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The International Wolf Center's acclaimed curriculum Gray Wolves, Gray Matter: Exploring the Social, Biological, Cultural and Economic Issues of Wolf Survival received first place in the National Association for Interpretation's 2002 Media Awards contest, which recognizes creativity and excellence in the field of interpretation.

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Teaching the World About Wolves

INTERNATIONAL
WOLF

THE QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL WOLF CENTER
VOLUME 13, NO. 1 SPRING 2003

Features

www.wildlifealongtherockies.homestead.com

Steve Grooms

Departments

On The Cover

Malik is an ambassador arctic wolf at the International Wolf Center. See Tracking the Pack on page 15 to read more about the ambassador wolves. Photo by Bruce Johnson.

Issac Babcock

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WOLF

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International Wolf welcomes submissions of personal adventures with wolves and wolf photographs (especially black and white). Prior to submission of other types of manuscripts, address queries to Mary Ortiz, publications director.

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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

Idaho Gray Wolf Recovery Project

What year were wolves first reintroduced into Idaho?

1995. The reintroduction of wolves into Idaho received less publicity than the Yellowstone wolf reintroduction, but it occurred the same year. Four wolves were released in Idaho's Frank Church — River of No Return Wilderness on January 14, 1995. Eleven more wolves were released in Idaho on January 20, 1995. ■

New Question

What is the largest prey consistently eaten by wolves in North America that is not an ungulate (a hoofed mammal such as a deer, moose, caribou, etc.)?

From the Executive Director

Wolf 101

While former University of Montana professor Dr. Bob Ream was delivering an impromptu lecture in the field—actually a magnificent overlook near the Lamar Valley in Yellowstone National Park—a white-tailed deer rushed through the snowy field in front of our "lecture hall." The reason for its rushing became clear as a wolf soon materialized, fixing a laser-lock focus on the fleeing deer. Our class immediately and without official notice took a recess as we all scrambled around a hillside to see if we could get a glimpse of the unfolding drama. But the drama we planned to witness failed to happen when a few vehicles and hikers appeared behind the hill, causing the wolf to give up the chase.

Walter Medwid

While that lecture by Center board member Bob Ream will always be memorable because of the chase, it is equally memorable because of what Bob had to say and show to participants in this Center-sponsored field trip to Yellowstone. He shared pictures of the Lamar Valley from a hundred years ago along with contemporary ones. What stood out in the contemporary photos were the recovering willows along the stream banks. Bob explained that with the wolf's return to the valley, elk no longer have free rein along the stream banks and prefer more protected areas to graze, thus giving the vegetation a chance to recover from heavy browsing. Never had I realized that the wolf's return would affect vegetation in such a pronounced way. And not only would wolves affect the vegetation, but they would also affect those plant and animal species that used the specialized habitat provided by the recovering vegetation. The chain of biological interactions was a delight to contemplate.

Adding to this particular revelation for me was witnessing other direct benefits of the wolf's return to Yellowstone. We saw bald and golden eagles feeding on the carcasses of wolf-killed elk, along with magpies and ravens. Coyotes also took advantage of the carcasses, risking a surprise attack by wolves. And it has been reported that grizzly bears may now be seen in any month of the year as they are drawn from hibernation to feed on the wolf-killed elk. Undoubtedly hundreds of other species from mammals to insects have benefited directly or indirectly.

As so many natural systems decline around the globe, it is some comfort to know that in places where the wolf exists, those natural systems benefit from the myriad impacts when a wolf kills its prey. ■

Walter M. Medwid

MISSION

The International Wolf Center advances the survival of wolf populations by teaching about wolves, their relationship to wild lands and the human role in their future.

Educational services and informational resources are available at:

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e-mail address:
wolfinfo@wolf.org

Web site: http://www.wolf.org

The Survivors

by NORMAN A. BISHOP and DOUGLAS W. SMITH

As everyone knows, wolves were reintroduced to Yellowstone National Park in 1995–96. Fourteen wolves were captured in Alberta in January 1995 and released in March 1995. Seventeen wolves were captured in British Columbia and released in April 1996. From these 31 wolves, the number in the greater Yellowstone area has grown to a projected population of 260 wolves by the end of 2002.

Just 3 of the original 31 wolves are known to survive: male 2 (radio collar number), female 41, and female 42. Their cohorts died from a variety of causes: 1 perished from burns when she fell into a hot spring, 5 are known to have been killed by other wolves, 2 were killed accidentally by vehicles, 7 were killed illegally, 5 were killed because of livestock depredations, 3 died of unknown causes, 2 succumbed to natural causes, and 1 each was killed by a moose, an elk and an avalanche.

Who are these three survivors? How have they managed to stay alive? Their histories provide a glimpse of the complex dynamics of the Yellowstone wolf population.

Black male wolf 2, born in 1994, was captured with five other wolves from the Petite Lake pack near Hinton, Alberta, 550 miles north of Yellowstone, in January 1995 and released in March 1995 from the Crystal Creek acclimation pen on the northern Yellowstone elk winter range. That fall, he was radio-located near gray female wolf 7, also born in 1994, captured from the McLeod pack and released from the Rose Creek pen several miles up the valley from the Crystal Creek pen. Wolf 7 had dispersed immediately on release from the pen and was living alone on the Blacktail Deer Plateau.

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Male 21 and female 42 are the alphas of the Druid Peak pack.

By spring 1996, it was clear that wolves 2 and 7 had paired, becoming the alphas of the first naturally formed pack in Yellowstone in 60 years. They were named the Leopold pack, in honor of Aldo Leopold, who had urged restoration of wolves to Yellowstone in 1944. The pack has been one of the most stable and productive packs in the park. Wolves 2 and 7 produced 3 pups in 1996, 5 in 1997, 5 in 1998, 1 in 1999, 10 in 2000, 4 in 2001, and 8 in 2002. Wolf 7 was killed in 2002 by other wolves, but her pups survived.

Wolves 2 and 7 had remained mated for eight years and survived by avoiding vehicles on park roads, staying within the park boundary and away from armed wolf haters, not taking livestock (in which case they could have been killed), and until 2002, avoiding conflicts with other wolf packs. The pack's territory, at 41 square miles, is the smallest of the park's packs. Even so, wolves from the Nez Perce pack have invaded their core territory twice in the past year, and Tower pack wolves were also seen in Leopold territory. The Geode Creek pack, a spin-off from the Druid Peak pack, was most likely responsible for the death of alpha female 7.

After female 7's death, male 2 maintained his alpha status but apparently did not choose a new mate. In mid-December 2002, however, male 2 appeared to have been deposed and was seen apart from the Leopold pack with four other pack members, perhaps searching for a new mate. An adult female from the Geode Creek pack has been seen with them several times and could be male 2's new mate.

Douglas Smith, National Park Service

Six wolves, including male wolf 2, were released in March 1995 from the Crystal Creek acclimation pen on the northern Yellowstone elk winter range.

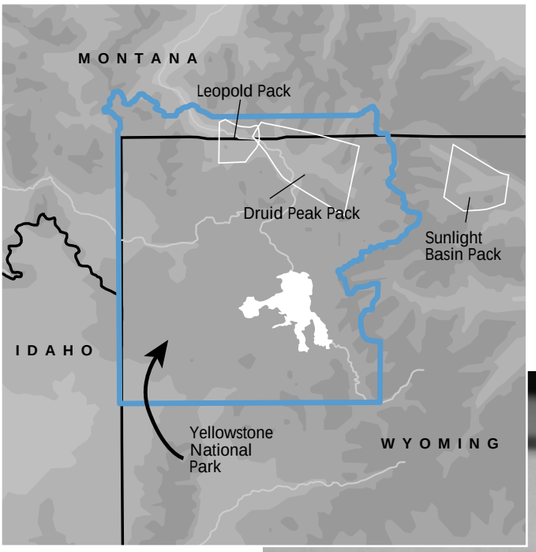
The other two survivors of the reintroduction are females 41 and 42. These sisters were captured in January 1996 east of Williston Lake, British Columbia, an area chosen because its terrain and prey base are similar to Yellowstone's. They were held in the Rose Creek pen with another sister, 40; their mother, 39; and alpha male 38 from the Prophet pack. All five were released from the pen in late April 1996 and became the Druid Peak pack.

For a time, female wolves 41 and 42 bided their time as subordinates, first to their mother, 39 (who lost her alpha status when she dispersed in late 1996 and returned in 1997 to be driven out by 40 and 42), and then to their sister, 40, who ruled the pack with a ferocious temperament. Their "stepfather," alpha male 38, sired pups in 1997 with both 41 and 42, who apparently shared a den, from which 5 pups survived.

Female wolf 41 dispersed from the Druid Peak pack in 1997, paired with a Rose Creek male, and founded the Sunlight Basin pack. Although the pack lives close to livestock, it has killed relatively few. In 1999, female 41 bore 7 pups; in 2000, 4 pups; in 2001, 5 to 7 pups; and in 2002, 6 pups. Now completely gray, she has maintained her alpha status.

In late November 1997, on a trip east of the park, Druid Peak alpha male 38 and male 31 were illegally shot. Shortly thereafter, black male 21 joined the Druid Peak pack to become its alpha male. In 1998, alpha female 40 had 2 pups, but only 1 survived. In 1999, only 2 of 6 pups born survived.

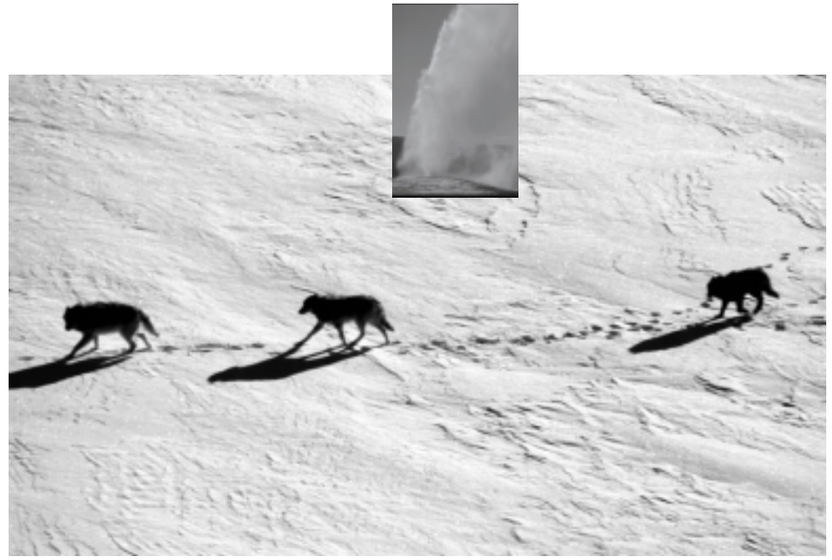
In 2000 alpha female 40 was killed, most likely by three of the pack's other four adult females (see "The Death of a Queen," *International Wolf*, Winter 2000). That year all five



Map: Wolves 2, 41 and 42 are members of the Leopold, Sunlight Basin and Druid Peak packs, respectively.

Isaac Babcock

Right: Female 42, the alpha female of the Druid Peak pack, is one of the three surviving wolves of the original 31 released in Yellowstone National Park in 1995– 96.



Douglas Smith, National Park Service

The Leopold pack, founded by male 2 and female 7, has been one of the most stable and productive packs in Yellowstone.

Druid Peak females (40, 42, 103, 105 and 106) came into estrus and were seen copulating with alpha male 21. Female 42 denned four miles west of 40's den and was joined by her niece, 103, and her daughter, 105. Female 106 denned three miles east of 40's den.

On the evening of May 7, 2000, 40 was seen attacking her sister, 42, and 105; then they all headed toward 42's den. The following morning, 40 was found mortally wounded, probably by 42, 103 and 105. After 40's death, alpha male 21 tended her pups and then went to the den of 42, who carried her pups to 40's den. Female 106 then moved her pups to 40's den, resulting in 21 pups grouped there, and a pack of 27 wolves. The pack grew to 37 in 2001 when 11 pups joined the 26 surviving Druids.

By late 2001, the huge pack had split into four subgroups; wolves from the Druid Peak pack linked up with wolves from other packs to form three new packs. Female 42 continues to be the alpha of the Druid Peak pack and seems to rule the pack in a more benign manner than did her sister, 40.

Because of the location of their den, just a few hundred yards from the Mammoth to Cooke City road, the Druid Peak pack is arguably the world's most observed wild wolf pack. As of June 2002, about 100,000 visitors to the park had seen the Druid Peak wolves.

But their location also places the wolves in jeopardy when they try to cross the road. One Druid Peak yearling male was killed by a vehicle on a dark night in 2000. Near the den in 2001, wolves were seen trying to cross the road 689 times; they got across 473 times and failed 216 times. Park employees asked drivers to pause or slow to allow them to cross. To reduce the hazard, the Wolf Project, funded by Twin Spruce Foundation, Defenders of Wildlife, and the Wolf Education and Research Center through the Yellowstone Park Foundation, hired two people to direct traffic, monitor wolf activity, and educate people about park wildlife. These efforts may decrease one of the many hazards for wolf 42 and give visitors a chance to see one of the last three original Yellowstone wolves. ■

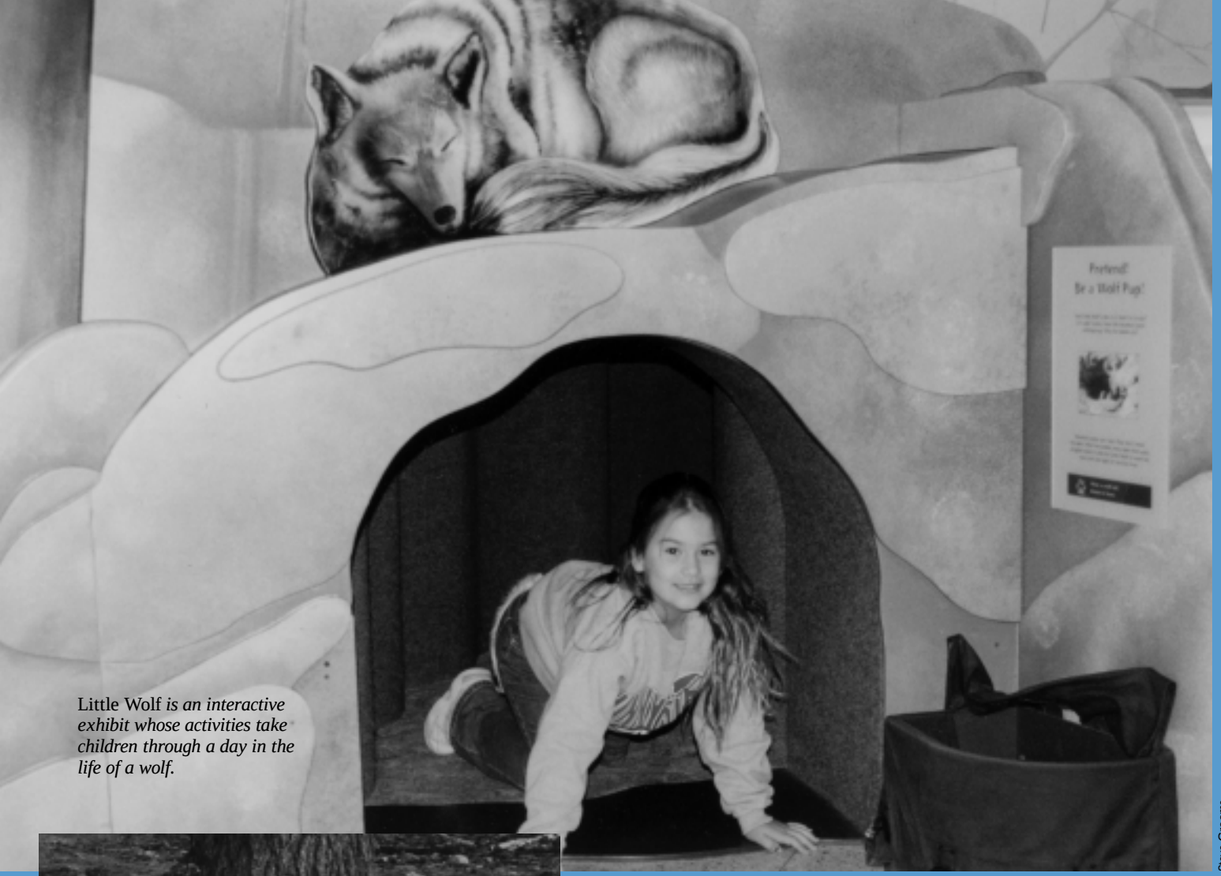
The authors thank Deb Guernsey and Rick McIntyre of the Yellowstone Wolf Project for enriching this story with accurate data and intensive observations.

Norman A. Bishop is the International Wolf Center field representative for the greater Yellowstone region.

Douglas W. Smith is project leader for the Yellowstone Gray Wolf Restoration Project in Yellowstone National Park. His many publications include The Wolves of Yellowstone, co-authored with Michael K. Phillips, a chronology of the first two years of the wolf restoration effort in Yellowstone National Park.

Ralph Maughan, a political science professor at Idaho State University, Pocatello, and astute wolf historian, has tabulated the status of the wolves translocated to Yellowstone in 1995 and 1996 as of August 2002. See his Web site http://www.forwolves.org/ralph/wpages/1995wolftable.htm and http://www.forwolves.org/ralph/wpages 1996wolftable.htm.

Because of the location of their den, just a few hundred yards from the Mammoth to Cooke City road, the Druid Peak pack is arguably the world's most observed wild wolf pack.



Little Wolf *is an interactive exhibit whose activities take children through a day in the life of a wolf.*

Steve Grooms

Steve Grooms

Two members of the Center's resident pack resting in the wolf enclosure

Any fan of wolves will surely enjoy a trip to the headquarters of the International Wolf Center in Ely, Minnesota. There is no such thing as a "typical" visit, as each season has its own special delights and educational opportunities. This article can only suggest some of what you can expect if you make your own visit to the world's foremost wolf educational facility.

Most visits begin with a drive through the Superior National Forest. This is the only habitat in the lower 48 states continuously occupied by wolves throughout recorded history, the place where several pioneers in wolf research did much of their work. Each year a few lucky visitors spot wild wolves on their drive to the Center.

At any season of the year, the beauty of the drive through this forest can be reason enough to make the trip. Visitors typically come in on Highway 1, a lyrically curving blacktop that glides past tumbling streams and rock-bound lakes. On my trip in mid-October, the blazing gold of aspens and birches was starkly contrasted by the pure white of an early snowfall.

Steve Grooms

In the Wolves and Humans *exhibit animal mounts depict key wolf activities.*

Visitors to the Center commonly sit by the windows and simply watch the resident wolves for an hour or two.

Mary Ortiz, International Wolf Center

The Center is located just east of the town of Ely. The building's triangular windows resemble the eyes and ears of wolves. The facility, beautiful without being lavish, blends traditional north woods elements with modern touches. The award-winning building seems to surge athletically like a wolf from the entrance up a ramp toward the 1.5-acre enclosure that is home to the Center's resident wolf pack. But the first wolves you are likely to see are bronze. Just outside the building is a handsome sculpture by Denver artist Rik Sargent, which features five wolves in dramatic full flight.

Each year the Center hosts about 50,000 visitors. They come from all states and from lands such as Japan, Russia and the Scandinavian countries. The average visitor stay is a remarkable two hours. In other words, the Center is not a tourist diversion like an "alligator park" where road-weary travelers shuffle by, mindlessly licking ice cream cones. Some visitors stay in Ely several days or a week to take advantage of the programs and recreational opportunities available at the Center and around Ely. Increasingly, visitors come to Ely specifically to enjoy the Center and to participate in its adventure vacations (see sidebar).

Let's walk through the Center. Passing through the main entrance, we turn up the big ramp. Just to our left lies a hall housing the famous Wolves and Humans exhibit created in 1985 by the Science Museum of Minnesota. More than 2.5 million people have been enthralled by this exhibit as it was featured in museums around the United States and Canada. Dramatic animal mounts depict key wolf activities. Other displays tell the anguished story of humans' persecution of wolves throughout history, while interactive howling exhibits and computer games allow the visitor to participate in the learning experience.

Up the ramp a few feet farther is the theater. Here visitors can enjoy some of the finest films ever produced about wolves, about their restoration to Yellowstone National Park and about the Center's resident pack. The theater is a welcome place to relax while learning more about wolves.

A splendid recent attraction is Little Wolf, an interactive exhibit whose activities take children through a day in the life of a wolf. Kids can crawl through the recesses of a wolf den and play games that teach lessons about wolf behavior. Thanks to Little Wolf, kids play happily while their parents absorb adult-oriented informational programs.

LET'S VISIT THE INTERNATIONAL WOLF CENTER

by STEVE GROOMS

Mary Ortiz, International Wolf Center

One of the Center's arctic wolves drinking from the enclosure's pond

Many of those programs are presented in the auditorium. Stadium seating gives a good view of the educational specialists as they present talks such as "Wolf 101" and "Conflicts to Coexistence." These friendly wolf educators cheerfully answer questions of all sorts. For the casual visitor, this is the main educational opportunity at the Center. Some visitors are surprised to find that the wolf educators are there to educate the public about wolves, not to promote wolves.

As visitors absorb the presentations, the Center's ambassador wolves conduct their activities behind the massive plate-glass wall separating the auditorium from the wolf enclosure. On my last visit, educational director Jen Westlund discussed the merits of a wolf-skin coat while the Center's wolves strolled behind her on the other side of the glass, modeling the real thing.

The popular presentation "What's For Dinner" is the highlight of each Saturday. After a staff member discusses how wolves hunt and eat, wolf curator Lori Schmidt delivers a road-killed deer carcass to the resident pack. Pack interactions at feeding time are fascinating and unpredictable.

Many visitors come specifically to study the Center's wolf pack. There are currently five wolves in residence, although three (MacKenzie, Lucas and Lakota) have recently been "retired" from ambassadorial duties. The retirement of these older gray wolves was hastened by the treatment they were receiving from Malik and Shadow, two young arctic wolves added to the pack in 2000. That leaves only Malik and Shadow on display.

Although they live in captivity, these are wolves. Anyone watching them carefully will see ways in which they differ from dogs. Because they are wolves, not domesticated pets, their interactions with each other have a dynamism that is unique to wolves. Visitors commonly sit by the windows and simply watch the resident wolves for an hour or two.

On the way out of the Center, many visitors pause at the Wolf Den. This unique gift store sells hundreds of high-quality items such as CDs, posters, books, stuffed wolves and apparel chosen to enhance the Center's mission.

Early in its life, the Center often served casual visitors who dropped by to see what it was about. Now, after some 10 years of teaching people about wolves, the Center is becoming a destination in its own right, still with the mission of helping people understand the world's most misunderstood and fascinating large predator.

Steve Grooms has been writing about wolf management since 1976. He is the author of the book The Return of the Wolf, *and serves on* International Wolf *magazine's advisory committee.*

If You Go

The logical starting point for a visit is the Center Web site: www.wolf.org. Click on the "Visit" link. Continually updated information there will tell you how to visit the Center and what to expect at different times of year. You'll find information on group arrangements, too.

Although you can easily spend just an hour or two at the Center, serious visits last longer and require finding accommodations in Ely. A link to the chamber of commerce is on the Center's site under "Travel Information" but can be accessed directly at www.ely.org.

Adventure Vacations

Visitors are increasingly drawn to the Center's adventure vacations. These special programs combine adventure, learning and sometimes exercise. One of the most popular adventures is traveling country roads at night with a guide to howl to wild wolves, often getting a thrilling reply from them. Other adventure vacations teach visitors how wolf biologists study wolves. Winter mushing expeditions offer exciting family dogsledding fun. The Center's Web site (www.wolf.org) has details on the timing, arrangements and cost of these unique vacations.

The Effect of Chronic Wasting Disease on Wolves

by NANCY GIBSON

Lynn and Donna Rogers, www.bearstudy.org

Because wolves consume every tidbit of their prey, from eyeballs to the brain, the potential for transmission of CWD clearly exists but is unlikely. Research has not documented any transfer of CWD from ungulates to wolves.

Wolves survive by killing old, young, weak and sick animals. Sickness comes in varied forms to wolf prey such as elk, mule and white-tailed deer, but one currently making headlines is the nervous system disorder Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). Will it affect wolves? The simple answer is, perhaps positively, because wolves may prove to be an asset in preventing the spread of the disease simply by being predators gifted with noticing any signs of vulnerability.

Research has not documented any transfer of this disease from deer to wolves. "All evidence suggests that CWD has a species barrier," states Dr. Glenn DelGiudice, Research Biologist and Deer Project Leader for the Forest Zone for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

William E. Rideg, Kishenehn Wildlife Works

CWD occurs in North American deer and Rocky Mountain Elk.

A droopy head, stumbling feet and body tremors in deer or elk are like an "On Sale" sign at a convenience store to a pack of wolves. Culling the weaker animals leaves the stronger prey to survive.

(MDNR). Because wolves consume every tidbit of their prey, from eyeballs to the brain, the potential for transmission clearly exists but is unlikely. Studies in Colorado are testing that theory. DelGiudice is extending his research to include CWD testing of wolf-killed deer by extracting any remaining brain and neck. Dead wolves will be similarly tested.

lynn and Donna Rogers, www.bearstudy.org

A droopy head, stumbling feet and body tremors in deer or elk are like an "On Sale" sign at a convenience store to a pack of wolves. Culling the weaker animals leaves the stronger prey to survive. DelGiudice calls the symptomatic animals "wasters," and if wolves kill them, "it shortens the infection time and prevents spreading the disease."

Most sources concur that CWD was first recognized as a syndrome in 1967 in a captive mule deer herd in Colorado. Eleven years later it was recognized as a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE) disease. According to the Chronic Wasting Disease Alliance, "computer modelings suggest the disease may have been present in free-ranging populations of mule deer since the 1920s." For all of the publicity, the disease is still classified as rare in occurrence and range.

Nonetheless, the number of cases of CWD is on the increase perhaps because of vigilant detection or actual transmission in captive and wild populations. Wyoming, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Montana, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Saskatchewan and Alberta have reported the disease either at game farms or in the wild. According to a new MDNR document, "CWD naturally occurs in North American deer and Rocky Mountain Elk," while it has not been detected in moose or caribou yet. Wildlife and game enthusiasts are nervous because CWD is somewhat similar to two domestic livestock diseases: scrapie, which has plagued domestic sheep and goats around the world for the past 250 years; and mad cow disease, discovered in 1986 but as yet confined to Europe.

More questions exist than there are answers. Health experts are particularly puzzled by the mode of transmission of this fatal disease between deer. It is caused by an abnormal protein called a "prion" that enters the digestive tract and then slowly tunnels through lymph nodes and into the brain, destroying all healthy cells in its path. Unlike other infectious disease organisms, prions lack DNA or genetic material. The normal proteins are overridden by misshapen brain-wasting agents until the brain deteriorates into a spongelike form. Only death is certain. The disease can go undetected for months or even years, especially in elk, before the lethal symptoms arise. Some evidence suggests that infected animals may transmit the disease just by contact, but most experts think body fluids are involved. Food and water may be contaminated with infectious urine, feces and saliva.

No evidence exists that CWD can infect humans. Nevertheless, alerts have been issued to deer hunters about handling meat from elk and deer: wear rubber gloves, minimize handling of the brain and spinal tissue, and don't eat the brain, spinal cord, eyes, spleen, tonsils and lymph nodes. Great advice for humans, but for wolves these cautionary warnings don't work, nor should they.

Imagine relying on these stealthy predators known for maintaining the intricate balance of predator and prey by using a combination of eyesight and smell to prevent the spread of this hideous disease. While scientists are laboring hard to find clues, an attentive watchdog is in the field. ■

Nancy Gibson is a co-founder of the International Wolf Center and currently sits on the board of directors. She wrote her first book, Wolves, in 1996 and describes her favorite pastime as watching wolves in action.

Hanging with the Pack: Alpha Weekend 2002

In September, Alpha Legacy and Wolf Sponsor members of the International Wolf Center gathered at the Ely interpretative center for a weekend of wilderness and wildlife. The annual Alpha Weekend brings together from around the country the pack of members, staff, board members and wolves that make up the core of the Center.

This year's program included presentations on wolf care and the status of the Center's resident wolf pack, and a viewing of a video anthology about the pack. Participants focused their attention on the Center's new traveling exhibit, while the ever curious arctic wolves, Shadow and Malik, tested the auditorium's windows to get a closer look at the human pack inside.

Other highlights were a historical tour of Burntside Lake, an interpretive hike to an abandoned wolf den, and a visit to famous wilderness writer Sigurd Olson's "Listening Point" with Chuck Wick. The weekend was topped off with a guided howling trip led by Jim Schwartz, during which a wild wolf pup showed up. Just add moose, loons, wild black bears at bear biologist Lynn Rogers's woodland retreat and migrating raptors overhead, and you can appreciate what a special weekend this was. But the real highlight was the chance to hang with the Center's pack, wolf and human alike.

Ellen Dietz,
Bloomington, Illinois

MORE NOTES FROM HOME ON NEXT PAGE

International Wolf Center

Alpha Weekend participants (left to right): in back, Andrea Lorek Strauss, John Virr, Henry Crosby, Bruce Weeks, and George Knotek; in front, Joey Haswell, Neil Hutt, Jan Makowski, and Pam Dolajeck

Remembering Wallace C. Dayton

With much sadness the International Wolf Center notes the passing of Wallace C. ("Wally") Dayton, one of its prime benefactors. Winner of numerous conservation awards, Dayton was long a friend of the wolf, wildlife and wild lands and a champion of the environment. He set the pace for many conservation projects, lending them his wisdom and financial support. Some of the other important environmental organizations he helped govern and support are The Nature Conservancy, the North American Wildlife Foundation, the Greater Yellowstone Coalition and the Wilderness Society.

An avid outdoorsman, conservationist and philanthropist, Dayton initiated the private fund-raising drive with a generous donation to launch the Center in the early nineties. His support never waned. Many programs benefited from his family's contribution. He liked to provide a key financial match to stimulate new avenues of support. Through his long chairmanship of the Special Projects Foundation of the Big Game Club, Dayton also helped finance numerous graduate students in their research on a variety of species, including several studies of wolves and their prey.

Dayton and his wife, Mary Lee, own a summer home in the Ely area and enjoyed visiting the Center. In summer 2000, they greatly appreciated a visit from the Center's two arctic wolf pups, courtesy of their foster mother and Center board member Nancy Gibson. Mary Lee continues her husband's legacy with support of many of his favorite causes, including a recent gift to the Center.

The Center and its board members along with many other outdoor organizations will long remember Dayton and his critical role in fostering their missions.

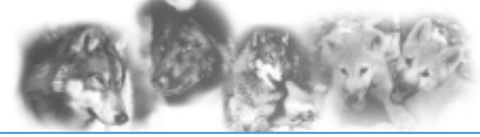
Nancy Gibson

Mary Lee and Wally Dayton enjoy a visit from Malik, a member of the International Wolf Center's resident pack.

Wolves and the Web

The International Wolf Center's Web site (www.wolf.org) is a wonderful educational tool. Through the hundreds of pages on the Web site, the Center educates thousands of people each day and can reach people in countries whom other educational efforts cannot.

The Web site has also brought the Center into contact with a wide range of interesting corporations, organizations, agencies and individuals. In the two years that Information Specialist Liz Harper has worked for the Center, she has had many unique experiences. She has helped create questions and form answers for television shows like "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire" and "The Weakest Link," and has provided thousands of individuals from a variety of government agencies, including officials at the Pentagon, with wolf information. Additionally, she has helped wildlife professionals in countries such as Germany and Kosovo gain access to materials and information that will assist them with wolf-related issues. While Harper receives contacts through a variety of avenues, clearly the Web site is helping the Center educate people worldwide. ■



Tracking the Pack

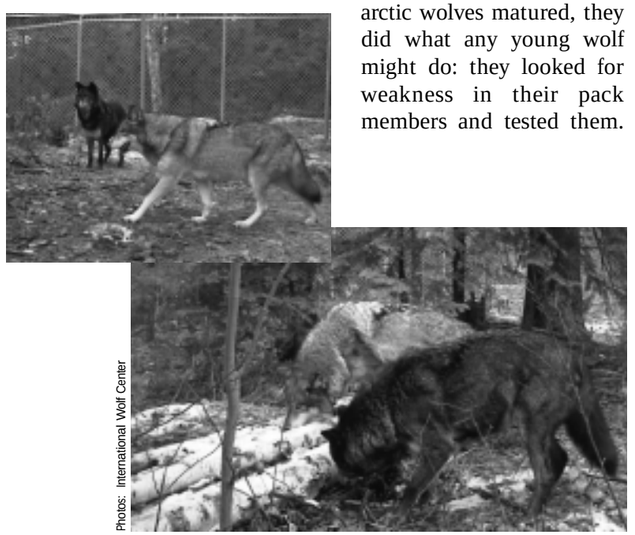
The Golden Years

by Lori Schmidt, Wolf Curator, International Wolf Center

Those of you following the International Wolf Center's ambassador pack via the Web site (www.wolf.org) are aware of the recent changes in the dynamics of the pack. For those of you who wait for the magazine to get your news, well, here's the scoop.

Since the year 2000, the ambassador pack has undergone some changes. The arctic pups we acquired were born that year and matured into strong, healthy adults while the 1993 litter of MacKenzie, Lucas and Lakota began to show signs of age. During August 2002, it was apparent that the younger pack mates were frequently testing Lakota and MacKenzie. Rather than risk a life-threatening injury, the Center's wolf management team decided to retire them to a separate enclosure.

The dynamics of the ambassador pack are similar to what goes on in the wild. Wolves in the wild rarely live past 8 or 9 years of age, and thus the older members (born in 1993) of our ambassador pack are at the age when wolves naturally begin to slow down. As the arctic wolves matured, they did what any young wolf might do: they looked for weakness in their pack members and tested them.



Photos: International Wolf Center

MacKenzie (at left in top photo and foreground above) and Lakota in the retirement enclosure

The survival of wolves depends on the strength of the pack. Testing is a behavior that has developed over generation after generation of natural selection.

But whereas older animals in the wild may go off on their own and spend their last months in a struggle to survive, managers of captive wolves can retire animals to a comfortable enclosure. Although the pack members' behavior determined that Lakota and MacKenzie should be removed, their aging physical condition would have eventually led to this decision.

These wolves have served the Center well as educational ambassadors, and we value what they have done for us. Now it is time for the Center to return the favor in their golden years. We want their final years to be more sedentary, without the stress of maintaining rank order with younger wolves. Older wolves also need more medical care than younger pack members, which can best be provided in a smaller enclosure. A special thanks goes to all who made the retirement enclosure possible, especially John and Donna Virr. A complete list of donors can be found on page 16 of this issue. ■

Lucas Also Removed from the Ambassador Pack

On November 9, 2002, the Center staff noticed that the arctic wolves, Malik and Shadow, were harassing Lucas, the last of the older wolves left on display.

Sherry Jokinen

Two shallow puncture wounds were observed on Lucas's hindquarters. Also, Lucas had been showing his age in his limited ability to climb rocks in the enclosure. Considering Lucas's vulnerability if he were to remain in the pack, the Center's veterinarian, Dr. Chip Hanson, and Lori Schmidt, Wolf Curator, decided to move him into the retirement enclosure. The transition went smoothly. At first Lucas showed anxiety and was aggressive toward MacKenzie but then settled down and ate a beaver carcass. Lucas was later observed sleeping close to Lakota. So far, life in retirement is good for all.

INTERNATIONAL WOLF CENTER

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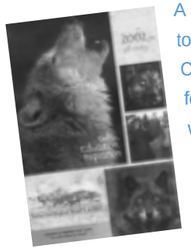

A rousing howl to the Target Corporation for its donation, which made our exciting 2002 Wolf Den gift catalog possible. This generous contribution brought products, educational information and programs to people around the world. And many thanks to you, our members and friends, for supporting our educational efforts through your purchases by mail, phone and Web site. Each dollar makes a difference!

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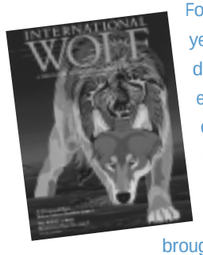

For the past few years, the quiet, dedicated efforts of Mike O'Connell (Indiana) and Janice Hood (Florida) have brought this magazine to life on www.wolf.org every three months. Mike formats all copy and images for the cyber world, and Janice proofs every word before the copy goes online. Their work shows a caring commitment to wolves and the Center. Our volunteer efforts across the nation are making a difference! If you have professional services to donate, please e-mail mortiz@wolf.org.

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Wolves of the World

WOLVES IN CHINA

Environmentalism at the Farthest Frontiers

by Neil Hutt

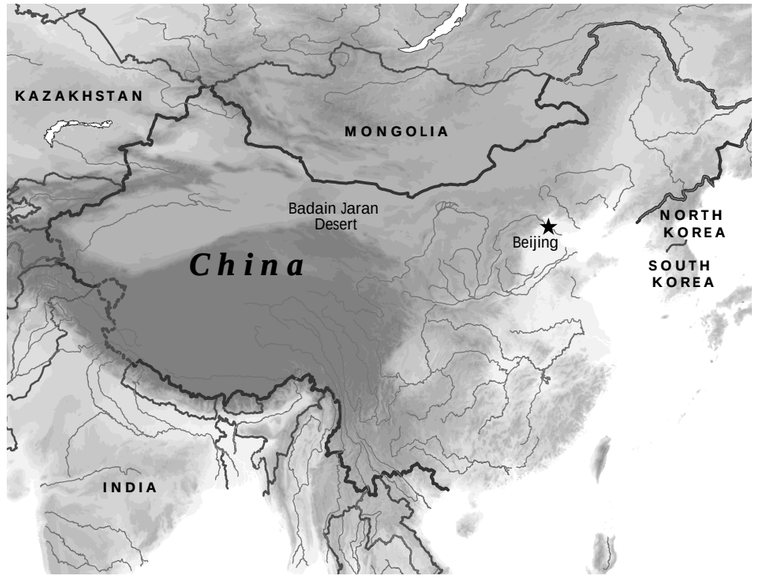
Why do you have a place like Yellowstone? Why do you have a place like Jade Dragon Snow Mountain? Why have a national park? The Chinese may come up with different answers, but those are the questions.

— Edward M. Norton, Director, Yunnan Great Rivers Project

Major attitudinal changes toward the environment have taken place in the past 50 years, particularly in the industrialized West. A large segment of the public has confronted the reality that the world's resources are finite. Nature, once considered an adversary needing strong discipline, is viewed in a different light, and the exploitation of wilderness has been modified by public support for preserving wild lands. After centuries of persecution fueled by virulent hatred, wolves are now afforded varying degrees of protection, and the great predators are rebounding in some areas of their former range.

The big question is whether this environmental ethic can be extended to developing countries. The exploding world population creates enormous pressures on natural resources, food sources and habitat. Unless nations rushing toward modernization can replace consumption with sustainable development, progress in solving ecological problems in the West will make little difference.

That is the bad news. The good news is that a balance between economic growth and preservation is now being sought in some countries that have long neglected the conservation of natural resources. China is one such nation. The Yunnan Great Rivers Project, for instance, is endeavoring to create national parks and protected wilderness areas in a remote southwestern province. And in the Badain Jaran, China's second largest desert, wolves are back, along with other animals that had all but vanished mainly because of unregulated hunting.



While herdsmen in this western region of the Mongolia Autonomous Region report recent significant losses of sheep, lambs and camels to wolf predation, they can no longer legally kill wolves that menace their livestock. The Chinese government has enacted laws to ban hunting; thus, the number of wolves is increasing. Also, the herdsmen are encouraged to improve grazing methods and to increase their vigilance over herds.

The return of the wolf to the Badain Jaran is accompanied by the reemergence of a variety of plants and animals, including smaller predators and rodents. China's Academy of

Agricultural Sciences reports that shrubs and grasses such as licorice and ephedras, plants that encourage rainfall, are reappearing. This control of "desertification" could benefit cities like Beijing, which are often enveloped by sandstorms originating in Inner Mongolia.

This is encouraging news. Perhaps the environmental pessimists are wrong in their predictions that preserving biodiversity and wild lands is impossible because too many people are exploiting too many resources. Recovery of the Badain Jaran demonstrates that at least some of what was lost or nearly ruined can be restored. Laws enacted to halt environmental degradation are the first step. The next challenge is to build public support.

The author acknowledges the following sources of information:

John Pomfret, "An American Gamble on a Chinese Shangri-La," *Washington Post*, Sunday, August 6, 2000.

Xinhua New Agency, "Wolves Prowl China's Second Largest Desert," October 16, 2002; http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2002-10/16/content_598843.htm.

WOLVES IN THE UNITED STATES

Mexican Wolves: Rough Road to Recovery

by Neil Hutt

The wolves are doing very well.
— Brian Kelly, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator

They're nothing more than a pain and a drain on taxpayers.
— Erik Ness, spokesman for the New Mexico Farm and Livestock Bureau

For the third consecutive year, Mexican wolves have reproduced in the wild in New Mexico and Arizona. This is good news for conservationists and bad news for some ranchers. "It's very encouraging," said Craig Miller of Defenders of Wildlife. "The most valuable asset in any captive reintroduction program is the survival of wild-born pups." Erik Ness of the New Mexico Farm and Livestock Bureau disagreed. "In our opinion, having more wolves out there is not a success," he said.

Since the first 11 Mexican wolves were released in March 1998, the recovery program has suffered a series of setbacks. Raised in captivity, the wolves had to learn to survive in the wild. Of the 74 wolves released since the program began, 26 have died. Some have been shot or hit by cars, and others have been recaptured after attacking livestock and domestic animals or because they strayed from the recovery area.

But there is reason for being optimistic that the recovery goal—a self-sustaining population of 100 by 2006—can be attained. Twenty-one radio-collared wolves in eight packs now range the recovery area, but managers believe the numbers are higher. Seven, and possibly all eight, of the packs are believed to have had pups in spring 2002, and the number surviving is not known.

Controversy erupted recently when seven pups in the Pipestem pack were euthanized after wildlife officials determined they were hybrids. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service officials insist the euthanization of the pups was justifiable and necessary. Wolf fans, however, were outraged. The death of the Pipestem pups all but obscured the good news that two captured pups from another pack were released after genetic tests concluded they were bona fide Mexican wolves.

Don Zippert

Complaints about Mexican wolves killing livestock show no signs of waning despite $15,000 in compensation paid for 27 domestic animals killed or injured by wolves. The program continues to draw fire from ranchers and rural people, including the Apaches on the San Carlos Reservation who want five pups and two adults removed from tribal lands. In addition, the Arizona Game and Fish Commission is demanding that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service make substantial changes in the Mexican wolf reintroduction program to address their complaints about such issues as depredations, the capturing of hybrids and the alleged lack of communication by the service to stakeholders in eastern Arizona and western New Mexico.

Nevertheless, Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator Brian Kelly remains determinedly optimistic. "Most of the groups are coming to the table and trying to find ways to work this out. If they're doing that, there's hope."

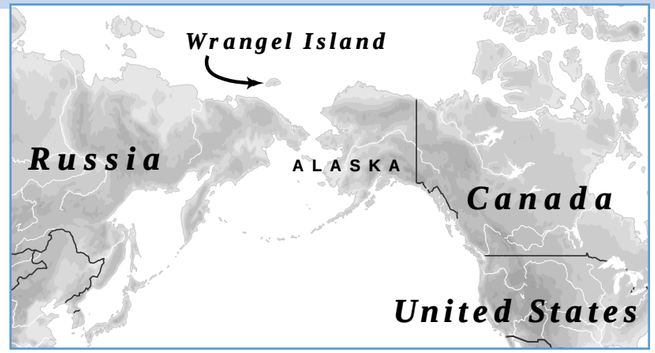
The author acknowledges the following sources of information:

Mexican Wolf News Powered by the California Wolf Center: http://www.azcentral.com/news/articles/0909wolves-ON.html.

Associated Press article, *Arizona Republic*, March 28, 2002; www.azcentral.com.

Pauline Arrillaga, "Untamed Recovery," *Arizona Daily Sun*, September 20, 2002; http://www.azdailysun.com/non_sec/nav_includes/story.cfm?storyID=49073.

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



Wolves Return to Wrangel Island

"The Story Has Begun"

by Neil Hutt

"Now I got them! We got them on the island!" With these jubilant words, Russian biologist and researcher Nikita Ovsyanikov announced his stunning discovery on September 26, 2002. While traveling inland on Wrangel Island, the remote nature preserve off the coast of Siberia, Ovsyanikov found "solid confirmation" of a pack of seven wolves, including three pups.

Wolves have not lived on Wrangel Island since 1983 when the Russian government eliminated a pack of eight animals in order to protect musk-oxen and reindeer. Ovsyanikov hoped wolves would disperse from Siberia and make their way across the 100 miles of frozen sea to this "arctic Eden." If they did not, reintroduction would be necessary, although Ovsyanikov conceded that such an effort would doubtless be prohibitively expensive.

Says Ovsyanikov, "Now the story has begun—a story of wolves colonizing the island where two species of ungulates lived for decades without a large predator. For the first time in the history of Wrangel Island, wolves will be allowed to settle and develop their own life history in this unique ecosystem."

Visit the International Wolf Center's Web site (www.wolf.org) to read Ovsyanikov's letter describing his discovery.

West Gate

WOLVES IN EUROPE

Europeans State Their Position on Hunting to Manage Wolves

by Jay Hutchinson

Hunting, if used properly, can be a practical, low-cost tool to help humans coexist with wolves and other large carnivores in Europe. This is the position of a core group of European conservationists who support the Action Plan for the conservation of wolves, brown bears, wolverines and two species of lynx still found in parts of Europe (see *International Wolf*, Winter 2002).

The conservationists point out that while areas of Europe offer potential for some of these animals to expand their present ranges, no large wilderness areas remain in Europe. So large carnivores can conflict with livestock raising, compete with hunters for deer and other wild ungulates, and raise people's fears of being attacked.

Conservation, they say, implies saving the species, not every individual, and hunting for trophies, for recreation or simply for control has long been a tradition in parts of Europe. Whether to use hunting or nonlethal means to control conflicts should be decided locally, depending on public opinion and ecological factors.

If nonlethal means cannot reduce conflicts, the conservationists point out that hunting may have the following benefits:

1. Allows long-standing traditions to continue;
2. Helps hunters regard wolves as game or sources of income, not as competitors, thus increasing respect for wolves;
3. Increases a sense of empowerment among locals;
4. Keeps wolf populations and predation at tolerable levels;
5. Makes wolves wary of people, thereby reducing conflicts;
6. Generates revenue in rural areas;
7. Increases long-term acceptance by slowing the recovery rate of wolves; and
8. Reduces poaching because locals have a stake in management.

B. and C. Promberger

The European conservationists conclude by saying that if social and ecological factors dictate that hunting should be used in some areas, it must be done under the following conditions:

1. Hunting is part of a comprehensive plan written in consultation with locals and wildlife interest groups and acceptable to a majority.
2. The wolf population is stable and can sustain hunting.
3. The social organization of wolves and how removal of individuals will affect it is taken into account.
4. Monitoring prevents the population from dropping below a set minimum.
5. Age, sex, condition, weight, reproductive organs, genetic samples and so on are monitored and reported annually.
6. Hunters are trained, and killing is done humanely and does not violate international, national or regional laws.
7. Closed seasons and quotas are imposed, taking into account hunter kills, predator control and road kills. Wounded and unrecovered animals are considered killed.

(This position statement was prepared by the Large Carnivore Initiative for Europe core group and does not necessarily reflect the views of all LCIE member organizations or individuals.)

Jay Hutchinson is a writer and editor, retired from the U.S. Forest Service's North Central Forest Experiment Station, in St. Paul, Minnesota. Between travels, he enjoys writing about various natural history subjects, including wolves.

International Wolf Center

Most of the unprovoked attacks by healthy wild wolves were caused by wolves that became fearless of humans due to habituation.

Are Wolves Dangerous to Humans?

Liz Harper, Information Specialist, International Wolf Center

Two recent reports on wolf-human interactions conclude that attacks by healthy wild wolves do occur but are rare and unusual events despite growing numbers of wolves worldwide. Both reports also state that there has not been a person killed by wolves in North America during the 20th century.

The Fear of Wolves: A Review of Wolf Attacks on Humans, edited by John Linnell, documents worldwide wolf attacks during the past 400 years. The authors reviewed records of wolf-human encounters from a variety of sources and concluded that historically attacks on humans were very rare, and attacks in the 20th century were even rarer. The report also documents four factors that are associated with wolf attacks. These are rabies (a majority of attacks involved rabid wolves), habituation (many attacks involved wolves that had lost their fear of humans), provocation (wolves were provoked into attack when humans cornered or trapped them or entered their den), and highly modified environments (many attacks occurred in areas where humans have greatly altered the environment). The report also notes that a decrease in the incidence of rabies worldwide has led to a decrease in the number of rabid wolf attacks.

A Case History of Wolf-Human Encounters in Alaska and Canada, by Mark McNay, documents 80 cases of wolf-human interactions (aggressive and nonaggressive) that have occurred in the past 60 years: 36 in

Isaac Babcock

Many of the wolf attacks documented in the past 400 years occurred in areas where humans have greatly altered the environment.

Alaska, 41 in Canada and 3 in Minnesota. Of the 80 cases described, none was fatal, and only 25 involved unprovoked aggression by healthy wolves (of these 25 cases, only 13 involved injury to humans). The other 55 cases consisted of interactions where wolves acted in self-defense (14), were known or suspected to have rabies (12) or showed interest but no aggression (29).

The findings of these reports show the importance of keeping wolf attacks in perspective. Currently, there are an estimated 10,000 to 20,000 wolves in Europe, 60,000 in the former Soviet Union, and 60,000 in North America. From the small number of documented attacks, it can be concluded that the vast majority of wolves do not pose any threat to human safety. A person has a greater chance of being killed by a dog, lightning, a bee sting or a car collision with a deer than being injured by a wolf. Most of the unprovoked attacks by healthy wild wolves that have occurred were caused by wolves that became fearless of humans due to habituation. Nonetheless, like bears and cougars, wolves are instinctive predators that should be respected and kept wild. ■

Both reports are available in PDF format from the International Wolf Center's Web site at www.wolf.org. For information on avoiding conflicts with wolves, see the Wolves and Humans *series, also available in PDF format on the Web site.*

News and Notes

WOLVES IN OREGON would be supported by about 70 percent of Oregon citizens according to a 1999 poll recently published. Wolves are making their way into Oregon from Idaho, but so far no breeding packs have been found there.

WOLVES AND MOBILE PHONES may not seem to go together, but according to a story from Greece, such a phone helped save a shepherd from a wolf pack. No one knows if the story is true, but the BBC reported that a shepherd treed by a wolf pack used his phone to summon help.

A WOLF IN UTAH was caught by a coyote trapper and transported by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service back into Wyoming from whence it came. The black male wolf was radio-collared in Yellowstone National Park, captured southeast of Logan, Utah, and released with a new radio collar in the Tetons.

WOLF SHOOTINGS are increasing as wolves themselves increase. One wolf may have been shot recently in Idaho, and two in Michigan. Rewards are offered by authorities for information on these illegal acts.

WOLF BOOKS. Two new ones are *Beyond Wolves: The Politics of Wolf Recovery and Management*, by M. A. Nie, University of Minnesota Press, to be released in April 2003; and *Wolf Mountains: A History of Wolves along the Great Divide,"* by K. R. Jones, Calgary Press, recently released.

A LONE WOLF from Finland probably greatly increased survival chances for Scandinavia's small wolf population (about 100 wolves), according to scientists. Genetic research on the population showed that outbreeding by the immigrant apparently fostered a surge in reproduction in the early 1990s.

A WOLF SYMPOSIUM will be held in Canmore, Alberta, Canada, September 25–28, 2003. See www.graywolf.ca/worldwolfcongress.

WOLVES IN THE NORTHEAST? According to an unconfirmed report, a pack of wolves may be living in Quebec within 20 miles of the United States, south of the St. Lawrence River. One animal was caught by a coyote trapper, and its carcass is being examined to confirm whether it is a wolf. If so, its pack mates are within easy dispersal distance to the northeastern United States. ■

Personal Encounter

A Conversation with a Wolf

Text and illustrations by Joan Ouellette

On a Friday in late September 2001 I took off in my pickup truck for Mont Tremblant Provincial Park in the Laurentian Mountains, about 100 miles north of Montreal in Quebec, Canada. I try to spend as much time as I can in this 1,500-square-kilometer (580-square-mile) forested park with over 400 lakes and 6 rivers. This weekend I planned to watch and film the park's diverse wildlife while appreciating the tranquility and beauty of the area.

The lakes are full of beaver and are also where some of the biggest moose hang out. On a previous visit I was successful in calling down a huge fellow with the biggest rack I have ever seen outside of Denali National Park in Alaska. From six to eight packs of gray wolves also inhabit the park. I was especially determined to get in one last visit to the northern sector before the park authorities closed it for the winter. That is where most of the wolf howling is heard by campers and where I had seen a lot of wolf prints and fresh scat.

I spent Saturday filming beaver laying in their winter pantry and congregations of loons giving final fishing lessons to their offspring before journeying south. While trying to sleep in the back of the pickup Saturday night, I fended off the attentions of the inquisitive little deer mice that conducted relay races up and down my body. Needless to say, my wake-up time Sunday morning was early, and by five a.m. I had shared my breakfast with the mice and was on my way, driving in a heavy fog to the northern end of the park.

As I was slowly feeling my way along in the fog, two wolves suddenly loped from the forest onto the road in front of the truck. I slammed on the brakes, pulled over,

and stepped out quietly with my video camera in hand. One of the wolves was having none of this, but the other decided to stop and have a look at this curious creature attempting a soft howl. She bark-howled at me a few times before deciding to catch up with the other wolf. But she stayed on the road, and I was able to follow her slowly in the truck. She didn't seem to mind, and twice she stopped and turned around to look. Both times I got out and alternately filmed and howled, trying to keep the moment alive.

Finally I sat on the ground to assure her I was no threat and filmed from there. We then began to howl to each other in earnest. She stood there for two or three minutes as we howled back and forth. When finally she started to leave, she stopped suddenly, turned around, and with one last look at me trotted off into the fog with a final howl, as if to say,

"Well, are you coming or not, because I really have to go." The beauty of those moments I spent communicating with this wolf are beyond description.

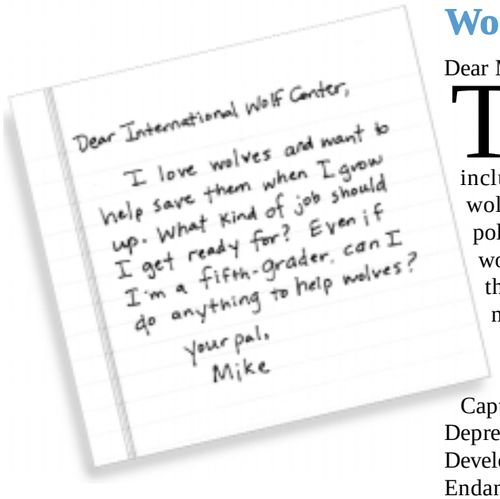
What is it that makes some people yearn for an experience like I had, to be in the presence of a wild animal that chooses to stay rather than flee in fear? Could it be that we humans feel a great longing to be accepted as part of, rather than separate from, their mysterious world?

I do know that this wonderful wolf spent 23 minutes with me, and I shall never forget the total peace and harmony I felt when sharing this time with her. ■

Joan Ouellette is an animal painter and videographer who lives in Mont St. Hilaire, Quebec, Canada, with two dogs, four cats and a succession of backyard deer and raccoons.

Larry Allman
ad

Wild Kids



Working for Wolves

Dear Mike,

There are lots of different careers that can make a difference for wolves. Some jobs include tracking and studying wolves, some include setting policy and enforcing laws about wolves, others involve educating the public about wolves. There's no end to the possibilities!

Here's a sample list of job titles that could involve wolves:

Captive wolf curator
Depredation investigator
Development director
Endangered species coordinator
Environmental educator
Ethologist
Farmer
Field researcher
Fund-raiser
Fur bearer specialist
Laboratory technician
Lobbyist
Legislator
Museum curator
Naturalist
Novelist
Park ranger
Photographer
Policy analyst
Political activist
Professor
Program administrator
Public information specialist
Rancher
Taxidermist
Teacher
Technical writer
Trapper
Veterinary technician
Volunteer
Wildlife biologist
Wildlife technician
Wildlife veterinarian

Pedro Ramirez Jr

Some veterinarians specialize in the care of wild animals.

No matter what subjects you are good at in school, there may be a job you can do that involves wolves.

You might notice, though, that very few jobs are focused exclusively on wolves. Most people who deal with wolves must have a wide variety of knowledge and skills. For example, political activists must know a lot about wolves and the policies that affect them, but they also must know how government works and be able to work within that system. Photographers must be intimately familiar with wolf behavior in order to find wolves and anticipate their movements, and they must also know how to work complex camera equipment. Even the technicians who track wolves in the wild have to know about more than just wolves. They have to operate—and sometimes even fix—the different kinds of tracking devices.

Even jobs that deal mostly with animals rarely deal only with wolves. Most wildlife careers include working with many different kinds of animals.

No matter what type of job you hope to have someday, you will need to know at least something from each of the subjects you have in school. Scientists need to be good at reading and writing just as novelists need to understand science.

LuRay Parker

Field researchers track and study wolves in the wild.

You can get ready now for your future career by working hard at school and by getting experience as a volunteer or an intern. Contact a zoo, animal park, nature center, park, veterinary clinic or research project near you to ask how you can help.

But you don't have to wait until you get a job to help wolves. There are things you can do every day that will make life better for wolves everywhere! Here are a few suggestions to get you started:

- Become a member of an organization that supports wolf survival. (For information on becoming a member of the International Wolf Center, see our Web site at www.wolf.org.)
- Learn as much as you can about wolves. Share what you know by giving a talk at a school, library or other venue in your area.
- Think globally, act locally. Get involved in local environmental projects. Everything in nature is connected, so every improvement to the environment ultimately helps wolves. Reduce, reuse, recycle—in that order. The less we humans use the earth's resources, the less pressure we put on the wild species trying to survive on those same resources.
- Help preserve wild lands in wolf range, or support organizations that do.
- Organize a fund-raiser and donate the proceeds to an organization that supports wolf survival.

Watch the "Wild Kids" section in future issues of *International Wolf* magazine for features on people who do some kind of "Wolf Work." Hopefully that will help you make choices for your future. ■

Good luck!
Sincerely,
International Wolf Center

WOLF WORK

PERSON: Lori Schmidt

JOB TITLE AND DESCRIPTION: Captive Wolf Curator. Tasks include caring for a captive pack of wolves, supervising helpers, acquiring and storing food, maintaining fencing and water supply, keeping thorough records, and planning, adapting and enforcing protocols for interacting with the wolves.

TRAINING REQUIRED: Minimum two-year associate's degree in a natural resource/animal-related major plus several years of supervised experience.

SKILLS NEEDED TO DO THE JOB: Willingness to work long hours outdoors in all kinds of weather, keen observation skills to notice nuances in animal behavior, attention to detail for complete record keeping, veterinary training, problem solving, critical thinking, facility maintenance, and adherence to procedures.

ADVICE TO KIDS: Learn the day-to-day responsibilities of caring for another living thing, such as a pet. Practice taking full responsibility for all of your pet's needs, even when you don't feel like it or are gone for a time.

International Wolf Center

Lori Schmidt, Wolf Curator, cares for the International Wolf Center's resident wolves.

A Look Beyond

Why Can't We Just Be Friends?

by Rolf Peterson

A version of this article originally appeared in the Isle Royale 2001-2002 annual report.

It was once common for wolf advocates to claim that wild wolves pose no threat to humans. In the past decade, however, wolves have injured people in several places across North America, including Algonquin Provincial Park (Ontario), coastal British Columbia, southern Alaska and Ellesmere Island.

Although the factors leading to attacks are not fully understood, it seems certain that wolves are likely to harm humans when the two species have lost their fear of each other. In Denali National Park, wolves have repeatedly stolen and damaged articles from camps while people were present, and in Algonquin, children have been seriously injured by "tame" wolves investigating campgrounds. People in sleeping bags on the ground, not in tents, may be particularly vulnerable to curious wolves that aren't overtly afraid of humans. At Isle Royale, wolf sightings by visitors have increased more than threefold over the past four decades, and an article published in 2001 in a regional outdoor magazine described an Isle Royale kayaker sustaining minor injuries from a wolf bite while camping at a nondesignated area along the shoreline. A curious wolf evidently found something worth investigating along a usual travel route, but when it turned out to be a kayaker's face, both parties quickly retreated, the kayaker ending up at the bottom of his sleeping bag.

Throughout history and in many parts of the world today, wolves' fear of humans has resulted from persecution — shooting, trapping and poisoning. While maintenance of fear is highly desirable, violence toward wolves is not a goal of any park or reserve. Aversive conditioning, such as electric shocks or rubber bullets, is a possibility, though not an ethical or aesthetically pleasing one. Wolves on Isle Royale have remained fearful of people, even after fifty years of total protection. What can be done to maintain mutual respect between wolves and people to minimize the risk of wolf-inflicted injury? Here are recommended measures at Isle Royale:

Park managers should continue to limit visitor access to areas frequented by wolves through existing nighttime closures in parts of the island. No new restrictions are necessary as the status quo, in place for more than 20 years, appears to provide wolves with enough space to avoid people.

Visitors must pack out trash and dispose of fish entrails appropriately so that wolves do not associate people with food.

Upon seeing a wolf, visitors should resist the temptation to get closer and should do nothing to entice the wolf to approach.

Photographers wanting wolf pictures should visit places where long-distance photography is possible (Yellowstone), or where wolves live in captivity (International Wolf Center, Ely, Minnesota). The dense forest cover at Isle Royale limits opportunities for long-distance wildlife viewing.

If there is an increase in wolf-human encounters, the wolves will likely suffer more than the people. All wolves in North America that have recently injured humans have been killed. Wolves do not need human friendship; they need wild lands. ■

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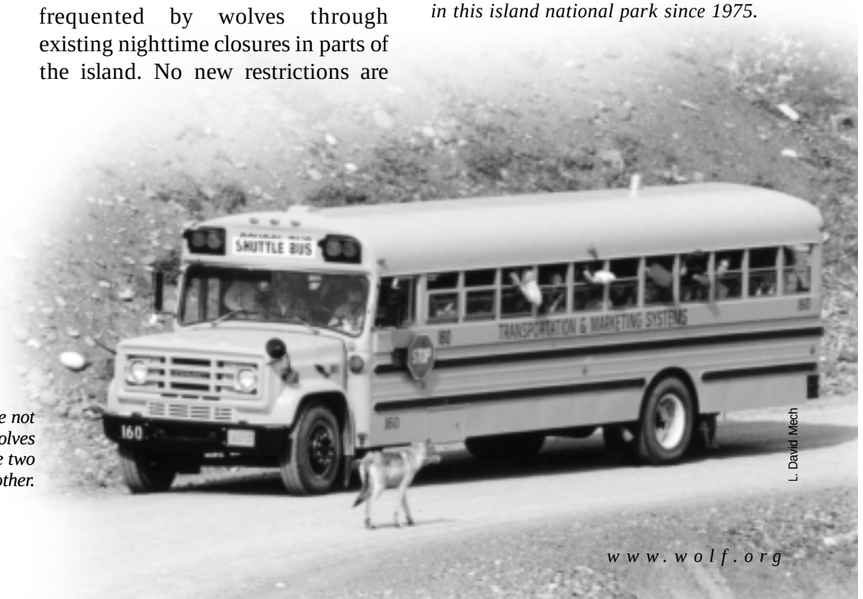

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