Idaho 83226
(208) 879-4500
milehigh@cyberhighway.net
visit our webpage at
www.milehighwolf.com