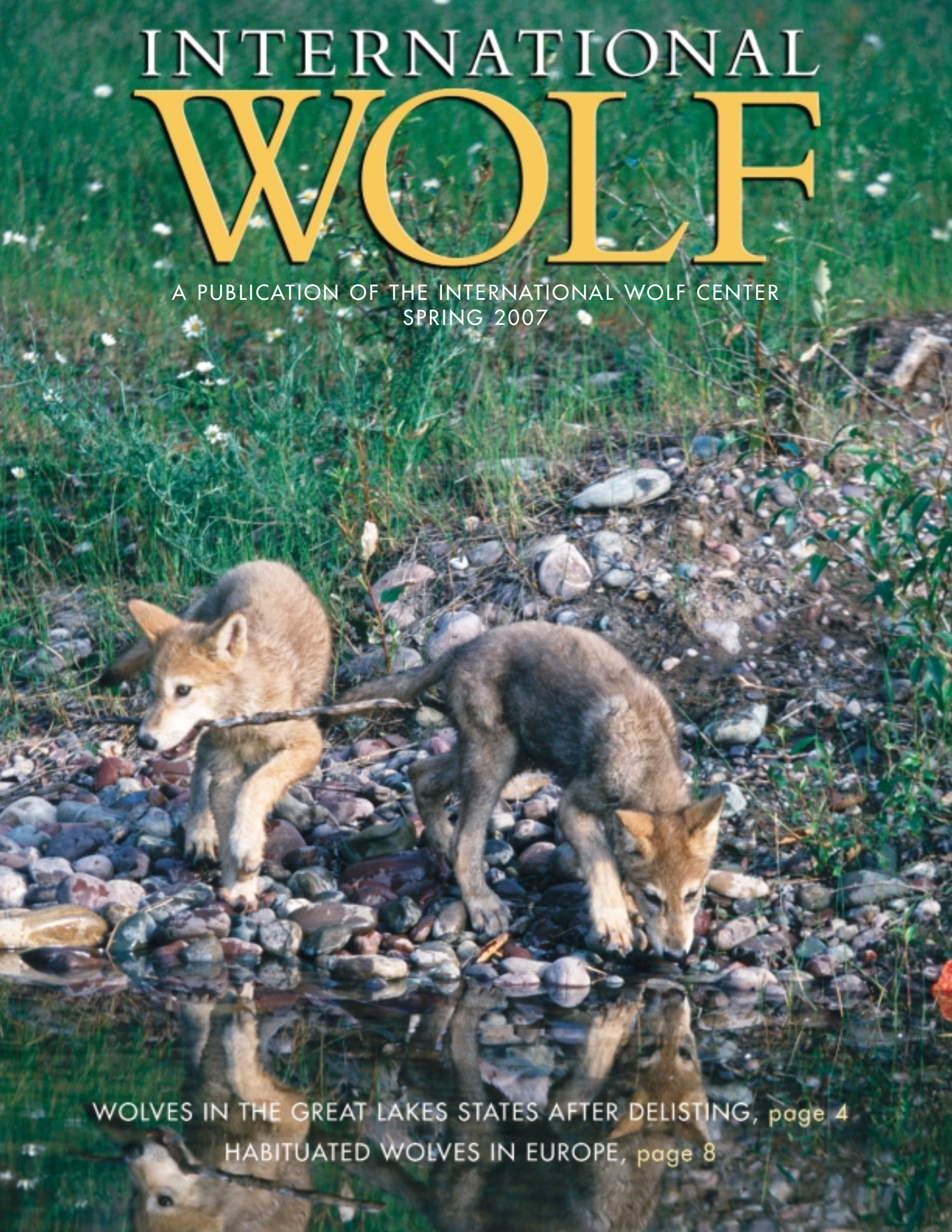


INTERNATIONAL WOLF

A PUBLICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL WOLF CENTER
SPRING 2007

A photograph of two wolf pups on a rocky bank. The pup on the left is light brown and is holding a stick in its mouth. The pup on the right is darker brown and is looking down at the water. Both pups and the surrounding environment are reflected in the still water in the foreground.

WOLVES IN THE GREAT LAKES STATES AFTER DELISTING, page 4
HABITUATED WOLVES IN EUROPE, page 8

INTERNATIONAL WOLF

THE QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL WOLF CENTER
VOLUME 17, NO. 1 SPRING 2007

Features



Dave Mech

4 Wolf Conservation in the Great Lakes States After Federal Delisting

On March 27, 2006, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced the beginning of a delisting process for gray wolves in the Great Lakes region. The departments of natural resources in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan have been preparing for delisting for a long time. What will delisting do to wolves in the region?

Adrian P. Wydeven



International Wolf Center

8 Visitors in Gray: Habituated Wolves in Europe

Whatever attitude people have toward wolves, most believe that they will avoid civilization and humans. But, in fact, the species has an amazing ability to adapt to changing conditions in its environment, including to urban areas. In the past few years there have been cases of human-habituated wolves in Romania, Italy and other European countries.

Florian Wetzel

Departments

- 2 As a Matter of Fact
- 3 From the Executive Director
- 10 International Wolf Center Notes From Home
- 13 Tracking the Pack
- 14 Wolves and Wild Lands
- 16 Wolves of the World
- 20 Personal Encounter
- 23 Wild Kids
- 24 A Look Beyond

On The Cover

Two captive wolf pups play near a pond in Kalispell, Montana.

Photo by Leo and Dorothy Keeler.

Leo and Dorothy Keeler have specialized in working with wild eagles, wolves and bears since 1989 but occasionally photograph captive animals when needed to encourage conservation. See more of their work at www.akwildlife.com.



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PHOTOS: Unless otherwise noted, or obvious from the caption or article text, photos are of captive wolves.

As A Matter Of Fact



Pete Neitrou

Question: What is the prey of wolves in Riding Mountain National Park in Canada?

Answer: Wolves in Riding Mountain National Park prey on a variety of species. Elk, moose, whitetail deer, snowshoe hare and beaver all inhabit this diverse island of forest in south-central Manitoba, Canada. ■

West Gate



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Awaiting the Next Campaign

On my voice mail was a message left by an outdoor writer living in Oregon. He was eager to find out whether the fragment of a story he had heard on the radio about someone recently killed by a wolf in the lower 48 states was true. Since I had heard nothing about a wolf killing from my usual trustworthy sources, before I returned his call, I took time to Google the news to see if such a story was in print. While some interesting articles came up from my search words, including information on Wolf Blitzler and a variety of horror films (this being the end of October), I found nothing about a human recently killed by wolves.

When I returned the call, the writer's voice held noticeable disappointment as I conveyed the empty results of my search. We exchanged pleasantries and ended our conversation, but what lingered for me was that disappointment in his voice. An inner voice told me belatedly that I should have dug deeper while we were talking to better understand his perspectives.

While his motives may not have been sinister, the conversation we had reminded me that there undoubtedly will be a tidal wave of bad publicity around the country if such a death occurs. And in this current environment where campaign commercials flood the airwaves, we are reminded about the prevalence of distortion in the information we receive and how we must maintain a healthy dose of skepticism.

I also suspect that those who have been against wolf recovery will take advantage of the situation to play "gotcha" and make every attempt to paint a dire picture of our future with wolves on the landscape.

This reinforces our efforts as an organization to deliver the most accurate, objective information possible and to be prepared when the distortions hit the media.

While anyone familiar with wolves knows the likelihood of a wolf attack is extremely remote, no one can predict how a wild creature will respond, and that certainly goes for wolves. And if we suggest with certainty that an attack will never occur, we undermine the credibility of those who speak on behalf of wolves and efforts to support wolf recovery. The fact is we live in a world filled with risks regardless of whether we venture into the wilds or live in a metropolis.

The best reality check about the threat posed by wolves is the Minnesota example. Amid the heart of this state's wolf population (the largest in the lower 48, with some 3,000 wolves), people have lived, worked and recreated decade after decade. And out of the millions of visitors to Minnesota's wolf country, no one has failed because of wolves to return safe and sound. ■

Wolf Conservation in the Great Lakes States After Federal



On March 27, 2006, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) announced the beginning of a delisting process for gray wolves in the Great Lakes region. The population of wolves being delisted is the Western Great Lakes Distinct Population Segment (WGLDPS), and the area includes Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota as well as portions of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, South Dakota and North Dakota (see map). Wolves live mainly in Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin; in late winter 2006 the population was estimated at about 4,000 wolves, of which three-quarters live in Minnesota. The delisting is expected to be completed in early 2007, and by the time this article is published the delisting process may have been completed.

Minnesota's wolf population was downlisted from endangered to threatened status in 1978, at a time when reclassifications were done state by state. Since the mid-1990s, the USFWS has reclassified vertebrate populations only by distinct population segments (DPS). (A DPS is a discrete and significant population.) In 2003, wolves in Wisconsin and Michigan, along with those in other states in the region, were downlisted to threatened as part of the Eastern Gray Wolf DPS. In 2004, the USFWS started a delisting process for the Eastern DPS, but a 2005 federal court decision in Oregon overturned the 2003 down-



Delisting

by ADRIAN P. WYDEVEN

listing and caused abandonment of the delisting effort for that population segment (see Ron Refsnider, "Gray Wolf Reclassification Derailed, Delisting in Eastern United States Delayed," *International Wolf*, Winter 2005). The new delisting attempt in 2006 reduced the size of the DPS to more of the immediate area where wolves had recovered.

So what will delisting do to wolves in the region? Is it likely to halt wolf recovery and leave wolves unprotected? Will it halt population growth or cause wolf numbers to decline? How will the states deal with wolf conservation after delisting?

The departments of natural resources in the three states have been preparing for eventual delisting for a long time. Wisconsin developed a state recovery plan in 1989, and a state management plan in 1999. Michigan developed a state recovery and management plan in 1997 and is currently updating the management plan. Minnesota developed a management plan in 2001.

A summary of some of the similarities and differences between the state management plans is listed in table 1. In general all plans show strong commitments to long-term wolf conservation, and all plans contain minimum state population goals well above the minimum federal recovery and delisting goals. Wisconsin and Michigan are committed to maintaining at least 450 wolves between the two states, four and a half times greater than the federal delisting goal for these states. The late winter 2006 count was 465 to 502 in Wisconsin, and

434 in Michigan, for a combined count of about 900 wolves, nine times the federal delisting goals.

The Wisconsin plan is the only one with a management goal for the population, which is 350 wolves outside Indian reservations. In 2006, at least 449 wolves occurred outside Indian reservations; thus, the population was 99 wolves above the goal. Following federal delisting the state would use a combination of proactive trapping by government trappers, landowner controls, and possibly public harvest to bring the population close to 350.

Control of depre-dating wolves will be handled in similar fashion across the region. All three states will provide government trappers to trap and euthanize verified depredators at sites where attacks have occurred, and all will provide payments for loss of livestock. Only Wisconsin will also pay for wolf depredation on dogs. Problem wolves will generally be euthanized because suitable unoccupied wolf habitat into which wolves can



be translocated no longer exists in the region. Landowner control of wolves would also be allowed in Wisconsin and Minnesota, but is not included in the current plan for Michigan. Additionally Minnesota's plan incorporates a state-certified predator controller program, whereby private individuals would be certified to control problem wolves up to one mile from lands where wolf attacks have occurred and would be compensated by the DNR for removal of problem animals. Although some have tried to characterize this control as a bounty system, the high levels of control and restrictions in this program make it totally unlike the general bounties that caused wolves to decline in this region earlier. Those bounties were payments made for killing any wolf anywhere anytime.

Minnesota and Wisconsin probably have more aggressive control programs than Michigan for problem wolves because of high depredation losses, high occurrence of farms near wolf range, and the potential

Slightly lower wolf numbers and more stabilized wolf range will not in any way endanger wolves in the region. The wolf population in the western Great Lakes region is viable and healthy.

for wolves to disperse into areas of high farm abundance. The number of farms with wolf depredation grew to 99 in Minnesota in 1998 but declined thereafter and has been between 53 and 67 farms in recent years. In Wisconsin farms with wolf depredations grew from 5 in 2001 to 25 in 2005. By the mid-2000s Wisconsin, with 335 to 465 wolves, had similar rates of depredation on livestock as Minnesota did in the early 1980s, when that state had 1,300 to 1,400 wolves. As wolves spread into agricultural areas of central and southern Wisconsin, there will be greater

need to apply intense control on wolves near farm areas.

The states do differ in use of zones. Minnesota has two zones: Zone A where wolves would be encouraged, and Zone B where more liberal controls would be applied to problem and nuisance wolves. These controls would probably allow wolf numbers in Zone A to fluctuate more naturally but would reduce wolf numbers in Zone B and near agricultural areas. Wisconsin has a four-zone system: Zones 1 and 2 are areas where wolves are most encouraged but are geographically separated from each other.

TABLE 1. State management plans for wolves in the western Great Lakes states

Management activities and goals	Michigan	Minnesota	Wisconsin
Federal delisting goal	100 with Wisconsin for 5 years or more	1,250–1,400	100 with Michigan for 5 years or more
Minimum state goal	200 for 5+ years	1,600	250*
Management goal	None currently	None	350*
Public harvest	Not addressed	Possible 5 years after federal delisting	Possible if more than 350*
Control by landowners?	Not currently	Yes	Yes
Lethal controls by government trappers on verified depredators?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Proactive controls by government trappers?	No	Some	Yes
Controls by certified trappers?	No	Yes	No
Payments for livestock?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Payments for dogs killed?	No	No	Yes
Population estimations	Annually	Every 5 years	Annually
Management zones	1	2	4

*Total number of wolves outside Indian reservations, which is 2–6 percent less than statewide wolf count

Zone 3 is marginal habitat in which wolves would be more readily controlled, and Zone 4 is highly urban and agricultural areas where wolves would be discouraged. Michigan does not have a zone system, but nearly all wolves occur in the Upper Peninsula, which is separated from the more agricultural and urban Lower Peninsula by the Great Lakes.

The states also differ in the process for approval of management plans. In Minnesota the plan required legislative approval. The Michigan plan required approval by the DNR director. The Wisconsin plan required approval by the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board (state commission), but if public harvests are considered, legislative approval will be required.

So what will be the effects of these plans on wolves in the region? The plans will likely cause wolf populations to stabilize in the region and perhaps cause some minor declines, especially near agricultural areas. Wolf distribution will probably stabilize and may shrink somewhat near agricultural regions. The Minnesota wolf population has already stabilized in its distribution to mainly heavily forested areas, probably due to lack of suitable habitat outside forests, higher mortality, and perhaps some impact from control programs.

Slightly lower wolf numbers and more stabilized wolf range will not in any way endanger wolves in the region. The wolf population in the western Great Lakes region is viable and healthy. Along with high levels of connectivity among the three states, this population is also well connected

to the Canadian population of gray wolves. The greater intensity of management of wolves allowed in the three states following delisting will improve local support for wolf management, which ultimately will determine how many wolves the region can hold. ■

Adrian Wydeven is a mammal ecologist for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources in Park Falls, Wisconsin, and has led work on wolf management and recovery for Wisconsin since 1990.

The states' plans will likely cause wolf populations to stabilize in the region and perhaps cause some minor declines, especially near agricultural areas.



Lynn and Donna Rogers, www.bearstudy.org

Joan Ouellette



Visitors in Gray: Habituated Wolves in Europe

by FLORIAN WETZEL

Wolves searching for food in yards and crossing road junctions? These wolf sightings are hard to imagine, especially in Europe. The wolf in Europe is, on the one hand, seen as a symbol of wilderness, of freedom and untamed nature. On the other hand, many people still fear wolves, and in many European tales the wolf is the evil antagonist, the man-eating beast. When wolves broke out of an enclosure in Germany in 2002, worried mothers wrote: “Aren’t there enough dangers for our children? Everywhere you have to be in fear of the wolves. . . . Restore our forests to the state we once liked.” A study conducted in Southern France revealed

that a remarkable proportion of the interviewed people said that they would be afraid to hike in woods where wolves are present. However, many people in European countries strongly support wolves and their reintroduction.

Whatever attitude people have toward wolves, most believe that they will avoid civilization and humans. But, in fact, the species has an amazing ability to adapt, through learning, to changing conditions in its environment, including to urban areas. This so-called *ethological plasticity* is the primary precondition for wolves using urban areas as habitat: through learning processes like habituation a wolf can adapt its responses

to specific, civilization-dependent stimuli. The wolf’s fearful response to stimuli, like streets, vehicles or buildings, will gradually wane. At the end of the habituation process the wolf will show less or even no avoidance behavior toward humans.

The basic prerequisite for habituation of wolves to an area or stimulus formerly avoided by them is that no negative consequences be connected with the specific stimuli. If wolves are persecuted, they keep on avoiding humans, as a result of learning, or negative conditioning. They associate humans with danger.

How fast habituation takes place differs in different circumstances. Wolves in the High Arctic, for



Isaac Babcock

International Wolf Center

Through learning processes like habituation a wolf can adapt its responses to specific, civilization-dependent stimuli. The wolf's fearful response to stimuli, like streets, vehicles or buildings, will gradually wane.

example, became habituated to researchers within several weeks; in other areas habituation took several months. Also the intensity of the stimulus matters; the higher the intensity of the stimulus, the longer the process takes.

Habituation also varies among individual animals. Some wolves habituate faster to the stimuli of civilization than others; some habituate only after a longer period of learning, and some never habituate at all.

Habituation to humans can affect the survival of an individual. Because the wolf that does not respond to a stimulus saves energy, habituation can lead to an advantage in competition with other wolves. The saved energy can be invested in other, essential behavior such as reproduction.

Thus, areas developed by humans can become usable habitat for wolves. Wolves require the adequate presence of certain essential ecological factors in their environment, such as food and shelter, whether that environment is wilderness or an urban area. A wolf can raise pups in a den in a remote area or in an abandoned building, as a female wolf did in Italy.

Habituated animals can find new food sources in urban landscapes. The food supply in urban areas is plentiful

and fluctuates little, and food is mostly attainable without great expenditure of energy. Wildlife species, like habituated deer and rabbits, are one important source. Additionally, domestic animals like dogs or cats are a further potential food source for wolves. Another important food supply is garbage. For a wolf population in Italy, 60 to 70 percent of the total food intake consisted of garbage. Wolves are attracted by these food sources and begin to connect positive consequences with them, which is one reason why wolves are moving into suburban and urban areas in Europe.

In the past few years there have been cases of human-habituated wolves in Romania, Italy and other European countries. In Italy, for example, wolves moved several times into a city with 30,000 inhabitants. Another wolf was observed on his way through the middle of an Italian village, where he passed a tennis court, traveled along an empty swimming pool and then crossed a street used by many pedestrians during the day. In Germany, wolves have moved into a military training area and have become habituated to the firing of the soldiers' guns.

The most famous case of a habituated wolf in Europe took place in

Brasov, a Romanian town with about 300,000 inhabitants. In the course of a research project a female wolf was radio-tracked on her way through the town in the evening hours. She crossed streets with heavy traffic, ran through housing estates and passed parked cars without showing any sign of shyness toward these stimuli.

In Europe, where wolf populations are gradually increasing in most countries, the number of human-habituated animals will also increase. The wolf is widely protected by national laws, and expanding suburban and urban areas provide sufficient prey for wolves. In the absence of persecution and given the presence of suitable resources, wolves will move into these urban areas. The challenge for the inhabitants of civilized areas is to recognize that the wolf is no "beast in the garden" and no lost roamer of snowy hills but an animal with an amazing ability to adapt. ■

Florian Wetzel received a M.Sc. in ecology from the Technical University of Munich in Germany. His master's thesis is about the habituation of wolves to civilization-dependent stimuli. He is now a Ph.D. candidate at the Konrad Lorenz Institute for Ethology in Vienna, Austria.



INTERNATIONAL WOLF CENTER
Notes From Home

Metamorphosis at the Center

by Emmanuel Allasia



Carissa Knoack

Emmanuel Allasia, from France, is a communications intern for the International Wolf Center.

Do you remember the cover of the fall 2006 issue of *International Wolf*, the image of the beautiful wolf mask? My first contribution to the magazine as communications intern was to assist Barb Simanton and Matt Stowell in delivering the mask to a professional photographer. I am from the south of France and live near both the Mediterranean Sea and the Italian border. This mask reminds me of Venice, the Italian city that is well known for its carnival, its extravagant costumes and colorful masks. *Loup* is the French word for “wolf” and also the name for Venetian traditional masks.

If you try to imagine the atmosphere of Venice, the magnificent city also called “Serenissima,” with all its lavishly costumed characters, then you might feel as if you were in a magical place where there is no time. That is exactly what I felt when I first came to the United States for my five-month internship at the International Wolf Center. Everything seems to be bigger—houses, buildings, cars—and the habits are very different, especially

those regarding food and work. I realized that my teachers in France were right: smile and have a positive attitude! I had to adapt, tame and explore!

What I experienced was a time for self-reflection and action. After five months at the Center, I have learned how to talk about wolves and other wildlife that I had never seen or experienced before. I also learned how to work with a team of enthusiastic people in the Twin Cities office. I was able to play my role among a *Carnival of Animals*, to refer to Saint-Saëns’ beloved masterpiece.

I am very grateful to my co-workers for welcoming me so warmly and for giving me so many opportunities to experience “real life.” I learned from both challenges at work and the discovery of nature. Some of my experiences included assisting with the promotion of the Center at the Minnesota State Fair, visiting the Center’s amazing facilities in Ely, implementing the communications plans for the Distance Learning and Ethogram programs, traveling to Yellowstone National Park (see my blog at

<http://notesfromyellowstone.blogspot.com>, implementing online affiliate programs, conducting various surveys for marketing reports, and developing a partnership with the Minnesota Orchestra.

This learn-by-doing experience was the aim of my internship as a student of EM LYON management school of Lyon, one of the leading business schools in Europe. On a more personal note, I would compare my experience in Minnesota to a metamorphosis since I found a healthy balance among high commitments in work, sports and culture. Moreover, I have found a way to face challenges that make life interesting, and the wolf mask keeps whispering that overcoming them is what makes life meaningful.



Huichol Mexican wolf mask

Bryan Winget, Richard Scales Advertising

Alpha Legacy Profile

Henry Crosby has been a loyal member of the International Wolf Center since 1985 and is also active in land conservation programs. He has spent much of his life in various corners of the world as a member of the Red Cross international staff, but he says his home and his heart are in Minnesota. Crosby has a deep commitment to the wildlife and land in his home state.

Crosby has high praise for the Center's educational programs. His personal favorite is the Alpha Weekend, a weekend of programming exclusively for members who have included the Center in their estate plans. During one Alpha Weekend Crosby hiked with his cohorts to an abandoned wolf den and howled with the wolves. It

was during this weekend that he recalled the beautiful experience of witnessing Shadow and Malik, the Center's ambassador wolves, as pups. He said he has a special attachment to them.

Crosby also understands the problems associated with protecting wolves, such as attempts to reintroduce them into previously wolf-populated areas. "Some areas have been without wolves for so long, people just object to the reintroduction," he says. He also believes that wolves may have become more adaptable to urban settings, which also hurts reintroduction efforts.

Crosby is concerned about all wildlife and protecting land. He is excited about the North American Bear Center, also located in Ely. During his work with



International Wolf Center

The Alpha Weekend is Henry Crosby's favorite Center program. During one of these weekends he hiked to an abandoned wolf den.

the Minnesota Land Trust, he has seen its program to integrate conservation easements on land deeds grow from 9 in the early 1990s to 300. This type of easement protects the land

from any further or future development.

Both Minnesota and the International Wolf Center are fortunate to have Henry Crosby as a friend and supporter. ■

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Tracking the Pack

Joining the Gone but Not Forgotten Pack

by Lori Schmidt, Wolf Curator,
International Wolf Center

On Tuesday, July 11, 2006, Lucas, the dominant male of the International Wolf Center's Retired Pack, was euthanized at the Center in Ely, Minnesota. After observing Lucas for several days, the wolf care staff and area veterinarians determined that he would not recover from what appeared to be a chronic, degenerative spinal condition and other age-related ailments. Born in April 1993, Lucas was one of the original pack that served as ambassador wolves for the Center.

As I previously noted in "Tracking the Pack" (Spring 2005), the Retired Pack received a complete medical examination in October 2004, and Lucas was found to be in overall good health but showing early signs of a degenerative spinal condition affecting his hindquarters. After this medical exam, wolf care staff administered Cosequin, Durlactin and daily vitamins in hopes of slowing the progress of the condition and to optimize his overall health.

Lucas did very well until the last week of June 2006, when staff noticed he was having significant difficulty moving around. He was then treated more aggres-

sively with anti-inflammatory medications and pain relievers. Although he had some days of improved mobility, his decline continued despite the treatment. The decision to euthanize Lucas was made cooperatively by the Center's wolf care management team based

on clinical observations by staff and the veterinary team charged with wolf care. The management team strives to make such decisions in a manner that prevents the unnecessary suffering of any of the Center's wolves.

To gain as much information as possible about the health and condition of the Center's wolves, a necropsy, or animal autopsy, was performed on Lucas. The lab analysis of his blood revealed the most significant finding, the presence of hemangiosarcoma. This is an aggressive,

metastatic form of malignant cancer that is common in domestic dogs and is known to attack almost any tissue in the body. Tissue samples revealed that Lucas' liver and lungs were already affected. It is also likely that this cancer had invaded the spine, causing some of the symptoms we observed.

Lucas served the Center well over the years and taught the staff another lesson on his death, that we cannot always know everything that is affecting the health of an animal. Staff will use the lesson learned to support the remaining Retired Pack members, who will reach age 14 in spring 2007. ■



Born in April 1993,
Lucas was one of the
original pack that served
as ambassador wolves
for the Center.

Lynn and Donna Rogers, www.bearstudy.org

Steve Lokker





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WCI-06



Highlights from the International Wolf Center's New Exhibit: *Wolves and Wild Lands in the 21st Century*

Editor's note: This is the second installment in a series that brings to our readers the ideas and images portrayed in the Center's new traveling exhibit. Each of the seven interpretive panels addresses a narrow slice of wolf issues in a particular region of North America. Excerpts from the panel about the southeastern United States are included in this issue. Visit www.wolf.org for more information about the exhibit.

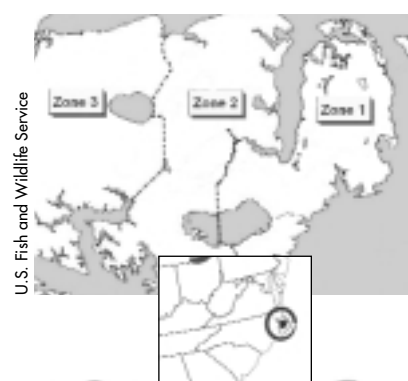
WOLVES IN THE SOUTHEAST Highlights from the exhibit panel

Red wolves need coyote-free homes

Coyotes threaten the survival of wolves in the southeastern U.S. by interbreeding with their red wolf cousins. Thriving in just one coyote-free wild area, red wolves need more space.



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



Steve Lokker



Coyote photo NPS by Judson



Interbreeding dilutes the red wolf gene pool

When a small red wolf population lives among an abundant coyote population, the two species will interbreed. This creates hybrids with part red wolf genes and part coyote genes. If unchecked, interbreeding could lead to an all-hybrid population, wiping out red wolves in just a few generations

Back from the brink

Once nearly extinct in the wild, red wolves were returned to a refuge in northeastern North Carolina beginning in 1987. Red wolves thrive in the recovery area today because the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service prevents them from interbreeding with coyotes.

Coyotes keep out!

Biologists stopped wolf-coyote interbreeding in North Carolina by removing all coyotes and hybrids in Zones 1 and 2 of the red wolf recovery area. To prevent coyotes from returning, they sterilize coyotes and coyote-wolf hybrids at the western edge of Zone 3. Ironically, the sterilized animals guard the territory, barring fertile coyotes from coming back and interbreeding with wolves.

Red wolf *Canis rufus*

Looks: 42–84 pounds, with mostly brown, buff, or reddish-colored fur.

Eats: Prey includes white-tailed deer, raccoons, and other small mammals, such as nutria (non-native, beaverlike rodents), rabbits, and mice.

Lives: Habitat in North Carolina includes agricultural lands, mixed forests, and wetlands.

Population: 100 wolves

Status: Endangered




- Historic range of the red wolf
- Current range of the red wolf
- Area related to this panel's stories

Note: The red wolf is a separate species from the gray wolf.

Wanted: A home for wolves

Today, wild red wolves thrive on an 875-square-mile peninsula in northeastern North Carolina. To ensure the survival of the species, biologists must find at least two more places to establish separate populations of red wolves. Habitat shopping isn't easy!



Wanted: Two large tracts of undeveloped land in the southeastern U.S. Low numbers of roads, coyotes, humans, and livestock a plus. Preferably near other areas of wolf habitat that can accommodate an expanding wolf population for years to come.



Where else can wolves go? The dense populations of humans and coyotes in the Southeast and the absence of large expanses of wild lands limit the options.



Wolves of the World

WOLVES OF EUROPE

Will Wolves Return to Austria?

by Heinz Dungler

Austria's spectacular alpine wilderness is traditional wolf country. Many old names in Austria show the historic presence of wolves, but by 1882, hunting, trapping and poison had eliminated the breeding population. While single animals are occasionally sighted, no viable packs exist in the country.

However, there is new hope for natural wolf recovery in Austria. Over the past 10 years, the number of wolf observations has increased, and sooner or later, a wolf pack could become established. Protected areas such as national parks could support wolf packs, and wolf numbers could be monitored. Two other conditions make it possible for wolves to thrive in Austria. The first is the new methods of wildlife management in

the European Union countries, definitely a positive step for long-term wolf recovery. Equally important is the changing human attitude toward wildlife in general and wolves in particular.

Wolves are faring well in neighboring countries, which could be potential sources of wolf recolonization. Wolves roam the Carpathian Mountains in Slovakia. Hungary, Croatia, Slovenia and Italy have wolf populations from which dispersers could travel into Austria. The closest viable population is no farther than 200 kilometers from the border. The "green belt" wilderness areas on the old border between western and eastern Europe are possible routes for far-traveling wolves.

Studies show the importance of Austria for the genetic fitness of central European wolves. The Carpathian, Balkan and Southwest Alpine–Appeninic populations come together in Austria, thus making possible the exchange of genetic material.

Whether wolf recovery will be successful depends on the attitude of the Austrian people. Public discussion will increase between wolf supporters and those opposed to wolves such as farmers and hunters. Livestock has to be protected, and new hunting regulations will create new challenges for hunters. The economic value of wolves can only be demonstrated by increasing numbers of nature tourists and environmental education participants.

Recovery and protection of wolves in Austria need progressive concepts and support from both the public and from government agencies. The Austrian Federal Ministry of Environment is preparing a project that will frame conditions for possible recovery. I have been chosen to lead this challenging project. In summer 2005, International Wolf Center founder Dr. L. David Mech invited me to study wolf research and education methods in northern Minnesota. I was able to go out into the wolf range of the Superior National Forest and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness with Dr. Michael E. Nelson, wildlife research biologist at the Kawishiwi Field Laboratory in Ely. I also visited the International Wolf Center, where I met with Assistant Director of Education Jim Williams.

We hope that Austria will be successful in its efforts to restore wolves and that they will find a new home and a welcome in some of their traditional ranges.

Heinz Dungler, Ph.D., is a wildlife biologist and sports scientist. He is an instructor at the University of Salzburg and leads a project of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Environment to build conditions for a possible recovery of wolves in Austria.



WOLVES IN THE UNITED STATES

Back to the Wild: The Twentieth Anniversary of the Red Wolf Reintroduction

by *Cornelia Hutt*

In 1980, red wolves were considered extinct in the wild. Habitat destruction and human persecution had forced the last red wolves into marginal habitat along the Texas and Louisiana coasts, where they interbred with coyotes and succumbed to parasite infestation. After years of captive breeding, eight red wolves consisting of four breeding pairs were reintroduced to the wild in 1987 at the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge (ARNWR) in northeastern North Carolina. This was the first attempt ever to restore an officially extinct carnivore to a portion of its historic range.

No one knew if the wolves would make it. Would they learn to hunt? Would they breed successfully in the wild? Would they adjust to the humid heat of the coastal summers and the chill of raw winters?

Make it they did! One year after the reintroduction, the first litter of red wolf pups was born in the wild on the ARNWR. During the ensuing 20 years, many more pups have been



The first litter of red wolf pups was born in the wild on the ARNWR in 1988. Since then, the population has expanded to over 100 wolves roaming free in a five-county area.


born and survived. The population has expanded to over 100 wolves roaming free in a five-county area that includes two other wildlife refuges and pockets of private land as well.

The Red Wolf Recovery Team has faced a number of obstacles throughout the years and has met each challenge with science-based action plans and on-the-ground fieldwork. However, in spite of the successes of the recovery program, red wolves continue to die because of humans. At one time, vehicular accidents were the number one cause of adult red wolf mortality. Today, and over the past

several years, gunshot and “suspicious circumstances” are the primary causes of adult red wolf deaths.

In response to an alarming loss of red wolf breeders, the Red Wolf Recovery Program in partnership with the Red Wolf Coalition and Defenders of Wildlife has launched a major hunter education initiative. Thousands of hunter education cards (shown above) have been distributed throughout the state. This wallet-sized card helps hunters distinguish red wolves from eastern coyotes and promotes the message, “Don’t Shoot!” east of NC State Highway 32.

The Red Wolf Coalition is seeking funding to develop a permanent exhibit that will demonstrate the benefit red wolves bring to hunters and farmers in rural northeastern North Carolina. We want 2007 to be a year of celebration for the red wolf and for the people who are determined to ensure its long-term survival in the wild.

 For more information about the Red Wolf Coalition, visit the Web site at www.redwolves.com, or go to <http://www.fws.gov/alligatorriver/redwolf.html>.

Cornelia Hutt is an educator and International Wolf Center board member who lives in Purcellville, Virginia.



Barron Crawford, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

WOLVES IN BELARUS

A Bold Conservation and Management Plan

by Vadim Sidorovich

Belarus's action plan for the wolf may seem controversial, but it must be kept in the context of the geography and economics of the country. Most of the land outside the cities is forest or farmlands where people are trying to survive in villages, working on collective farms or their own land with maybe a cow and a few sheep to help them get by. These people are frightened for their livestock and often for themselves because they are afraid some wolves may be rabid. It is difficult to replace domestic animals, and the wolf is perceived as a threat to their modest means of making a living. Nevertheless, in Belarus human persecution is not so widespread that wolves are in any danger of eradication.

—John Griffiths, author of
“Researchers Begin Study in Remote Country,”
International Wolf, Fall 2006


In Belarus, a nation slightly smaller than Kansas, natural and semi-natural vegetation (dry land, grassy marches, dry-land meadows, raised bogs) covers about 65 percent of the country. Additionally, large tracts of extended woodlands and forests remain intact. Wolves are present in all regions of Belarus, but their population density varies (see distribution map).

The most important factor shaping the variation in wolf numbers is the hunting harvest. According to Belarus hunting law, the wolf is a pest species. It is legal to hunt wolves freely during hunting season (October to February) or out of hunting season if one obtains a special permit. Also, anyone may search for wolf pups and take them from the den, and local hunting organizations pay for the wolf pups that are killed. Thus, human persecution markedly limits the wolf distribution and population in Belarus. Wolf numbers fluctuate since hunting goes on intensively in winter, so in spring before pups are born, wolf numbers are depressed. Census studies conducted in recent years during the early winter estimate the Belarus wolf population to be between 1,500 and 2,000 individuals.

To gather data on the diet of wolves in Belarus, a study was conducted by the Vertebrate Predation Research Group of the Institute of Zoology (Research Group.) In eastern Belarus, for



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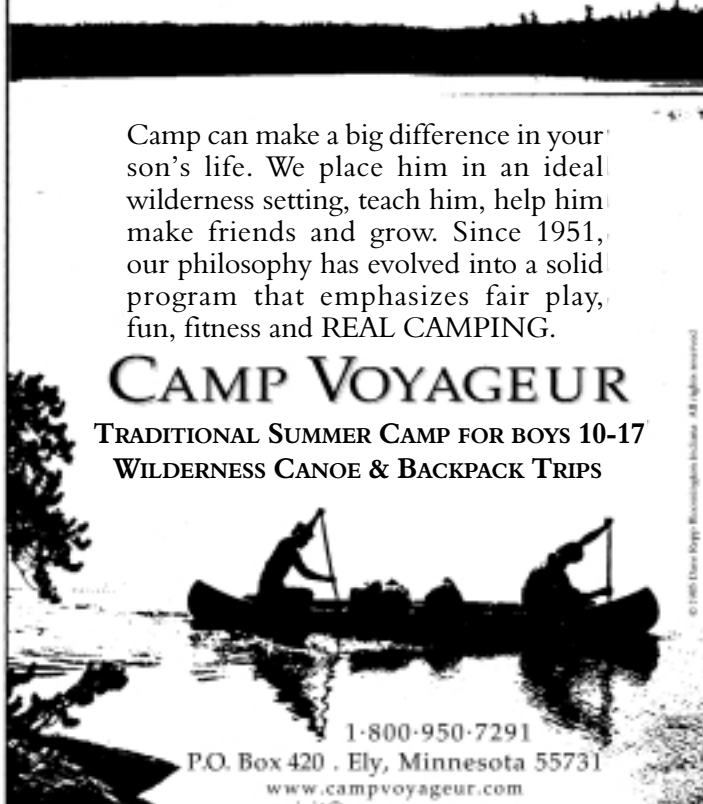
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In Belarus, a nation slightly smaller than Kansas, large tracts of extended woodlands and forests remain intact.

Census studies conducted in recent years during the early winter estimate the Belarus wolf population to be between 1,500 and 2,000 individuals.

example, the study revealed that wolves consumed wild ungulates when these animals were numerous. However, in years when wild ungulate numbers were low, wolves preyed on medium- and small-sized wild animals, such as beavers, and on domestic livestock. The rate of wolf depredation on domestic animals and the appearance of wolves both in and around rural villages increased exponentially when wild ungulate numbers declined, and decreased when wild ungulates began to recover.

To take into account both conservation aims and the demands of limiting damage to wild ungulates and livestock, a bold national action plan has been developed in Belarus. It is a two-part project. The first part is a study on numbers of wolves and their diet, both wild prey and livestock. The second and larger portion of the project is the management of the wolf population, taking into account both the need to decrease depredation on livestock and the need to save the wolf as a part of the country's biodiversity.

In the extended woodlands of Belarus, the plan recommends keeping all wolf packs but controlling the number of individuals within the pack. Breeding adults will be retained,



Distribution of Wolves in Belarus
Legend:

- The wolf is a common species; the whole district is occupied by wolves; approximately one pack covers an area of 200–300 sq. km. (80–120 sq. mi.).
- Wolf packs occupy an area of 400–600 sq. km. (160–240 sq. mi.); there is much area that is rarely visited by wolves.
- There are few residential wolves.

and population control will be done through “pup searching” by specially trained personnel whose goal will be to save the breeding adults and to cull all but one pup in each pack. Reproduction numbers will be maintained by pups in dens that will not be discovered deep in the vast forested areas of Belarus. Additionally, hunting will be recommended as a measure to limit the number of wolves.

Such an approach to population control of wolves in Belarus may seem drastic; however, it might be a great step toward combining contradictory aims: limiting the damage

from wolves and conserving the wolf as an important component of biodiversity. Moreover, such an approach to wolf management will promote a demographically well-structured population since the majority of wolf packs will be maintained instead of being eradicated each year. ■

Vadim Sidorovich is the senior researcher at the Institute of Zoology at the National Academy of Sciences in Belarus. Leader of the Vertebrate Predation Research Group, he has worked with carnivores since 1985.

To learn more about Belarus, please visit www.ecoethno.org.



Vadim Sidorovich

Personal Encounter

Over the Next Ridge

Finding Wolves in the Barren-Lands

by Kristy Raines

Silently, our group of 16 hikers trekked across the tundra, all of us focused on a single goal—locating a family of wolves. If successful, we would find a hidden place to observe their activities without intruding or stressing them. The pace was moderate on the varied terrain, across areas of spongy lichen, through tangles of stunted birch trees, and over ridge after rocky ridge. We were just about to reach a hilltop when Canadian biologist Dean Cluff, who was at the head of the line, suddenly signaled us to halt, drop to our knees and stay low. I could feel the pebbles scraping my knees and palms as we started

crawling back toward the way we had come. In excited whispers, Cluff explained the reason for our hasty retreat. Just over the next ridge lay a pure-white adult wolf slumbering in the midday sun. How rare to be so close—just 30 yards away from a wolf in the subarctic barren-lands.

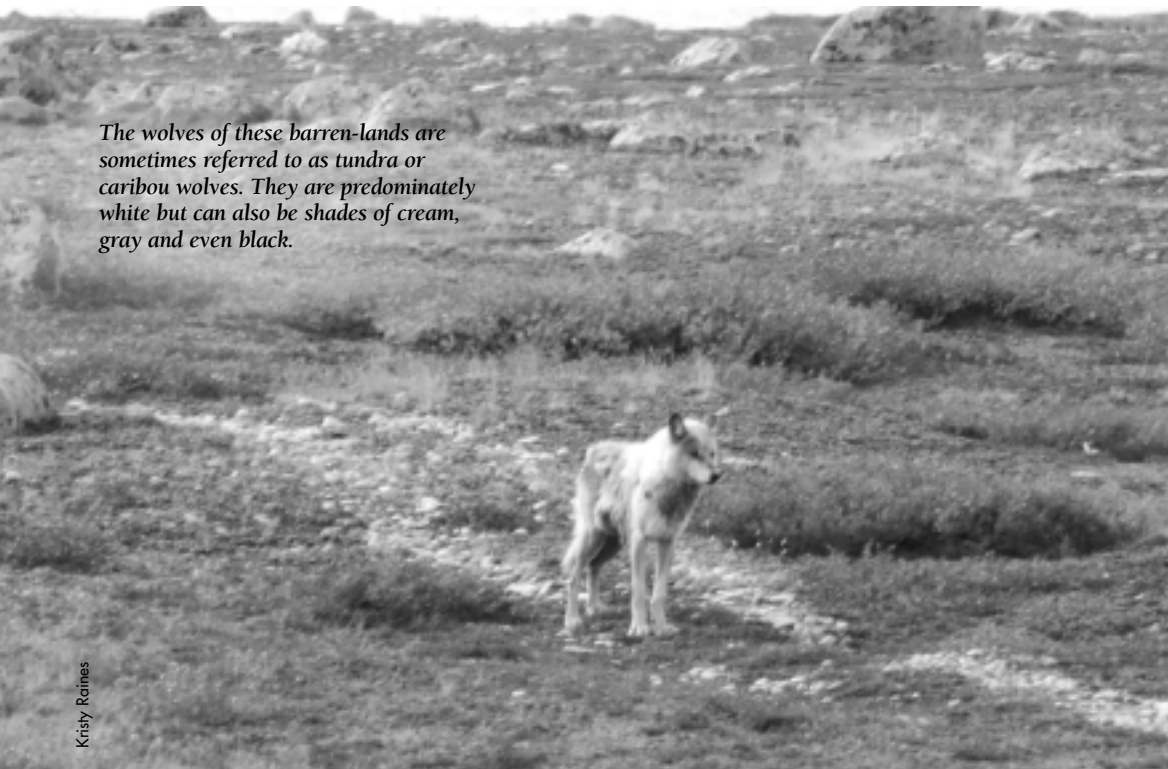
Such was the start of a week of wolf watching in the Aylmer Lake area of Canada's Northwest Territories, a trip led by Dr. L. David Mech, founder of the International Wolf Center, and Dean Cluff. Aylmer Lake is located north of the 60th parallel, about 90 miles south of the Arctic Circle. The vast landscape, too far north for trees to grow tall, is often referred to as the

barren-lands. But the summer sun revealed that the land is anything but barren. Low-growing birch and willow are abundant. Patches of moss campion with green leaves and tiny pink flowers as well as fuchsia-colored fire weed blossoms provide spectacular splashes of color. Five varieties of berries, including blueberries and cranberries, add texture and color to the landscape. They also provide essential nutrients to grizzlies, sik-siks (arctic ground squirrels) and ptarmigan. Who could resist munching on handfuls of ripe, juicy blueberries just there for the taking? I couldn't!

I was awestruck by the remoteness and unique beauty of the tundra. The wildlife was nothing short of inspiring. I became obsessed with hiking over the next ridge in hopes of spotting another rarity. Ironically, we didn't always have to travel far to find wildlife. A lone, mottled-gray wolf wandered nearly every day through the site of the lodge where we were staying. Friendly, human-habituated sik-siks darted from under the log cabins to beg for peanuts. Footprints in the sand gave evidence of a grizzly traveling close by. We spotted one grizzly from the ridge behind the lodge, where our group liked to congregate with our spotting scopes in the evenings. From the ridgetop the moon rising and the sun setting were breathtaking.

The wolves of these barren-lands are sometimes referred to as tundra or caribou wolves. They are predominately white but can also be shades of cream, gray and even black. Tundra

The wolves of these barren-lands are sometimes referred to as tundra or caribou wolves. They are predominately white but can also be shades of cream, gray and even black.



Kristy Raines



Kristy Raines

Dens are often dug in an esker—a ridge of sand and gravel deposited by melting glaciers nearly 10,000 years ago.



Debbie Reynolds

Kristy Raines with a sik-sik, an arctic ground squirrel.

wolves travel above and below the tree line on the mainland of the Northwest Territories and depend largely on the migratory barren-ground caribou as their major food source.

The wolves live in this subarctic region above the tree line from early spring through fall. In early May they hover near their chosen den site in anticipation of the arrival of pups. Dens are often dug in an esker—a ridge of sand and gravel deposited by melting glaciers nearly 10,000 years ago. I was thrilled to enter a long-unused den, knowing that several years ago, it had been occupied by fuzzy, wriggling wolf pups.

When the pups are about 2 months old, the pack leaves the den site and moves to a summer rendezvous site, where the adult wolves raise the pups until they are older and able to travel. And that's just what our group had stumbled upon—the rendezvous site of a tundra wolf pack! We soon discovered that the slumbering wolf we had spotted over the ridge was not alone. A second adult had joined its packmate for an afternoon snooze. We retreated to a vantage point to observe the wolves undetected. Much to our delight a wolf pup raised its fuzzy head from its hidden resting spot in the willows before lying back down to nap close to the adults. I felt a tight-

ness in my throat as I tried to dampen a squeal of pure joy!

Our group watched the three wolves nap for hours in the afternoon sun. So far the wolves were unaware that 16 sets of eyes—through binoculars, spotting scopes and cameras—were focusing on their every move. I've never been more excited to see twitching ears! But our patience paid off.

One of the adult wolves eventually sat up, looking anxiously in our direction and sniffing the air. The wolf's keen senses had detected our presence, even though we were 200 yards away and crouching low to the ground. Soon both adult wolves were up and apprehensive of the strangers in the distance. A subtle cue must have been given to the cream-colored pup, for it too left its comfort zone and started following one of the adults, presumably its mother. The other adult revealed itself to be the breeding male, as he performed a raised-leg urination before moving up the ridge. My heart raced as I, not wanting to miss a thing, frantically tried to keep tabs on all three wolves through my spotting scope.

The lone pup followed its mother for a short distance before I lost sight of both in what seemed to be a depression of willows and birches. The adult male kept traveling farther and farther

up the ridge before disappearing over the top. All were out of sight. But not for long! One of our group members suddenly whispered loudly, "Wolf! Wolf! On top of the ridge!"

The wolf watchers were being watched. The adult male peered over the top of the ridge, revealing only his head. If you weren't looking carefully, you could have mistaken him for another rock on top of the ridge. It was like watching a jack-in-the-box as he disappeared behind the ridge just to pop back up minutes later.

As the week went on, two additional wolves appeared on the scene. They were lower-ranking, young-adult members of the pack as evidenced by their submissive behavior toward the pup's mother. Often, only mother and pup were present at the rendezvous site. The breeding male disappeared over the next ridge, presumably to hunt for food. But this year, the caribou were not close.

During the summer, the barren-ground caribou migrate south through the subarctic on the way to their winter feeding grounds in forested areas below the tree line. The migratory path chosen by the caribou can differ from year to year. It is a precarious time for the wolves. If the caribou are not nearby, the adult wolves may travel 50 miles or more



Dr. L. David Mech and Dean Cluff led a week of wolf watching in the Aylmer Lake area of Canada's Northwest Territories. Back row, left to right: Debbie Reynolds, Neil Hutt, Jim Winkowski, Jackie Winkowski, Colleen Coghlan, Jack Cornwell, Jane Schofield, Roy Schofield; front row, left to right: Nancy Gibson, Jack Daniels, Dave Mech, Deb Tastad, Kristy Raines, Dean Cluff, Gary Tastad, Des Coghlan. (The stuffed wolf was used as a decoy for behavioral studies.)

per day in order to provide food for their young. All the while the wolves look for anything else they can catch and kill, including arctic hares, ground squirrels and even those ice-age holdouts—musk-oxen.

On our last day of observing the rendezvous site, only the pup was present. Were all of the adults out searching for food? Would they find enough food to provide for the pup as well as for themselves? We'll probably never know the answers. But while the adult wolves were away, a lumbering giant was in their backyard. A huge musk-ox meandered close to the rendezvous site as the anxious yet curious pup observed.

Aylmer Lake is located north of the 60th parallel, about 90 miles south of the Arctic Circle. The vast landscape, too far north for trees to grow tall, is often referred to as the barren-lands.



Wolves look for anything they can catch and kill, including arctic hares, ground squirrels and even those ice-age holdouts shown here—musk-oxen.

depend on the distribution of caribou.

I miss waking up in the wee hours with a wolf in my backyard and the northern lights over my head. Was it the trip of a lifetime? You bet. Once in a lifetime? Not if I can help it. ■

Kristy Raines is a veterinary technician from Hudson, Illinois. She has participated in numerous International Wolf Center adventure programs. She is currently writing a series of fictional children's books about wolves.

To participate in the next International Wolf Center trip to the Northwest Territories, August 9–19, 2007, contact trip coordinator Cornelia "Neil" Hutt at qhshades@aol.com, or write to 16156 Jonella Farm Drive, Purcellville, VA 20132.



Wild Kids



Little Red's Ongoing Story

by Kevin Strauss

You have all heard the *Little Red Riding Hood* story, right? But have you really? In your version, does Little Red trick the wolf and escape? Does she get gobbled up with her granny?

Folktales are stories that pass from one generation to another and from one country to another by word of mouth. These stories may have changed over time as storytellers adapted them for their own purposes. It wasn't until the 1800s that folktales were written down for the first time, allowing hundreds of generations of storytelling and story adapting to take place before that.

You can often find several versions of the same story because there is no one "right" version of a traditional folktale. Each one represents the time, place and person telling it. Examining the cultural values expressed in a folktale will help you understand the story and its underlying messages better.

The classic tale of *Little Red Riding Hood* is a good example of a story that reflects cultural values.

Most versions of the story can be traced back to the 1600s to the farming areas of central Europe. The people of that time and place possessed a general dislike for wolves due to the wolf's predation on farm animals. So the wolf was universally considered a villainous character.

The story also gives us insight into other cultural values such as the role of women and children in society. Some versions emphasize the vulnerability of little girls to moral perils

in the world. Others demonstrate the dangers of talking to shady characters. The oldest known versions of the story stress the importance of clever, resourceful thinking in getting a person out of a difficult situation.

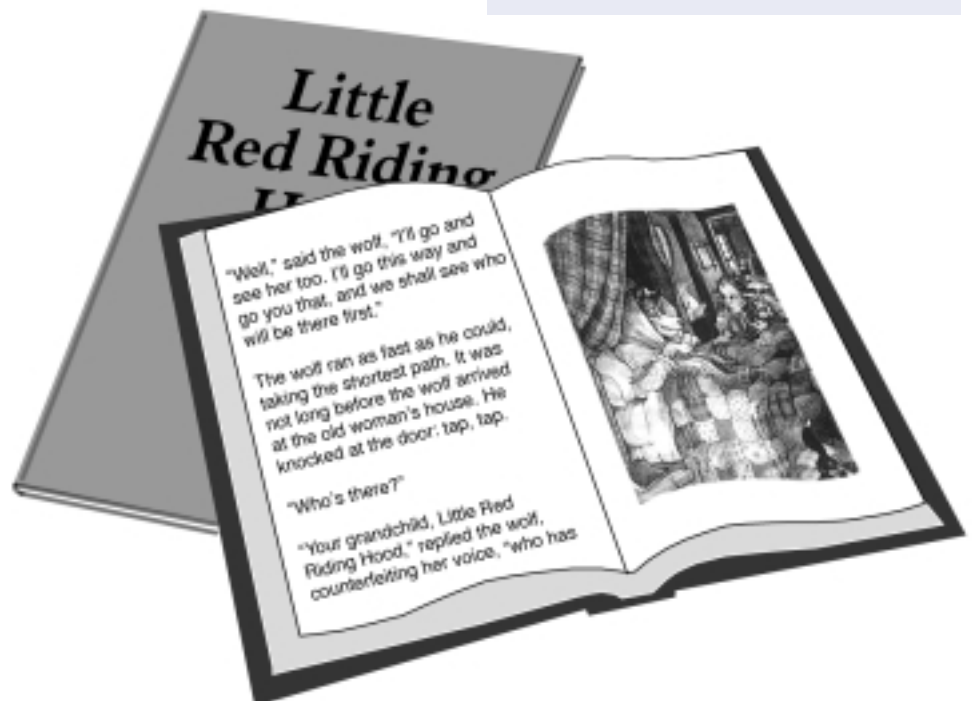
No matter which version of *Little Red Riding Hood* you find, be sure to look deeper than its face value, and consider the underlying cultural values expressed to get a full understanding of the story's meaning. ■

*Kevin Strauss is a naturalist, author and storyteller from Ely, Minnesota. Visit the "Shop" section of www.wolf.org to purchase his book *Song of the Wolf: Folktales and Legends from Around the World*, and audio CD *The Mountain Wolf's Gift: Wolf Tales from Around the World*. Contact him at kevin@naturestory.com.*

Try this!

Go to your library, and check out as many different versions of the *Little Red Riding Hood* story as you can find. Look for versions in children's picture books as well as in folktale collections in the 398.2 section of the library. Read through at least four different versions of the story, and discuss with a friend:

- How are the stories different?
- Describe one or two lessons that each version of the story teaches.
- Speculate about the time, place and person telling these stories...what do you guess might be true?
- How does the artwork accompanying the story contribute to your impression of Red or the wolf?



A Look Beyond

Chicken Little and Wolf Education Don't Mix

by Nancy Jo Tubbs

The-sky-is-falling headlines and promotional photos of dead wolf pups can provoke strong emotions and may result in public support for a cause, but fostering fear, catastrophe or even adoration of wolves to get you to send money is not our style.

To paraphrase Johnny Cash, you probably didn't join the International Wolf Center "in a fever hotter than a pepper sprout."

We'd rather put a fire in your mind to support the survival of wolf populations with credible, well-balanced information and a savvy look at the science, politics and intricate reality of wolves.

Center National Education Director Andrea Lorek Strauss puts it this way: "Some organizations think of you as an empty bowl. They want to fill you up with their bias so you'll think the way they do. We see you as a candle whose interest we can spark so that your brain lights up, and you think for yourself about wolf issues."

While the alarmist headline grabs attention, it also polarizes people and discourages healthy resolution of problems. Instead, we work to bring people on all sides of wolf issues to the ongoing dialogue and promote listening that leads to useful policy.

We also seek to tell the meaningful story. Kit Briem, the Center's development director says, "Shouting 'Wolves Delisted' in a headline may frighten you into sending a check, but it only tells part of the truth." At the Center, we aren't satisfied until we tell the where, what, who and why of the story. Our members are

willing to read further to determine the underlying meaning and the many possible outcomes of an event.

Diverse opinions and voices deserve our respect. For some, wolves are a source of archetypal inspiration and wonder. For others, the wolf causes significant problems. For both, we encourage their tolerance of the real wolf, in all its complexity, in everyday life,

The great aim of education is not knowledge but action, said English philosopher Herbert Spencer. Please take what you learn from

International Wolf, the Center's courses and our Web site and participate in public decisions about the wolf's future.

We hope too that you will continue to contribute financially as the Center takes action in the service of wolves. Your donations support a new distance learning program for school kids, the Wolf Helpline in Ely and stakeholder dialogue in the Southwest.

Alarmist headlines won't save wolf populations. Objective facts, healthy dialogue and programs that you support at the Center just might. ■

Nancy Jo Tubbs is chair of the International Wolf Center's board of directors, owner of an Ely-area resort and progressive opinion writer for the Ely Timberjay newspaper.



Becki and John Johnson