

# INTERNATIONAL WOLF

A PUBLICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL WOLF CENTER  
SPRING 2001

**Female Wolf Attacked  
on Isle Royale, page 4**

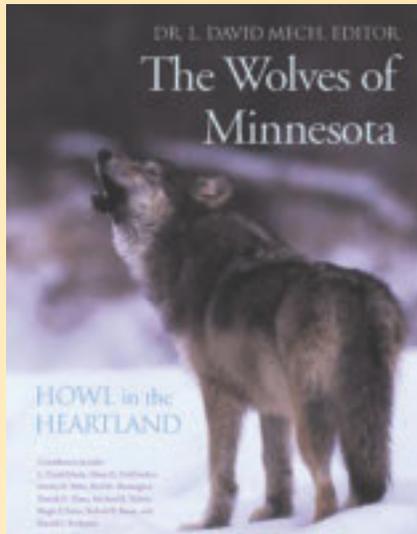
**Realities Behind  
Outlaw Wolves, page 8**

**Five Days in  
Yellowstone, page 11**



# The Wolves of Minnesota

L. David Mech, Editor



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# INTERNATIONAL WOLF

THE QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL WOLF CENTER  
VOLUME 11, NO. 1 SPRING 2001

## Features



Dwight Andrews

# 4

### **Dramatic encounter ends with unexpected twist**

Rolf Peterson's account of a lone wolf's desperate attempt at surviving a series of attacks that led her into the icy waters of Lake Superior.

*Rolf Peterson*



International Wolf Center

# 8

### **The Realities Behind Outlaw Wolf Legends**

Old Three Toes, one of the outlaw wolves of the 1900's is chained and muzzled by Government hunter Roy Spangler at the Henerson Ranch, Colorado in June 1923. These outlaw wolves were semi-romantic celebrities.

*Steve Grooms*

# 11

### **Five Days in Yellowstone**

The journal of an International Wolf Center member's trip to Yellowstone National Park documents fascinating wolf sightings.

*Alyson Baker*

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### *On The Cover*

A Timber wolf pup takes time to smell the wildflowers on a sunny spring afternoon. This photo of a captive wolf pup was taken by William Rideg, Kishenehn Wildlife Works in Missoula, MT.



**International Wolf Center**

# INTERNATIONAL WOLF

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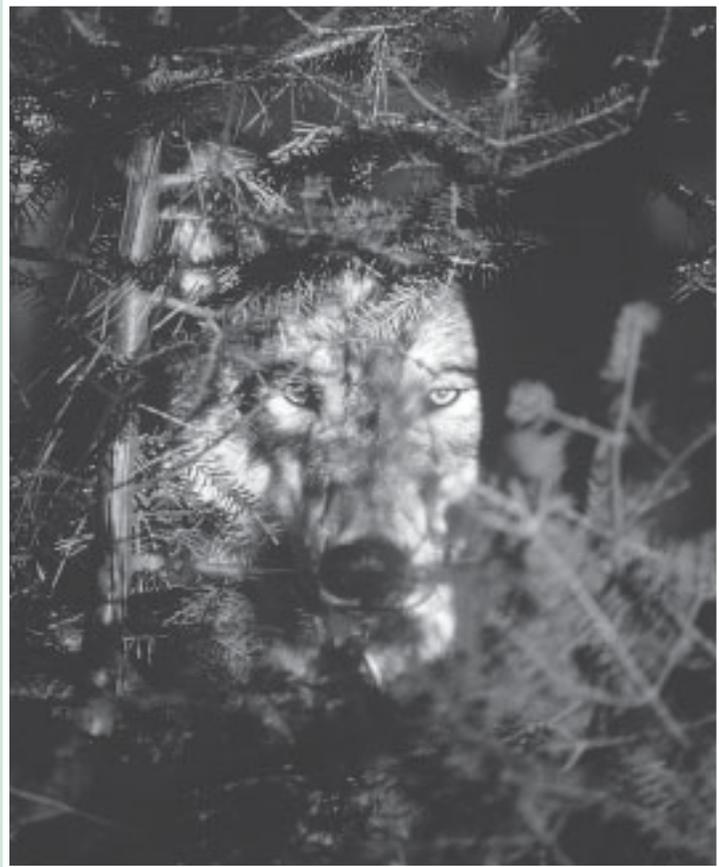
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PHOTOS: Unless otherwise noted, or obvious from the caption or article text, photos are of captive wolves.

# As A Matter Of Fact



Lynn and Donna Rogers

## How far can a wolf see and can it see in the dark?

Wolves can see at least as well as humans and probably better, for on open tundra they can spot prey such as musk-oxen, or arctic hares, as far as humans can. Dogs (and almost certainly wolves, from which dogs were domesticated) have several visual adaptations that allow them to see well in the dark. ■

### New Question

Who started the Isle Royale wolf study?

### **International Wolf magazine is interested in what you think!**

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One of the results of our magazine surveys is that readers particularly enjoy articles describing personal encounters with wolves. This also relates to a frequently asked question at the Wolf Center, "Where can I go to see wolves in the wild?" In this issue, two articles address those issues with distinctive perspectives about encounters with wolves and other creatures in two spectacular landscapes—Canada's Northwest Territories and Yellowstone National Park. Readers will capture a sense of the excitement and drama of being 'on the ground' witnesses to the daily lives of wolves in open country as they participate in two Wolf Center-sponsored field trips.



Walter Medwid

*Several projects to enhance the visitor experience are in full swing at our education center in Ely, Minnesota.*

Rolf Peterson's most recent personal encounter story is not one to miss. This riveting description of the private lives of wolves in Isle Royale National Park provides us with a glimpse of just how precarious life is for a wolf and also how incredibly resilient an individual animal can be. His story reinforces the idea that credit for wolf recovery is due in large measure to the tenacity and adaptability of the species.

These personal stories are supplemented by wolf tales that have become part of our history. Author

Steve Grooms provides an assessment of why certain wolves came to be legends in the second part of his article on outlaw wolves. At a time when we knew so little about the real wolf, the information void was filled with elaborate stories that only intensified our prejudice toward the wolf and other predators. The stories of legendary wolves remind us that we have come a long way since the early days of the last century, but it should also be noted that the tradition of making exaggerated claims about wolves has hardly disappeared with the new century.

Closer to home, several projects to enhance the visitor experience are in full swing at our education center in Ely. By the time this issue is in your hands, a new children's exhibit room will be in the construction phase, new theater seating will comfort visitors, and the final planning will be completed on three other significant projects scheduled for completion in 2001, including a new garage/workshop, improvements to our wolf enclosure and the repair and paving of the parking lot.

Our visitors are not the only ones getting attention. A walk-in freezer installed over the winter will store an ample quantity of road-killed deer, ensuring a steady supply of the favorite food of our newly expanded resident pack of wolves. All in all, it looks like a most productive and promising spring at the International Wolf Center. ■

# Life on Isle Royale

**Dramatic Encounter Ends  
with Unexpected Twist**

by ROLF PETERSON



Rolf Peterson



*The Middle Pack closes in to attack the lone female wolf, even after she took desperate refuge in icy Lake Superior.*



Rolf Peterson

*The lives of wolves can be grim as these animals strive to kill prey many times their size and compete with each other and neighboring packs. Rolf Peterson witnessed an especially interesting version of events last year on Isle Royale, the national park in Lake Superior that since 1958 has been a natural laboratory for wolf research.*

*—Dave Mech*

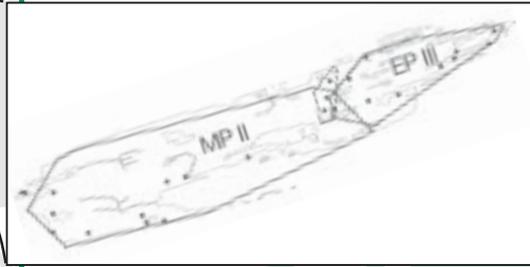
**T**he island's Middle pack was intent on expanding its territory in 2000. After spending five weeks at the west end of the island, the pack moved 20 miles on February 16, east to country that in 1999 had been used by both their own pack and another, the East pack. There, the Middle pack found a kill made by collared male 670 (originally from the East pack) and a female. The Middle pack followed the pair's tracks to another kill, chased the male for a mile, and killed him.

Two days later near this kill, tracks in the snow showed that the Middle pack had encountered another wolf pair and had given chase. By aircraft, we followed these tracks for six miles, to and along the south shore of the island. We caught up with the 11-member pack at water's edge, vigorously shaking themselves dry. Twenty feet out in Lake Superior, on a submerged rock in ten inches of frigid water, stood a bedraggled wolf, cowering, its hind quarters almost under water.

During the next hour, we circled

overhead. After several minutes of rolling in the snow to dry off, Middle pack wolves either lay in the snow, watching the victim, or strutted back and forth along the shore. In quick succession, three wolves jumped into shallow water and leaped for the rock where their quarry stood quivering. Confronted by this snarling trio, the stranded wolf snapped furiously at them. The lone wolf was forced backward into neck-deep water, but retained its footing and held the attackers at bay; they retreated to shore to shake and roll again in the snow.

While we watched, the pack led a series of a dozen attacks on the wolf. The lone wolf's desperate defense was effective, but the ordeal, including standing neck-deep in ice water, took its toll. During the last few encounters, the loner adopted a new strategy—when attacked on its rock, it retreated into the lake and swam along the shore about 30 feet to another submerged rock, buying a few moments before the pack members jumped back to shore and



*This graph, published in Ecological Studies of Wolves on Isle Royale 1999-2000 depicts wolf pack movements during the 2000 winter study. MP II marks the location of Middle Pack II. EP III marks the location of East Pack III. Isle Royale annual reports are available for purchase at [www.wolf.org](http://www.wolf.org).*

ran to the new location, where they renewed their attack.

We became aware of a new element when the breeding male of the Middle pack jumped to the rock to confront the lone wolf. Instead of pressing the attack, he slowly wagged his raised tail, then circled around the wolf's side and inspected its hindquarters; the male was interested in courting the stranger, a female in heat, it turned out. His arousal prompted his own mate to jump to the rock and launch a severe attack, the other wolves grabbing the strange female and throwing her on her back in the water! Soon all 11 wolves were involved in the melee. In less than a minute, however, the pack retreated and the bedraggled female rose to her feet.

After 45 minutes, the lone female, once again facing a violent attack, swam into Lake Superior, heading for a rocky point about 50 yards down the shore. Her "dog-paddle" strokes seemed vigorous, and I thought she might be able to reach shore and get

away with an all-out run. But she only crawled out of the water and stiffly walked a few steps before starting to shake off her drenched fur.

Within seconds, the Middle pack arrived and knocked the hapless wolf over. The whole pack crowded around and bit her. When they pulled back briefly, the female snapped at them. The last wolf pressing the attack held her throat for several seconds, leaving her motionless on the shoreline rocks. The Middle pack retreated toward the forest edge, then lay down in the bright afternoon sun, keeping an occasional eye on their victim. We thought the female was dead, but she raised her head briefly, which brought on a renewed attack.

Finally, the female lay still. We headed back to our base camp to refuel at one o'clock.

At half past three, we found the pack heading into the island's interior. We planned to land and collect the carcass, but as we circled, we saw a wolf approaching the scene in the tracks of the Middle

pack — the trailing member of the pack. As it drew near the scene, this looking all around with its tail tucked between its legs. Eventually, it followed tracks to the water's edge and saw the female's carcass.

Without hesitation, the newcomer approached and, when only two feet away, the female raised her head! The oncoming wolf kept its distance, but moved near the female's hindquarters, revealing himself as a potential suitor. The male retreated a few feet, climbed up on a nearby rock, and lay down to watch. The female laid her head back down on the bedrock shore.

Periodically, the male approached the female, his attention seeming to breathe life into her. We left the pair alone for two hours. When we returned at six o'clock for our final check of the day, both wolves were gone! We marveled at the female's resilience.

The next day, the Middle pack was miles away, and from the aircraft, we could find no sign of the wounded female and her new companion. We landed on a nearby lake and snowshoed to the attack scene. About 50 yards into the woods, we found a succession of three bloody beds. We followed parallel tracks of both wolves,

*We became aware of a new element when the breeding male of the Middle pack jumped to the rock to confront the lone wolf.*



Rolf Peterson

*Five days after being left for dead by the Middle Pack and by the author, the wolf was on her feet receiving attention to her wounds from a male suitor.*

with occasional drops of blood marking the female's path for a few hundred yards.

Five days later, we were rewarded with a clear view of the wounded female and her suitor standing on a rocky knoll, about a half-mile from the attack site. The female was standing while the male attentively licked her wounded neck.

Obviously the female was recovering! Her companion had provided much-needed attention to her neck wound and may have saved her life. But then he became a pest, displaying an imposing array of courtship behavior. The female had no evident interest, and she had to expend valuable energy to whirl and snap at his unwelcome advances.

For almost an hour, we circled overhead and watched the female ward off all physical contact with the male except his attention to her

wounded neck. Twice she grabbed a mouthful of snow; evidently she had not been able to get to the lake for water. Prevented from displaying common courtship behavior, such as pawing the female's back, inspecting or mounting her rear, or playfully chasing her, the male tried a new approach, something I'd never seen before in wolf courtship—he stood in front of the female and quickly dug a deep hole in the snow, as though caching food, similar to some of the hunting-related courtship behavior of red foxes.

Two hours later, when we checked the pair for the last time, the male was still making a nuisance of himself, and the female was still snapping at

him: two individuals, one focused on mere survival, the other on reproductive imperatives, neither with much chance of success outside the existing territorial packs. We felt fortunate to observe the pair again, but this was our last flight of the winter season. A final outcome would only be known to the wolves. ■

*Rolf Peterson is a professor of wildlife ecology at Michigan Technological University and the author of numerous journal articles and books about wolves, including *The Wolves of Isle Royale: A Broken Balance*, published by Willow Creek Press. The preceding story first appeared in 'Ecological Studies of Wolves on Isle Royale, 1999-2000,' an annual report.*

For information about the International Wolf Center's upcoming adventure to Isle Royale from June 2-7, 2001 please call 1-800-ELY-WOLF Ext. 25.

# Uncovering The Realities Behind “Outlaw” Wolf Legends

PART I I

by STEVE GROOMS

In the last issue of *International Wolf*, we discussed a few of the fascinating legends surrounding famous wolves with names, often called “outlaw” wolves. From time to time, particular wolves have become famous. This was especially common in the Great Plains states during the early decades of the 20th century.

When most wolves had been extirpated from a region, sometimes a few remarkable individuals survived against great odds. These were often given a name. Many of them became semi-romantic celebrities, something like human outlaws, and their exploits were publicized in regional newspapers. They were pursued relentlessly. At least 150 men hunted Three Toes of Harding County during the 13 years the wolf preyed on cattle in a region of South Dakota.

These legendary wolves inspired many thrilling and puzzling stories. People talked about them as if they had magic abilities to avoid bullets, traps and poisons. Often they were accused of wanton depredation on livestock. Many named wolves were described as physically distinctive, being an unusual color or larger than average wolves. Many were loners. Their exploits were the stuff of campfire legends.

But these stories, while fun to read, raise problems for modern students of wolves because they



*The legendary outlaw wolves inspired many thrilling and puzzling stories. They were described as being physically distinctive, being an unusual color or larger than average wolves. Many were loners. Their exploits were the stuff of campfire legends.*



*This sketch shows the infamous Lobo, the dark wolf in the foreground with his mate Blanca standing behind him. This drawing was adapted from a sketch by Ernest T. Seton, who wrote the book, *Wild Animals I have known*, published in 1904 by Charles-Scribner & Sons.*

present such a strange picture of wolves. Wolves do not have supernatural abilities, and their ranges aren't nearly as extensive as described in the old stories. Wolves are not the huge monsters depicted in the legends. In general, reading these old tales leaves the impression the authors weren't willing to let facts get in the way of a good story.

What can we make of these stories now? How can we separate myth from reality in these old, semi-authenticated stories?

In their paper, "Accounts of Famous North American Wolves," Philip Gipson and Warren Ballard attempt to reconcile fact with fiction for 59 famous wolves. In the end, the authors conclude that many stories are "exaggerated, inaccurate or fabricated." Whenever we have evidence to check old legends—such as skeletal remains, taxidermy mounts, old records or photos—the provable fact often dashes cold water on the old legends.

One source of inaccuracy might have been the bias of those writing the reports. Freelance "wolfers" and

governmental agents working to extirpate wolves had an incentive to exaggerate the exploits of depredating wolves. Glorifying outlaw wolves glorified their own work and argued for continued funding of it. Many tales of renegade wolves come from the same source, Stanley P. Young. Young, one of the earliest scientists interested in wolves, believed that wolves were such a hazard to wild game and livestock that they needed to be controlled. Gipson and Ballard conclude that Young's anti-wolf bias encouraged him to fabricate and speculate when retelling stories of outlaw wolves.

Cattlemen had their own reasons to exaggerate. If a rancher's inattention caused a heifer to drown, he might prefer to tell his buddies that "Old Clubfoot" had struck again. Missouri's Jesse James used to read newspaper accounts that had him holding up banks in three states on the same day. The same phenomenon is apparent with these wolf tales.

Some stories about famous wolves are outright lies. A good example is Ernest Thompson Seton's maudlin

tale, "Lobo, King of the Currumpaw." Seton claimed that Lobo died of a broken heart. But the skeleton of Lobo, which exists in a museum today, has a fresh bullet hole in the skull. Skeletal remains suggest that the size of renegade wolves was routinely exaggerated. Some old photos prove that the sex of famous outlaws was improperly reported. For many different reasons, the people who created these legends just weren't as careful with the facts as they should have been.

Yet we should not totally dismiss all tales of outlaw wolves. It is not difficult to understand why so many stories ascribed strange behavior to the old outlaws.

Many famous wolves were loners for the obvious reason that the campaign to eradicate wolves had almost been completed. A great many of these wolves operated in the first three decades of the last century, a time when trapping, and particularly poisoning, had almost eliminated all wolves. So few wolves remained alive that they could not form normal pack social structures.

We can also speculate about why some of these old famous wolves were claimed to hunt such large territories. Since few wolves were alive, the survivors did not need to defend a territory against other wolves, and were uniquely free to roam opportunistically. And since it was easier for wolfers to find and kill any wolves that operated in a small region, wolf eradication programs would tend to eliminate wolves with small territories but not kill those with less predictable habits.

It also makes sense that these last wolves would attack so many cattle and sheep, even though wolves normally select wild game as their prey. Toward the end of the 19th century, unregulated market and sport hunting had depleted populations of wild game. Before modern management techniques restored game populations, game herds fell to dangerously low levels. The last wolves alive were almost forced to attack livestock.

We can even understand, at least in a general way, why some of these wolves behaved in ways not normal for wolves. Most of the famous wolves lived during a period that was extraordinary. Exploitation pressures were ferocious. Normal pack structures had been destroyed, and the survivors were often forced to live as solitary individuals. The natural prey base had been almost eliminated. It is hard to imagine how a wolf in such abnormal times could possibly have behaved “normally.”

Often the wolves themselves were physically abnormal. Many were disabled as a result of being shot, trapped or snared. The most common injury was the loss of one or more toes to traps. Many of these wolves were old, some so old they had poor teeth. These so-called “gummers” had to resort to unusual tactics to get prey. Several famous wolves were hybrids, not surprising in view of the fact that wolves that are deprived of the chance to mate with other wolves will sometimes mate with dogs.

It even makes sense that these

outlaw wolves were exceptionally hard to eliminate. The last survivors of such a ferocious campaign of persecution would naturally be highly wary. Some famous wolves might have survived because they simply happened to have unusual habits. Wolves that behaved typically were readily killed by techniques targeted to kill typical wolves. Wolves with unconventional habits, whether those animals were exceptionally smart or not, didn't so easily fall prey to techniques invented to kill conventional wolves. For example, one wolf famous for her resistance to traps baited with scents was found to have no sense of smell. Her legendary elusiveness was a happy accident arising from a disability.

We can enjoy these old tales today, for they are thrilling stories. But we should not too easily accept them as truthful, even though most were based on elements of truth. The careful reader will enjoy these old legends but not accept them at face value.

Above all, modern fans of wolves should not form general opinions about wolves based on the reported exploits of these unusual animals. Modern wolves are not nearly as destructive as the legends of the outlaws would lead us to assume. At the same time, wolves are not generally as elusive and canny about humans as the outlaw legends suggest.

Outlaw wolves are fascinating because they were so exceptional. For this reason, we should not acquire distorted notions of what normal wolves are like based on the anguished last days of the last wolves living before modern wolf restoration began. ■

*Steve Grooms is the author of several books, including a popular book on wolves and wolf restoration in the United States, Return of the Wolf, which he just revised. A writer living in Saint Paul, he serves on International Wolf magazine's advisory committee.*



*According to Animals Under The Rainbow, by Aloysius Roche (published by The Broad Water Press Limited, 1952), monks during the 12th century fed wolves and regarded them as creatures created by God during a time when wolves were severely persecuted. This drawing depicts the allegedly true story of a wolf St. Francis of Assisi fed to keep it from being driven by hunger to attack the local people.*

## Journal Entries Detail an Exciting Look at Wolves in the Wild

Following the reintroduction of wolves to Yellowstone five years ago, each March and November, wildlife technicians in the park observe the wolves of the Rose Creek, Druid, and Leopold packs daily to gather data for a study of what wolves prey on and how. Alyson Baker, an International Wolf Center member from New Zealand, along with other members and researchers, went on a wolf observation trip that coincided with the March 2000 study. Here, 'Day One'

sets the stage for the rest of Alyson's fascinating journal entries about her first experience observing wolves in this remarkable ecosystem.

# Five Days in Yellowstone



Douglas Smith

*Yellowstone Park's Druid Peak Pack inhabits primarily the east end of the broad Lamar Valley lying in the northeastern corner of the park. There, they often cross the park highway or lie on ridges above the road where visitors can spot them through binoculars or spotting scopes.*

## Day 1

"Focus on the rock in the center of the scope." The image finally came into focus: a perfect oval—it was a black wolf curled with its nose tucked neatly under its tail. I whooped for joy. A wolf sighting, on our first day in Yellowstone! The black wolf from the Rose Creek Pack slowly lifted its head, looked around, then curled up again.

by ALYSON BAKER

The excitement in our group rose as the black stood, stretched, and moved left. Now we could see a large, gray female sprawled on the ground. The commentary from the technicians (techs) sped up as the pack assembled. The techs identified each wolf by number, until we had nine wolves in view! The excitement in the pack was also rising. The animals began loping, feinting in the snow, and circling each other. Then the wolves faded from view as falling snow hid them behind a wall of white; from behind it, came a chorus of howls.

When the snowfall waned, we spotted the pack moving toward an enormous elk herd isolated in the valley above. Over and over, the wolves corralled a group of elk, circled, made forays into the herd, then wandered off. Suddenly, two of the wolves that had been identified as the breeding pair were running at top speed toward an elk. After dashing to a better vantagepoint, I could see the kill through my binoculars! One wolf sat to the left, patiently waiting for its turn, while all the other pack members stood, faces down and tails up, ripping at the carcass.

And this was just our first day! If we needed any further proof of how lucky we had been, we only needed to watch Diane Boyd, a wolf biologist with 20 years of field experience who had just joined us. Boyd was so ecstatic at having witnessed her first kill from the ground, I thought she might scent mark on the spot!

## Day 2

Our second day gave us wonderful opportunities to watch the Rose Creek wolves sleeping, frolicking, urinating, 'scatting', testing bison, and chasing elk. The night before, we had listened to a talk by renowned wolf expert Dave Mech, who was also observing the Yellowstone wolves. Yellowstone is allowing unprecedented opportunities to study wolves interacting in the wild.

Yellowstone isn't the end of a re-introduction program, it is the beginning of a new era of wolf research. Fresh observations of wolves have caused Mech to question some of the "fundamental truths" of wolf behavior, particularly with respect to pack hierarchy and dominance. There is so much to observe and think about, so many suspected changes in the other species in the park, so many theories to test!

## Day 3

A good way to find wolves is to find filmmaker Bob Landis. Today, we found Landis along a road watching the Druid Peak Pack. They are known as the "Deadly Druids" because they have killed wolves from other packs and coyotes as well as elk. But to our group, the Druids were most obliging. We observed eight pack members at a kill. Yellowstone Wolf Interpreter Rick McIntyre shared a wonderful story.

McIntyre had observed an encounter between the Druids and the Rose Creek Pack, which have adjoining territories.

If wolf packs happen to encounter each other in border territory, the smaller group usually retreats discreetly. This day, both packs had seven wolves. After a frozen moment in which the packs did their arithmetic, both groups charged! They flew toward each other at top speed... and flowed right through each other, unscathed. McIntyre hypothesized that at the last possible moment, pack members recognized kin in the other group.

There are more than five research projects on nine species currently funded in Yellowstone, all using radio collars. It was suspected that the elk we had seen killed on our first day was one that had been radio-collared for an elk study. A tech hiked out to check.

Meanwhile, Doug Smith, a biologist for the Yellowstone Gray Wolf Restoration Project, had just hiked into a mountainous area to try to locate the Crystal Creek Pack. A signal from a female dispersing from that Pack was then picked up deep in Rose Creek territory, causing much speculation—how would the Rose Creek wolves react to a dispersing female?

When Doug called in, he said he had found the entire Crystal Creek Pack intact. The collared elk was located with a mountain lion on the carcass (death from unknown causes). The new theory? The radio signal emanating from the Rose Creek territory must have been from a collar on a dog being taken in to track the lion found on the elk... except when the lion techs emerged, they hadn't been using dogs!

**It was starting to feel like whatever the group dreamed, we would witness.**

The mystery was never solved.

In contrast to the research maelstrom is the simplicity of the wolves. The Druid senior male and female with two pups later that afternoon were having a lovely time playing, sleeping and howling, the black male swaying in the sun as he howled.

## Day 4

It was starting to feel like whatever the group dreamed, we would witness. Once, a coyote stopped right in front of our van to yip and howl. We saw elk frolicking and head-butting in the snow. Snow-covered bison slept within camera range. And of course, we kept seeing wolves. Day four started with Rick calling on the walkie-talkie: "The Druids are waiting for you about three miles down the road!"

These bloody faced, meat-drunk wolves had made yet another kill. The Druids made four kills in 50 hours while we were in Yellowstone.

Both Diane Boyd and Dave Mech noted that when they had handled drugged Yellowstone wolves, the animals were so fat that the biologist couldn't feel their hips or pelvis bones, contrary to most wolves they had studied. Someone asked Diane why the pack territories in Yellowstone are much smaller than observed elsewhere. Was it abundance of prey, or the newness of the area? Diane responded, "Obesity."

## Day 5

Our last day was the only day we didn't see wolves. We hiked into one of the Druid kill sites and watched techs sawing off a section of a dead elk's leg bone to test the marrow for fat content. They also pulled an incisor to test the elk's age. Then techs removed a metatarsal (foot) bone to help them assess the condition of the elk herd. The metatarsal bone of an elk fetus is the one that grows most rapidly in the womb. Thus, an

analysis of an elk's age and metatarsal length indicates the condition of the elk's mother during the winter when the elk was in her womb.

What a week! So much complex information to absorb and so many wonderful memories! One evening, we were racing up and down the roads while maintaining walkie-talkie contact, trying to help the techs locate fast traveling Druids. Dave Mech leaped into the car yelling, "God I love this! This is so much fun!"

On that same evening, I spotted elk running at top speed. Sweeping my binoculars to where they had appeared, I saw why: two Druid pups exploded into view in a dream of energy, swirling snow and fur! I will always treasure these memories of the wolves. ■

*Alyson Baker is an International Wolf Center member from New Zealand. Wolf related trips have brought her to such places as Anaktuvuk Pass, in Alaska, and to the Sierra de la Cabrera in Spain.*



Douglas Smith

*The Rose Creek pack makes its way over the snow in the Slough Creek area east of Tower Junction. This area is close to the center of the pack's territory, where visitors often watch the wolves trying to catch elk, their main prey, or sometimes even bison.*

## Notes From Home



Sue Schroeder

Dave Mech demonstrates how a radio-tracking antenna works. Behind him is a collection of wolf radio collars. Mech has volunteered much of his time to educating people about wolves.

### L. David Mech Receives Lifetime Achievement Award

On November 3, 2000 the second annual Eugene M. Shoemaker Award was presented to L. David Mech, the founder of the International Wolf Center in Ely, Minnesota. This lifetime achievement award was created to honor a US Geological Survey employee who uses his or her outstanding scientific ability to introduce complex concepts to many different audiences. The award citation reads as follows:

“Dave exemplifies the criteria for this award not only as a highly respected world-expert on wolf biology and wolf recovery but by aggressively pursuing every opportunity to inform the public on issues surrounding wolf conservation throughout the world. With Dave’s guidance, the International Wolf Center has grown into a major environmental voice for educating the public about wolves. Dave Mech sets a high standard for others in ensuring the research findings make their way into the decision making arenas and the public consciousness.”

Congratulations, Dave.

### Wolf Center Plays Matchmaker in Unlikely Place

Imagine the most unlikely place to meet your future spouse. For Aaron and Natasha Sampson, it was in Madagascar, an island off the coast of southeastern Africa. This is where the two were serving as Peace Corp volunteers. The following is a brief account of the story told by Aaron and Natasha and an explanation of how The International Wolf Center played a major role in their discovery of each other.

**Aaron:** “It was cold when I arrived in Antananarivo,

the capital city in the highlands of central Madagascar. To keep warm, I put on two layers of socks, bought a three dollar sweater in downtown Antananarivo, and pulled out my fleece jacket from the Wolf Center.”

**Natasha:** “Imagine my surprise when one day I walked into the Peace Corps office in Antananarivo to find a new volunteer wearing an Ely Wolf Center jacket! My family has a place on Bear Island Lake, and I



Ellen Sampson

Aaron and Natasha Sampson enjoy a dance at their wedding in Ely, Minnesota on September 23, 2000.

consider Ely home. When I tapped Aaron on the shoulder to point out the coincidence, we found that both of our sets of parents were actually in Ely that very weekend. To make a long story short, we realized over the next few months that we had a lot in common.”

**Aaron:** “Without the jacket, she wouldn’t have paid any attention to me.”

**Natasha:** “That’s not entirely true.”

**Aaron:** “But somewhat true.”

**Natasha:** “Anyway, when I returned to the U.S. in December of 1997, Aaron came along, and we’ve spent as much time as possible in Ely. It is a special place for both of us and after our engagement in January of 2000, it seemed the ideal location for our wedding.”

Because Aaron’s mother is such a strong supporter of the Wolf Center, she suggested inviting guests for a tour on the morning of the wedding. Our guests had a wonderful time—so Aaron and I would like to say thank you to the Wolf Center—not just for giving a tour to our guests on the day of our wedding, but also for helping to bring about that day in the first place!

Congratulations Aaron and Natasha!



*Tyler Thompson sells lemonade to raise money for his International Wolf Center membership.*

Cheryl Thompson

## Wolf Center Commends New Member

The International Wolf Center would like to publicly recognize one of our newest members, Tyler Thompson, who purchased his very own membership by selling lemonade last summer! At right is the letter Tyler’s mother submitted to the Center:

Good going, Tyler! Without members like you, the Wolf Center would not be what it is today. ■

*Dear International Wolf Center:*

*I am so proud of my son Tyler—I wanted to share his love of wolves with you.*

*We have visited the Wolf Center twice. Upon arrival of your fundraiser [forms] in the mail, Tyler decided he was going to make money to send to help the wolves! He proceeded to organize a Kool-Aid sale in which he made \$16.50 to send to you. I thought you might enjoy the picture he drew and the time he spent on the computer making the sign for his sale.*

*Tyler has a big heart for animals, and most of all, wolves.*

*Please accept our donation of \$28.*

*Sincerely,*  
*Cheryl Thompson*



INTERNATIONAL WOLF CENTER

*Contributors*

*Thank You!*

**Correction**

*International Wolf* was notified by Sherry Jokinen that two photos on pages six and seven of the winter 2000 issue were inaccurately attributed to her. The photos were taken by Heather Wieczorek.

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## Tracking the Pack

### Fitting Into the Pack: A Lesson in Social Dominance Hierarchy

by Lori Schmidt

There is a saying in the wolf world: “Invest in your pups; they’re the future of the pack.” The International Wolf Center has done just that by nurturing the newest pack members of our resident pack in Ely (*International Wolf*, winter 2000). As the photo in this article demonstrates, the Center’s efforts paid off — Malik and Shadow have developed into healthy, full-grown Arctic wolves. I’m sure the question on everyone’s mind is: How did it go?

The pups were introduced into the main pack on August 9th, weighing 34 pounds; by October 6th, they weighed 62 pounds,

and by late December, Malik and Shadow’s physical body structure matched that of MacKenzie, Lucas and Lakota, nearing 100 pounds. Even though they maintained the soft pelage and the slight uncoordinated efforts of pups, over winter, they became part of the pack’s “social dominance hierarchy.”

During fall and early winter, the adult wolves made allowances for the pups; the newcomers were allowed to eat at the carcass first; they could pull on MacKenzie’s tail without retribution; and they could jump on top of one of the adults with nothing more

than a responsive grunt. As winter waned and the pups began maturing, minimal allowances were made for these antics, and adult wolf rules began to apply. The deer carcass we feed them each Saturday night was no longer left to Malik and Shadow’s leisure: they now had to compete with the more experienced adults.

Feeding is not the only place where the pups noticed a change. When the pups were young, they were accustomed to greeting the wolf care staff as soon as the staff entered the enclosure. By definition of the social dominance hierarchy, the alphas have rights to do as they wish and they began to apply those rights as the pups began maturing.

One hierarchical right is the right to greet first. When wolf care staff enter the enclosure, MacKenzie, the

pack’s alpha female, forcefully pushes the pups aside and leaves them waiting for their turn. Mackenzie takes this right seriously; staff members have even observed her dragging Lakota off the greeting rock by his tail so he wouldn’t greet the handlers first!

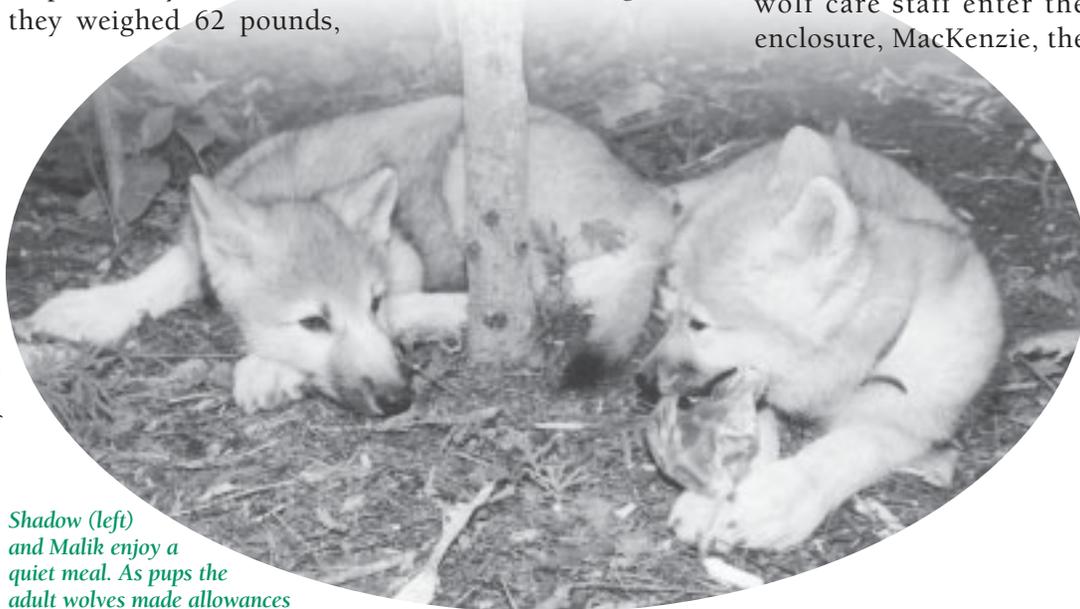
The pups have not permanently established a place in the pack’s rank order and may not until they reach sexual maturity, between 18 and 24 months. Until then, the pups wait their turn as lower pack members, looking for opportunities to climb in the social rank order. One thing is certain — the changing dynamics will make for interesting observations for Center visitors. ■

Lori Schmidt is the wolf curator at our Center in Ely, MN.

#### TECHNICAL EDITOR’S

*NOTE: While the interactions described in this article are interesting from an academic standpoint, readers should not assume that they represent typical social interactions in natural wolf packs. The International Wolf Center wolf pack is unusual in three important respects: (1) the wolves are constrained by a fence and are artificially fed, (2) the adults are spayed, thus changing their natural hormonal profiles, and (3) the pack is composed of adult littermates and newly introduced, unrelated pups. Most natural wolf packs are composed of an adult breeding pair and their immature offspring; occasionally an unrelated adult joins the pack temporarily.*

—L. David Mech



Shadow (left) and Malik enjoy a quiet meal. As pups the adult wolves made allowances for them; they were allowed to eat at the carcass first.

Kyle Allen

# Wolves of the World

by Neil Hutt

## WOLVES IN ETHIOPIA

### On the Edge of Extinction: Saving The Imperiled Ethiopian Wolves

*“Ethiopian wolves exemplify an evolutionary paradox: habitat specialization versus generalist versatility.”*

—Claudio Sillero,  
Wildlife Conservation  
Research Unit,  
Oxford University

It is the world's rarest canid. It looks somewhat like a red fox with its long, slim legs, extended muzzle and small body, and like a fox, it preys exclusively on rodents, usually foraging alone by day. Unlike the fox, however, the Ethiopian wolf, or “ky kebero,” lives in large family packs that often include older adults who may remain because dispersal territory is limited or non-existent.

Carnivores living in groups often do so for a number of reasons. For example, hunting large prey may require pack hunting. Pressure from rival predator species may also be a factor in some regions. These traditional explanations for group living among carnivores do not, however, apply to the Ethiopian wolf. Catching rodents does not require pack hunting, and rival predator species are not a threat.

Claudio Sillero, a zoologist who has worked for 13 years to protect the Ethiopian wolf and its

afroalpine habitat, explained the adaptive basis of the animal's intricate social organization. Larger groups, said Sillero, can defend larger, better quality territories such as tracts of grassland where rodents are plentiful. Social aggregations among Ethiopian wolves can be selected relatively quickly because of the high level of relatedness within the packs.

Ethiopian wolf packs usually consist of three to 13 closely related adults and juveniles. Raising pups is a cooperative activity. The pack centers its interactions around the den during the pup-rearing season, protecting the pups and regurgitating food to them.

Ethiopian wolves are particularly interesting because they are what Sillero calls “specialized carnivores.” Other members of the dog family tend to adapt readily to a variety of habitats, and most are opportunists in terms of prey selection. Gray wolves and red wolves, for instance, may prey primarily on ungulates such as elk, deer or moose. In addition, they will supplement their diets with a

variety of small mammals such as hare or beaver. In contrast, the small isolated Ethiopian wolf populations are restricted to rodent prey on the open moorlands of the Ethiopian Highlands. This factor, combined with the animal's distinctive social behavior, has prompted the question: Is this canid a wolf?

*Canis simensis* has long been referred to as the Simien jackal or Simien fox. These names are not, however, accurate. As a result of genetic studies, many scientists are convinced that these graceful mammals are indeed a distinct species of wolf. “The first explorers to the area had the right name when they called it the Abyssinian wolf,” Sillero said.

Swift intervention and help from the international community is critical in order to diminish the real possibility that this unique mammal will become extinct. The main threats to the Ethiopian wolf's survival are habitat destruction and fragmentation, competition with humans for high-altitude agriculture and grazing, direct persecution, hybridization with domestic dogs, and especially infectious diseases such as canine distemper and rabies. Fewer than 500 adults are believed to survive in the wild, half of them in Bale Mountains National Park, where they are protected by law.

Is there a future for the Ethiopian wolf? Despite



the grim statistics, an international effort is being made to develop a conservation strategy.

One year ago, the Wildlife Conservation Research Unit at Oxford University organized an international Ethiopian wolf conservation strategy workshop to discuss ways to protect these endangered animals and the unique afroalpine ecosystem in the Bale Mountains. While no immediate plans exist for a captive breeding program, education programs are underway to raise conservation awareness among the Ethiopian people.

Sillero has pointed out the necessity of establishing management practices concentrating on disease prevention and on ways to curtail hybridization. "The most worrying threat," he said, "is that of diseases transmitted from domestic dogs. Thus, one of the main activities of the Ethiopian Wolf Conservation Programme, established in 1995, is to vaccinate domestic dogs in areas around wolf populations to reduce contact with disease."

The challenges are daunting, but by using the Ethiopian wolf as a "flagship species," broader conservation initiatives might be developed to save other wildlife found only in Ethiopia.

*In April of 1998, 11 captive-raised Mexican wolves were released into the Apache National Forest in Eastern Arizona. Several others have been released since then.*

#### MEXICAN WOLF

### El Lobo: A Future in the "Land of Enchantment?"

*"There are no neat stories in nature, no tidy closures with beginning, middle, and end, no epiphanies. There is only ongoing process, continuous struggle."*

—Rick Bass,  
The New Wolves

In biological terms, the recovery plan for the critically endangered Mexican wolf suggests hope for a neat story with a tidy closure. The Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area (BRWA), where the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) hopes to re-establish a wild population of at least 100 Mexican wolves by 2008,

encompasses almost 7,000 square miles straddling the border of Arizona and New Mexico. This vast expanse of public land contains favorable wolf habitat with a large native prey base of deer, elk and small mammals. It also contains federally leased grazing land—and livestock.

The process of wolf recovery has, therefore, been a continuous struggle, one that has pitted urbanites against rural citizens, ranchers against environmentalists, and some pro-wolf groups against USFWS policies.

In April of 1998, 11 captive-raised Mexican wolves were released into the primary recovery



Dick George



California Wolf Center

*Environmental policies are so sensitive to livestock interests that some say they hamper the entire Mexican wolf recovery program.*

zone—the Apache National Forest in eastern Arizona. Biologists were optimistic when the captive-raised wolves began hunting elk. Then in 1999 came the reports that two wolf packs had killed livestock. The wolves were recaptured and returned to captive breeding facilities where they were held for translocation into the Gila Wilderness in western New Mexico. This decision ignited a firestorm of controversy over the recovery program.

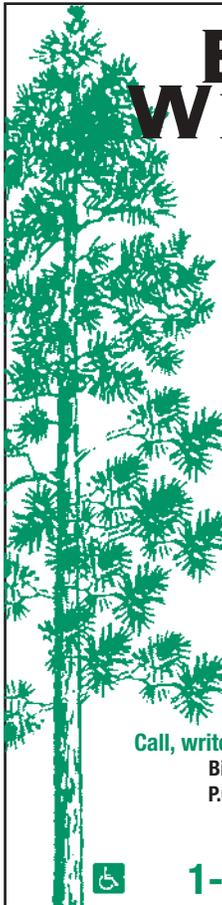
The approved wolf recovery action for the Mexican wolf allows for the translocation of recaptured wolves to the Gila Wilderness. Of particular significance is the fact that only wolves previously released in the primary recovery zone in Arizona are eligible for release into the Gila, a remote area with no livestock and with plenty of game. Despite these advantages, however, two translocated packs released in April 2000 have run into trouble. Three wolves from one pack were recaptured when they moved onto a ranch within weeks of their release. Then in June, the alpha male from another pack was returned to captivity after he killed a lamb.

A coalition of environmental groups is pushing wildlife agencies to change their policies. These policies, the coalition claims, are so sensitive to livestock interests they

hamper the entire Mexican wolf recovery program. The coalition also advocates changing the practice of releasing only recaptured wolves into the Gila Wilderness. If release into this region would maximize the potential of reintroduced animals to succeed, why not make the Gila a primary release site?

Brian Kelly, the director of the USFWS Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan, believes that in spite of vigorous opposition, wolf reintroduction is working in the Southwest. “What we are ultimately trying to do is to get animals in the wild who behave. . . like wild wolves,” said Kelly; this means avoiding people and staying away from livestock. Kelly projects that the wolves will shake off “the human imprint” as more generations are born into the wild.

In the meantime, the return of the Mexican wolf to the Southwest has caused deep division in New Mexico’s isolated ranching communities. Pat Wolff, a local environmental activist, acknowledges the challenge of being a wolf advocate in the Southwest, but she remains cautiously optimistic. “Accept the fact that change takes time,” advises Wolff. “It could take decades to change the way humans relate to the natural world and to each other. Time is running short but we must not give up hope.”



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**WOLVES OF  
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## Finding a Balance

*“The landscape conveys an impression of absolute permanence. It is not hostile. It is simply there—untouched, silent and complete.”*

—Edmund Carpenter (from *Arctic Dreams*, by Barry Lopez)

The Northwest Territories is a vast mosaic of ecozones, each with distinct characteristics. The treeless sweep of the tundra in the serene Arctic light, the windswept boulder fields bursting with summer color, the boreal forests known to the Athapaskan people as “the land of little sticks”—each of these does suggest permanence, silence, completeness.

But this vast land is no longer untouched. Modern transportation has made even the most remote areas accessible both to those who come to enjoy a wilderness experience and to those who want to exploit the region’s rich mineral resources. Canada’s North faces the challenge of making choices that will determine the future of the land and its wildlife—and that includes the wolf.

The late Dr. Douglas Pimlott, Canadian wolf researcher and international conservationist, once commented on the difficulty of meeting the challenge of conflicting goals—including the one

“You cannot stop progress.”

Patricia Hogg, a wildlife biologist at the Ekati Diamond Mine in the Northwest Territories, views the power of modern humans to alter nature with a mixture of hard realism and determined optimism. Her job is to gather information on potential effects that North America’s first diamond mine may have on local wildlife and on the tundra ecosystem. She is mindful of the weight of that responsibility. Can she and others like her help minimize the detrimental effects of progress? Hogg thinks so. “When a road engineer calls me to ask where I want the caribou crossings built on the haul road, and when production is brought to a halt for fear of disturbing a raptor’s nest, I know I have made a difference,” she says.

The extent to which Canadians like Patricia Hogg succeed in their efforts to protect this pristine land will make a difference to the wolves, too. In 1997, the Canadian government estimated that approxi-

mately 10,000 wolves live in the Northwest Territories where the population is stable or increasing. Wolves in this region are classified as big-game animals and furbearers. Aboriginal peoples are not restricted from hunting wolves by a defined hunting season, nor are they restricted to “bag limits.” Non-aboriginal resident hunters aren’t restricted to bag limits, either, but they are permitted to hunt wolves only during a specified season. Wolf hunting and trapping is generally restricted to winter when fur is in prime condition and when the packs are not raising pups.

With the recent increase in wolf popularity, has come a polarization of public attitudes toward wolves. Airplanes and all-terrain vehicles have opened frontier areas to hunters who have money and leisure time for big game hunting expeditions. Predictably, a trend has begun toward protective legislation to maintain

ungulate populations at carrying capacity by protecting habitat and by regulating human hunting. Concerns about protecting wolves have been voiced as well, and many wolf advocates have rallied to demand a change in the law to end wolf hunting with snowmobiles.

Dr. Lu Carbyn, a research scientist for the Canadian Wildlife Service and an IUCN wolf specialist, has summarized the task Canadians face. “We are all learning to appreciate and use our resources wisely,” Carbyn wrote in a guest editorial for *Outdoor Canada*. “The challenge of balancing on the one hand the increasing human demands on wildlife resources with a deliberate program to protect wildlife diversity on the other hand is as difficult as it is important.” ■

*Cornelia Hutt is a wolf advocate, educator and International Wolf Center board member who lives in Purcellville, Virginia.*



Dave Mech

*The treeless sweep of tundra in the Northwest Territories suggests permanence, silence, completeness.*

# Personal Encounter

## An Arctic Expedition: Adventurers Come Face to Face With Thriving Wolf Culture

by Debbie Reynolds



A wolf pup breaks from its pack and curiously approaches Debbie Reynolds's party.

It was a race against time! Who was going to make it to the top of the ridge first—Will, a fellow adventurer, and I with our cameras, or those two adventurous arctic wolf pups we were trying to ambush? Even now, as I sit and reflect on the best trip I have ever taken, I have to smile as I recall those two small wolf heads popping up over the ridge just before we made it to the boulder we had chosen to hide behind. We had to stop dead in our tracks right where we were, and start shooting pictures!

But let me take you back to the beginning of this marvelous trip. Ten of us were fortunate enough to have signed on with IWC board members Dave Mech and Nancy Gibson, and Dean Cluff, the northern regional biologist for the Northwest Territories, to travel 250 miles northwest of Yellowknife in the Northwest Territories into the “Barrenlands” to

look for a wolf pack. We expected to see at least one or two wolves, because Dean had radio-collared them earlier and knew they were still in the vicinity.

Our float plane flew us over a landscape filled with what seemed to be equal parts water and land to Aylmer Lake, our base camp for the week. What a base camp it turned out to be—great food, wonderful hosts, and cozy accommodations. All we had to worry about was finding those wolves—so immediately after landing, we headed off to look for a good vantagepoint for seeing the two wolves Dean had located with his tracking equipment.

We belly-crawled to a ridgetop about half a mile from where we thought the wolves might be resting for the day. As we scanned the opposite hillside with our binoculars and spotting scopes, eventually we began to see boulders and rocks come to life! Instead of two lone female wolves that Dean knew were there, we counted 12 pups and seven adults, for a total of 19 wolves! We realized then that our wolf adventure was going to be about as good as any adventure could get! When we returned the next day to count 15 pups and nine adults on that hillside, we found that we were in for the best wolf week of our lives!

Our days evolved into a routine based on wolf activity. Wolves are most active in the mornings and evenings, so we chose to arrange our days around the wolves’ nighttime behavior. One of the many highlights of the trip for me were the nightly debriefing sessions given by Dave Mech that combined his and Nancy’s insights with our observa-

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tions. I learned more about wolves and their behavior during this one week than I would ever have learned from any classroom experience.

This was a week of many firsts for me. I had never seen a wolf pack in the wild before. We not only observed a record setting pack of 24 wolves, we also found another wolf pack some distance away with at least four pups and three adults. At least one of the adults began bark-howling while we were there! Since we did not want to stress this small pack, we checked out the den site and quickly left. We went back to observe the original pack, and we did not seem to alarm its members.

Another first for me was hearing a wild wolf pack howl. One night at dusk as we walked back to our boats, we heard the deep voice of the alpha male begin to howl; then the varied voices of the eight other adults chimed in, the pups adding their own high-pitched notes. We heard that chorus at least four more times, but none as beautifully haunting as that first evening's song.

During our week there, we saw wolves everyday and it became almost commonplace to observe them regurgitating to their pups. My favorite observation happened early the last evening we were there. The adults had just left for the hunt and must have found something rather quickly, as they began to return almost immediately. The first adult came over the ridge heading to the rendezvous site, when all of a



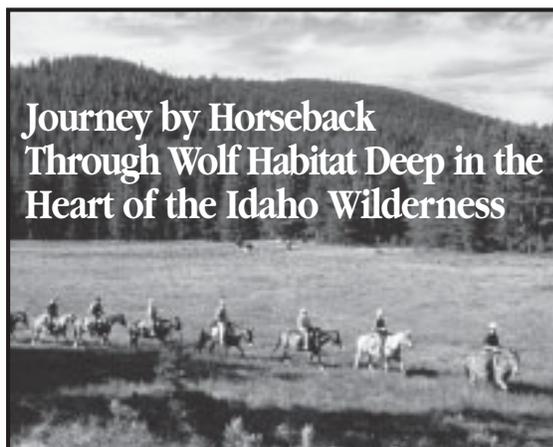
Nancy Gibson

sudden, the earth seemed to just erupt puppies—it was a veritable train of little bodies streaming to meet the adult! We laughed at the sight!

The Arctic is a special and beautiful place, and during the summer, this part of it certainly doesn't personify its "Barren Lands" nickname—it is teeming with life! The tundra was just loaded with edible berries of all kinds (blueberries, cloudberry, bearberries, cranberries and crowberries), a veritable feast for anyone willing to slow down and pick them, which I certainly did! We observed all

*Debbie Reynolds taking a moment to relax between adventures on a trip to the Northwest Territories.*

For more information about Center-sponsored trips to the Northwest Territories, see the back cover of this magazine and contact the Center's development director, George Knotek, at **763-560-7374**, or **develop@wolf.org**.



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manner of wildlife besides wolves, including caribou adults and calves, a small herd of musk-oxen, several rough legged hawks, two nests of almost-fledged peregrine falcons with their noisy parents, several kinds of loons, plovers and sparrows, arctic hare, sik-siks (the arctic ground squirrel), and the ever-present black flies and mosquitoes (they only annoyed us a few times when the wind died down).

Perhaps the most beautiful memory I have of our time spent in the Arctic is of the aurora borealis, or northern lights. We had left the wolves later than usual this particular evening and experienced the uniquely Arctic occurrence of the moon rising and sun setting at the same time as we traveled home for our nightly discussion. At midnight, as our discussion was wrapping up, we heard cries of "ooh, ahh" that I associate with fireworks displays. We hurried outside to watch a full hour of the most beautiful northern lights that even our Canadian group members had ever witnessed! With sunspot activity particularly high this year, we were able to see multiple colors snake across a cloudless sky, raining curtains of fire on us from a boiling center during each occurrence. I will never forget that Arctic night.

There were numerous other special moments. We found the remains of two caribou carcasses and learned that, in a few more weeks, even their antlers would be consumed as food by some arctic creature. During a very rainy day spent in comfort at our base camp listening to Dave, Nancy and Dean discuss wolf behavior and their



Debbie Reynolds

*Although the Arctic is nicknamed the “Barren Lands” it is teeming with life. This caribou was one of the many animals found roaming the tundra.*

personal experiences with wolves, a member of the pack we had been observing all week trotted through camp to check us all out! This wolf could not have timed its appearance any better! And, as luck would have it, there was not a camera in sight!

One evening as we were packing up to leave our observation site, six of the adult wolves moved off to hunt. But instead of going over the ridge behind their rendezvous site, as we had observed on other evenings, this group came right toward us! We stopped packing up to see how this was going to turn out. The excitement was palpable as Dave instructed us to get ready to lie down fast to make ourselves as inconspicuous as a large group of people could on the open tundra should they actually come up to our location; unfortunately for us, the wind had shifted to our backs, pushing our scent toward

the wolves. They must have been quite confused, as our scent mixed with that of a caribou that had passed just a short while before. The wolves stopped about 250 yards from us, teasing us with their nearness until the closing night chased us to our boats for a moonless ride home.

The trip was filled with wonderful wolf adventures, many of them “firsts” for me. The Arctic is a special place, too, impressive in its unspoiled beauty. I will return to the Arctic again. ■

*Debbie Reynolds is an International Wolf Center member and the board chair of the Raptor Center in Saint Paul, Minnesota. She is also the board chair of Milkweed Editions, a non-profit press in Minneapolis.*



Debbie Reynolds

*An arctic hare poses for a quick snapshot.*

# News and Notes

**THE KILLING OF A MEXICAN WOLF** was solved by federal agents, leading to the sentencing in October of James Rogers to four months in prison, six months under house arrest, and 50 hours of community service. The Springville Police Department and New Mexico Department of Fish and Game assisted the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service with the investigation.

**A MINNESOTA WOLF MANAGEMENT PLAN** has been prepared by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources in keeping with legislation passed by the 2000 Minnesota Legislature. The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service required the plan before it would agree to proposing the removal of the wolf in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan from the Endangered Species List.

**WILDLAND PRESERVATION** received a major boost last fall when Congress appropriated \$12 billion for land conservation, preservation, and infrastructure improvement over a six-year period. The appropriation was part of the Interior and Related Appropriations Bill signed by the President on October 11, 2000.

**WOLF RECOVERY IN THE WEST** continued at a rapid pace in 2000. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, estimated numbers of wolves in the three recovery areas are as follows: Northwestern Montana, 80-100; Yellowstone area, 165-185; central Idaho, 190-220.

**WOLF DEPREDATIONS ON LIVESTOCK** are more complex than previously thought.

Scientists compared Minnesota cattle ranches that suffered wolf losses with those that did not. The biologists had hoped to find ways ranchers could change their husbandry practices to minimize losses to wolves. The only differences they found, however, were that the ranches where wolves struck were larger and had more cattle. The study was published in the fall 2000 *Wildlife Society Bulletin* and can be accessed through [www.wolf.org](http://www.wolf.org).

**WOLVES IN NEWFOUNDLAND** attacked 10 dogs in and around Nain during a short period of November. These attacks led authorities to suspect that the wolves were rabid, so two schools were closed, according to The Associated Press.

**THE HIGH ARCTIC WOLF PACK** studied since 1986 by Dave Mech still retains a pair of adults. Although the pack's second breeding female since the study began ("Whitey") died in 1997, one of Whitey's 1992 pups ("Explorer") survived into summer 2000 and had a mate but not pups. Mech believes that the lack of reproduction is related to a decrease in musk-oxen and arctic hares first noticed in 1998. ■



Serle Chapman

# Wild Kids



## Puppies...What Will They Be When They Grow Up?

by Nancy jo Tubbs

Wolf pups and dog puppies may look alike, and in fact, they are cousins. But while the dog will grow up to be fed, worked or pampered by humans, the wolf sleeps outside, hunts for a living, endures harsh weather and struggles for its place in the pack. Wolf pups and dog puppies act differently from each other because they are in training for lives as different as a house cat and a mountain lion.

"In the beginning, Malik and Shadow would run to me for security, but all that changed when they reached four weeks of age", said Nancy Gibson, who helped raise the Center's two arctic pups. "Dog puppies are interested in getting attention, affection and food from people. Wolf pups want food, period!"

Dogs have been fed by their human families since they were tamed and selectively bred from wild

wolves beginning 14,000 to 100,000 years ago. On the other hand, wild wolves have to hunt and kill their own food. Nearly half of wild wolf pups in some populations die of starvation their first year.

Malik and Shadow "wolfed" their meals this summer. They snarled and snapped at each other while gulping up to seven pounds of beef in about a minute. In the wild, wolves may go days or weeks without a kill, so they gorge when food is available. Getting enough to eat is a life or death matter for them.

Besides having impolite table manners, wolf pups can't be house trained. They would chew your sofa into a rubble of foam and splinters. They mark their territory too, peeing on every available surface. They may come when called if food is involved.

Dogs have been bred and trained to meet human needs: they herd



Claire and Hannah Anderson hold their Cockapoo puppy, who demonstrates one very clear difference between dog puppies and wolf pups: dog puppies want affection from humans!

Paul Anderson

sheep, sniff out drugs, retrieve ducks and guide the blind. The wolf isn't interested in pleasing humans. In fact, wolf pups that are not socialized by humans beginning when they open their eyes will remain shy of people for life.

In play, wolf pups are learning the pack roles of dominance and submission. When stalking a beetle on a stump, they show a deep focus, intensity and intelligence that will serve them as adults on the hunt. As they fight for every scrap of food, they are building strength and size to run with the pack in the fall. Everything young wolves do has a purpose: survival. ■

Nancy jo Tubbs is chair of the International Wolf Center Board of Directors.



Dave Welch

# A Look Beyond

by Steve Grooms

Once it was natural for people to fear wildlife almost by reflex. Filmmakers and television writers took advantage of that fear to present terrifying encounters between people and all sorts of “dangerous” animals such as snakes, spiders, and various large predators. These terrifying images of dangerous animals inflamed people’s irrational fear of all kinds of creatures.

This has now been turned upside down. The many wildlife TV shows now show animals sympathetically, even those capable of killing humans. Such creatures as lions and wolves are shown as loving parents, not savage beasts. The bears we see in these films look no more dangerous than the singing bears in cartoons.

One result of this total change in media treatment of dangerous animals is that many people have become sympathetic to large predators. This can be a good thing, but lack of fear is not so good. At Yellowstone Park, tourists have casually approached bison to hug them for a photo, sometimes with fatal results.

One animal most affected by this change of perception is the black bear. Many people now see bears as lumbering buffoons who pose no danger, whereas people used to fear bears and shoot them on sight. Several cities have passed ordinances against feeding bears, although not everyone obeys them.

The maxim of woods-wise people is: “Feed a bear, kill a bear.” In other words, if you feed a bear, you teach that bear to lose its fear of people and to see them as a source of food. That

often leads the bear to do something to cause it to be destroyed.

Now this is happening with wolves. The animal that used to inspire horror now looks no more threatening than a Siberian husky to many people. A wolf recently attacked a sleeping kayaker in British Columbia. That wolf had been fed by humans. Having lost its fear of people, the wolf had begun to show frustration and aggression with humans who didn’t feed it. This attack could have been fatal if the injured man had not been quickly moved to a hospital.

Feed a wolf, kill a wolf: we might yet see that idea expressed in city ordinances. People need to approach all large predators such as bears, wolves or cougars with caution and respect. While all fans of wolves should celebrate the new positive view of wolves, we now must guard against dealing with wolves as if they were no more dangerous than dogs. Treating large predators as pets is dangerous to humans and usually fatal to the animal. ■

*Steve Grooms is the author of several books, including Return of the Wolf, which he just revised. A writer living in Saint Paul, he serves on International Wolf magazine’s advisory committee.*

Lynn and Donna Rogers



# WOLVES IN SPACE!

(CYBERSPACE THAT IS)  
[www.wolf.org](http://www.wolf.org)



## My, How They've Grown!

Join arctic pups, Malik and Shadow, on their romp through the Wolf Center's web photo album. The album includes an array of images of the pups from those precious newborn moments to their most recent adventures with the ambassador pack in Ely.

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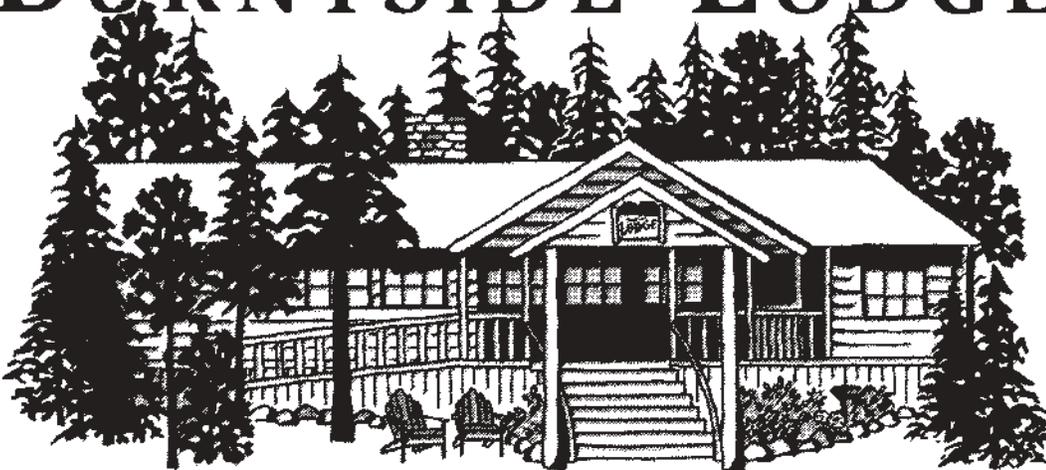
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## Comments of past trip participants:

"Hidden in the rocks just above their rendezvous site—we watched as the adults returned from their evening hunt? As I watched the pups mob the adults and reestablish the family bonds—I was struck by the wonder of this intimate moment in the life of the pack >that and the fact that I would need a better camera when I made a return trip!"

– Neil Hutt  
Outdoor writer

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– Debbie Reynolds  
International Wolf Center member

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Top photo by Debbie Reynolds  
Bottom photos and wolf photo by Tristan Rebane



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