

Wild Kids



Back from the Brink

By Andrea Lorek Strauss,
Information & Education Director

In the year 2000, scientists estimated that at least one species of plant or animal goes extinct every 20 minutes—that's 26,280 species that disappear every year!

The Endangered Species Act is a U.S. law passed in 1973 that identifies and protects plants and animals in danger of extinction or threatened by extinction in the foreseeable future. When a plant or animal is placed on the list of endangered or threatened species, the USFWS makes plans to protect that species from disappearing forever.

In this issue of *International Wolf*, you can read about the Mexican Wolf and efforts to ensure its survival in the wild. The Mexican Wolf is a subspecies (one type of) gray wolf (*Canis lupus*). The other types of gray wolves are not as close to extinction, but they have been exterminated from most areas where they used to live in the United States.

One of the reasons why wolves no longer live in ecosystems where they used to roam free is because people moved in and changed the

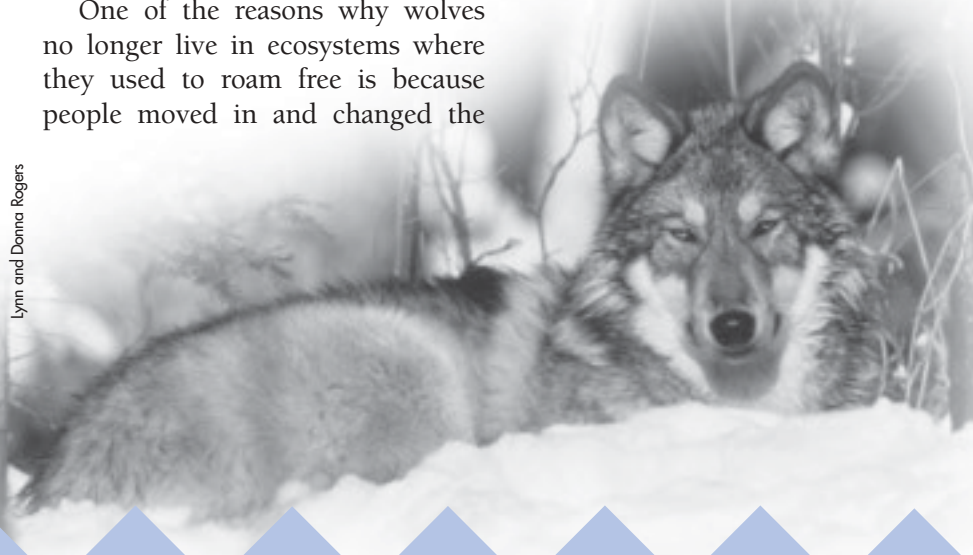
ecosystem. For example, wolves used to inhabit all areas of Minnesota, but when cities and farms were developed, wolves could no longer live in those areas. In addition, people feared wolves, so they shot and poisoned them to get rid of them.

The tables at right contain information about how populations of humans and animals have changed since the 1700s. Make a chart of the data and ask yourself:

- What trend do you see in animal populations over time?
- What trend do you see in human populations over time?
- How might animals and humans affect each other to cause these changes?
- Do you predict the trends will change or stay the same in the next 100 years?
- What could be done to change the direction of the trends? ■

This activity and more can be found in the International Wolf Center's new Wolf Management curriculum for students grade 6 – adult. To obtain a copy of the activity guide and instructions for the on-line workbook, e-mail office2@wolf.org or call 1-800-ELY-WOLF, ext. 25.

Lynn and Donna Rogers



U.S. POPULATION

Year	millions of people	Year	millions of people
1790	.....4	1920	.....110
1800	.....5	1940	.....136
1820	.....9	1960	.....180
1840	.....19	1980	.....230
1860	.....28	1990	.....249
1880	.....54	2000	.....281
1900	.....80		

WORLD POPULATION

Year	millions of people	Year	millions of people
1650	.....550	1850	.....1210
1700	.....610	1900	.....1630
1750	.....760	1950	.....2520
1800	.....950	2000	.....6200

US/CANADA MAMMAL AND BIRD EXTINCTION

Year	Total species extinct	
	BIRDS	MAMMALS
1700-1799	0	2
1800-1899	20	6
1900-1980	39	33

WORLD MAMMAL AND BIRD EXTINCTION

Year	Total species extinct	
	BIRDS	MAMMALS
1600-1649	3	2
1650-1699	9	5
1700-1749	13	8
1750-1799	17	16
1800-1849	39	21
1850-1899	87	43
1900-1949	152	102

Source: *Gray Wolves, Gray Matter, 2001, International Wolf Center, pages 78 – 81.*