

# INTERNATIONAL WOLF

A PUBLICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL WOLF CENTER  
FALL 2009



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# INTERNATIONAL WOLF

THE QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL WOLF CENTER  
VOLUME 19, NO. 4 WINTER 2009

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*Tracy O'Connell*

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*Cornelia Hutt*



Curt Tidwell

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Wolves in winter go where the elk are plentiful. In this case, a pack shares living space with people and domestic dogs in a residential neighborhood, causing both fear and excitement – and some changed minds.

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## On the Cover

Photo by Curt Tidwell

A member of the Phantom Hill pack roams a snowy hillside above a neighborhood in Idaho's Wood River Valley. See story on page 20.

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*International Wolf* is a forum for airing facts, ideas and attitudes about wolf-related issues. Articles and materials printed in *International Wolf* do not necessarily reflect the viewpoint of the International Wolf Center or its board of directors.

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

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

*International Wolf* is printed entirely with soy ink on FSC certified paper.

We encourage you to recycle this magazine.

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## Red Wolf Coalition Director Awarded 2009 "Who Speaks for Wolf"

Kim Wheeler, executive director of the Red Wolf Coalition, is the recipient of the International Wolf Center's 2009 "Who Speaks for Wolf" award. This annual award is given to someone outside the organization who has made exceptional contributions to wolf education. Kim works as a volunteer for the Center, and her commitment to red wolf survival has enhanced the success and status of this critically endangered species. ■



Left to right: International Wolf Center Board Member Nancy Gibson, Kim Wheeler

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**Wild Wolves**  
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Photo: Dan & Cindy Hartman

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## From the Chair of The Board of Directors

### Reading Takes Children Where the Wild Things Are

by Nancy jo Tubbs, Board Chair, International Wolf Center

Father tucked me into bed and opened our favorite book. I was about six years old, and when I wasn't climbing trees or catching frogs, I was learning to read a bit myself. I proudly picked out a few of the words as he read "The Old Mother West Wind" tale.

"The last little star was blinking sleepily as Old Mother West Wind turned her big bag upside down on the Green Meadows and all her children, the Merry Little Breezes, tumbled out on the soft green grass."

Dad made Thornton W. Burgess' stories of the Breezes, Grandfather Frog and Sammy Jay, who was always planning mischief, come alive with voices that squeaked and rumbled and one that sounded suspiciously like my mother's voice calling from bed for coffee. Mom objected in mock protest, and Dad and I giggled.

This issue of *International Wolf* is chock full of suggestions for delightful books about the world of the wolf. Some speak to adults and others to the younger set. You'll find fascinating, factual and adventurous reading suggestions here about the wolf, its habitat, its pack and its prey.

Of particular importance, I think, is the notion that sharing nature with very young children can start with reading that delights both parents and kids. When we are snuggled up with a good nature book, a bond grows between child, parent and the great outdoors.

Some stories for children are less factual but find a way to captivate young people with anthropomorphic characters who inhabit our imaginations, though not the real world. As we grow older, we make the transition from hearing about Grandfather Frog to learning about the world of amphibians, about wood frogs, spring peepers and goliath frogs. We begin to care about the frogs in our pond and those in other ecosystems, which may be in danger.

I hope you remember your favorite nature books from early childhood. Perhaps you are finding new favorites that you share with the children in your life. Whether they are fables or factual, I hope they are rich in words that squeak and rumble off the tongue and snare one's imagination. Reading books about wolves, frogs and the west wind plants the seeds of care for the natural world in those who listen. And delightfully, it may even refresh our care for our big, windy world in those of us doing the reading.

Wishing you wild reading. ■

*Nancy jo Tubbs*

For a comprehensive list of books and videos for all ages, please visit the Learn section of [www.wolf.org](http://www.wolf.org).

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Ken Callings



Amanda Stamoszek

# Wolf-dog Crosses—

## Pet or Problem?

BY TRACY O'CONNELL

Amanda Stamoszek



Adam Oliver



Amanda Stamoszek

**I**s a wolf-dog hybrid on your holiday wish list? A check online will yield a list of breeders, organizations and happy owners pictured with their loving companions – as well as more than a few cautionary tales, a site listing a 30-year chronology of wolf-dog attacks on humans, and many rescues and sanctuaries where victims of unsuccessful ownership experiments end up.

Robert A. Willems, veterinary medical officer with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, wrote an article, “The Wolf-Dog Hybrid, Overview of a Controversial Animal” in the Animal Welfare Information Center newsletter in 1995. “Unfortunately, there is little scientific literature. . . . Most of what we now know about their behavior comes from anecdotal accounts,” he wrote. “One side describes them as highly aggressive, destructive, unpredictable, and untrustworthy. . . . The other sees them as gentle, loving animals. . . . Many experienced hybrid owners claim their animals are less dangerous than some breeds of dog. National statistics on canine attacks on humans have been used by both sides to support their differing positions.”

Those same arguments are heard today. But several sources work to provide unbiased information, such as the Center’s Web site, and there are several points on which everyone from across the spectrum seems to agree.

Wolf-dogs aren’t for everyone, a point made loud and clear by supporters, rescuers, and educators alike. A person considering such an acquisition needs to be well informed and to have significant resources to provide the space, secure housing and care required by such an animal. Wolf Park, an Indiana educational and research facility, offers courses and recommends

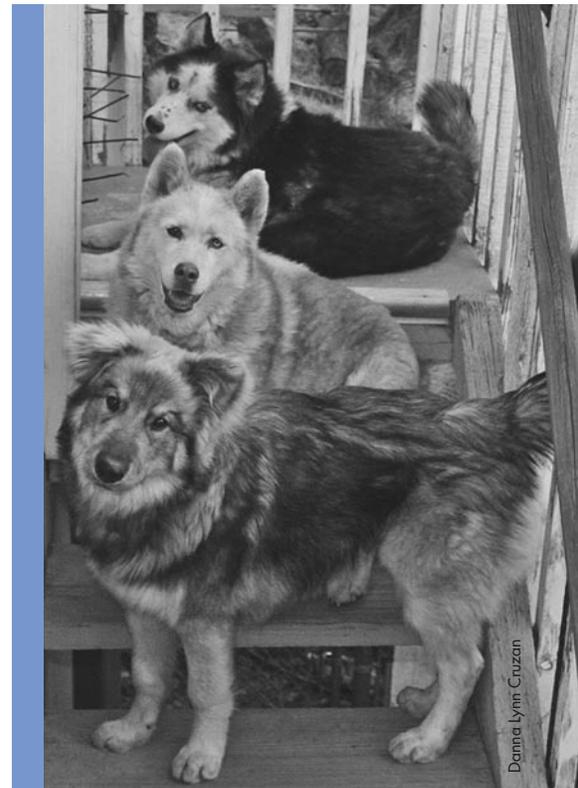
books on its Web site for those interested in owning a wolf-dog.

People who envision keeping such an animal in their homes soon encounter problem behavior, such as marking territory and destroying furniture, says Beth Duman, a Wolf Park volunteer and dog trainer. Further, despite the imagined fierceness, they aren’t good at guarding, a purpose many have in mind for large dogs. Most agree the nature of the wolf – to avoid human interaction – does not bode well for people seeking a guardian to give them protection. Additionally, some veterinarians won’t treat a wolf-dog, and rabies vaccines manufactured for dogs have not been proven effective on wolves or wolf crosses.

What’s in a name? Getting agreement on terms can be dicey. Wolf-dogs are not hybrids, posits Leyton Cougar, executive director of the Wild Spirit Wolf Sanctuary in New Mexico, a facility caring for more than 50 wolves and wolf-dogs that have been surrendered by owners unable to keep them for a variety of reasons. He notes “hybrid” refers to a cross between two species, while wolves and dogs are of the same species.

Lori Schmidt, wolf curator at the Center, uses the term hybrid, saying the difference is between a domestic animal and a wild one, making the term more in reference to “the nature of the animal being not aligned by one trait or another.”

Cougar, Schmidt, and others say the more successful ownership stories come from ‘low-content’ animals, those with little wolf genetic material. Many animals carrying the ‘wolf-dog’ label don’t have any wolf content in their genes, just about everyone agrees. Unscrupulous breeders, or people hoping to find homes for mixed-breed, ‘wolfie-looking’ dogs, attach the sexier



title for marketing purposes. Duman estimates up to half of the purported wolf-dogs are, in fact, dogs.

For this reason Mace Loftus, a 20-year wolf-dog enthusiast and publisher of a newly-launched magazine devoted to the subject, notes that some of the problems associated with wolf-dogs should actually be blamed on bad dogs. He says it’s the bloodline that counts in determining a good animal,

**There can be such variability within a litter that one animal can make an appropriate companion, while a sibling does not.**



## A person considering such an acquisition needs to be well informed and to have significant resources.

along with the training it receives, rather than the percentage of wolf ancestry. He and others cite positive reinforcement as an effective training method.

Cougar, who cites Loftus as a resource, counters that since there's no affordable genetic testing available, "When someone tells me the animal is such a percent wolf, I know he's full of it." He, Duman, the Center's Web site and other sources say that due to the nature of the cross, there can be such variability within a litter that one animal can make an appropriate companion, while a sibling does not.

"But when someone says the animal is 98 percent wolf, I know it is pure wolf and they're trying to be legal," Cougar adds, referring to a ruling in many states against keeping pure wolves in captivity. Laws regulating wolf and wolf-dog ownership differ by state, and change over time.

Duman notes Michigan's Department of Natural Resources supported

the ban against owning wolf-dogs in that state (which followed the deaths of four children in unrelated incidents) because of the concern that such animals, especially when abandoned by owners unable to care for them, skewed the picture of wild wolf impacts.

Rescuers see yet a different side – animals chained for years in a backyard, their collars grown into their flesh, controlled with tasers, and otherwise brutalized by abusive owners. Their Web pages tell stories of animals starved and fearful.

The National Wolf-dog Alliance promotes a code of ethical conduct for breeders, takes a stance on the unsuitability of tethering to contain animals, and tracks legislation that would make ownership of wolves or wolf-dogs more difficult. It provides links to rescue sites from its Web page and provides expectations potential owners should be prepared to meet, including environmental enrichment and a companion.

"They're pack animals," Loftus agrees. "You keep one alone, and it goes nuts."

How many are out there? No one knows the number of wolf-dogs in the U.S. Cougar, the rescuer, gets so many calls ("four yesterday") from owners unable to keep their animals that he believes there are more wolves in captivity in the U.S. than in the wild.

His is one of a number of public and private organizations that either provides permanent sanctuary for surrendered animals, or that seeks to re-home them. Many offer tours and events to raise funds to care for their charges.

Frank Wendland, cofounder of W.O.L.F. Sanctuary in Colorado, says he turns down 1,000 requests per year to take animals owners can no longer keep. Citing the scope of this situation, he says of his organization, "WOLF is adamantly against the breeding of wolves and wolf-dogs. By their nature and spirit they were not meant to be contained. They do not do well in captive situations."

Some other rescuers are more nuanced in their opinions, as are educators. Jess Edberg, information services director at the Center, says most questions she gets on the wolf-dog issue are from people who already own one and want to know how to care for it, or "if we'll take theirs." When she does get questions from potential owners, she asks if their vet will treat such an animal, if they have adequate room for it, and if they have the knowledge of both dogs and wolves to enable them to deal with an animal that could be anywhere in between on the behavioral continuum.

Meanwhile rescuers suggest those wanting a wolf-dog get one from a rescue, or sponsor one in a sanctuary. ■

*Tracy O'Connell teaches in the Marketing Communications program at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. An International Wolf Center member who serves on the magazine and communications committees, she once counted a wolf-dog and a coyote among her 'family.'*

# "Can you recommend a book about wolves?"

by CORNELIA HUTT

Yes we can! Here's a sampler of books for gifts and your personal wish list.

First a disclaimer! There's no one-size-fits-all book list! Regrettably, space limitations mean leaving out five-star titles including children's books, story collections, novels and first-person accounts. See the review of two children's books on page 18, and look for more in a future issue.

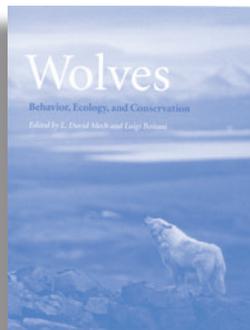
Visit the Center's Wolf Den Store in Ely, MN, or <http://shop.wolf.org> for a superb selection of books and videos for all ages. Remember! Out-of-print books are often available through online book vendors.

## WHAT IS A WOLF?

### *Wolves: Behavior, Ecology, and Conservation*

L. DAVID MECH AND LUIGI BOITANI (EDS.)

The ultimate resource, this comprehensive, engaging book appeals both to scientists and the general public.



### *Return of the Wolf*

STEVE GROOMS

Superb general resource book about the wolf's fascinating world in Groom's trademark conversational style.

### *The Way of the Wolf*

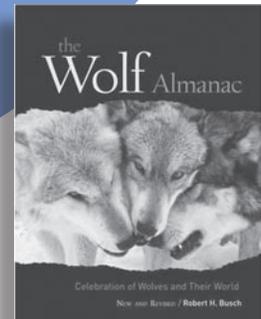
L. DAVID MECH

Popular, comprehensive, for all ages.

### *Wolves of the World*

TODD K. FULLER

More than a beautiful "coffee table" decoration. Contains rich information.



### *The Wolf Almanac*

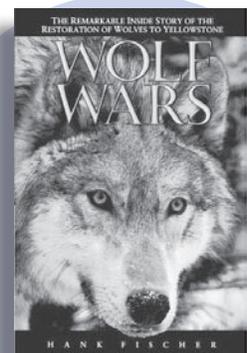
ROBERT H. BUSCH

### *Wolves: A Wildlife Handbook*

KIM LONG

Illustrated, highly useful handbooks.

## POLITICS AND MANAGEMENT OF A CONTROVERSIAL PREDATOR



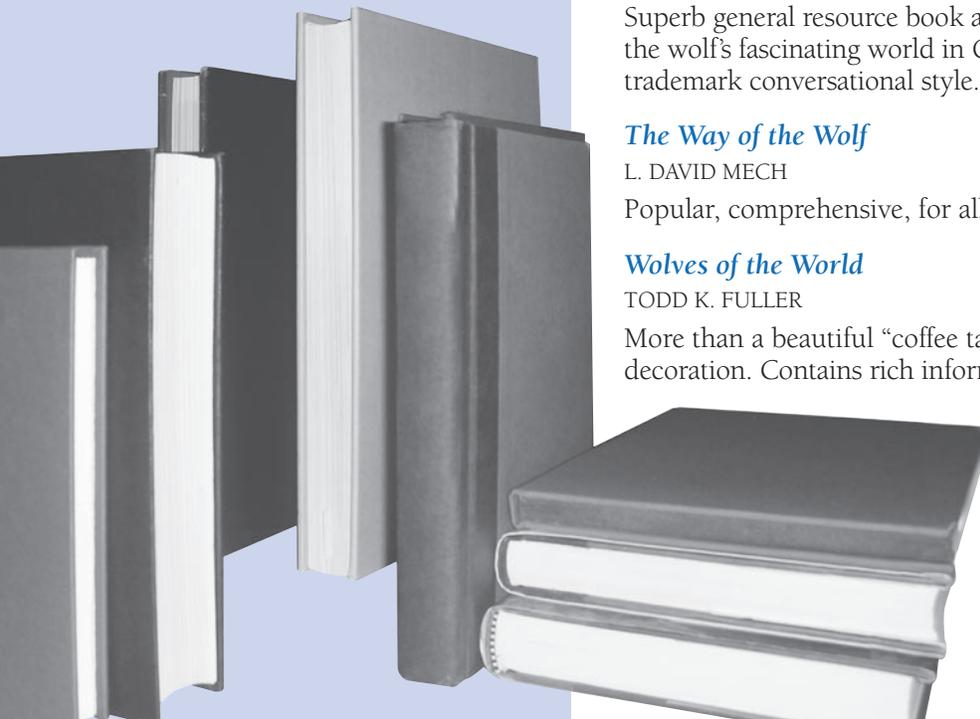
### *Wolf Wars*

HANK FISCHER

### *The Return of the Wolf to Yellowstone*

THOMAS MCNAMEE

Two page-turning tributes to the remarkable achievement of the conservation heroes who collectively restored the wolf to the northern Rockies.



## *The Great American Wolf*

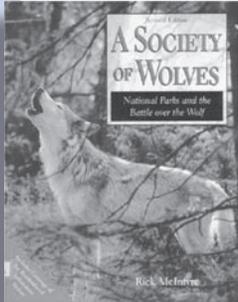
BRUCE HAMPTON

How will people accommodate wolf recovery? Historical perspective with implications for the future.

## *A Society of Wolves: National Parks and the Battle over the Wolf*

RICK MCINTYRE

Stunning photography and an epilogue that gives special meaning to the book's solid information.



## *Of Wolves and Men*

BARRY LOPEZ

## *Vicious: Wolves and Men in America*

JON T. COLEMAN

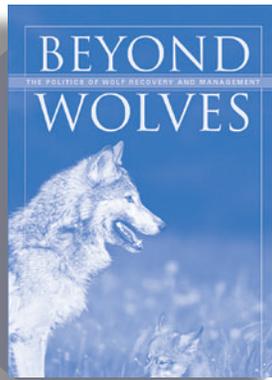
Two books that track wolves through their brutal eradication saga. Each connects history and folklore and challenges us to confront and move beyond our history of sadistic wolf killing.



## *Wolf Mountains: A History of Wolves Along the Great Divide*

KAREN JONES

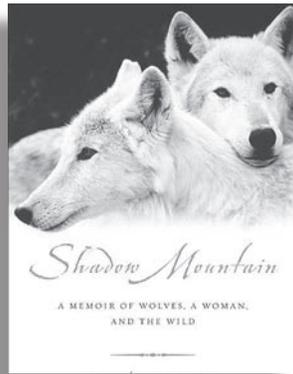
Important look at the history of the policies and control measures in four Rocky Mountain national parks.



## *Beyond Wolves: The Politics of Wolf Recovery and Management*

MARTIN NIE

Don't let the title suggest the reading audience is limited to policy makers and wildlife managers. It's for everyone who sees the value of consensus-building and the democratic process.



## *Shadow Mountain: A Memoir of Wolves, a Woman, and the Wild*

RENEE ASKINS

Again, don't let the title mislead. Challenges readers to re-think the way our society views and uses wild animals.

See the comprehensive list of books and videos on our Web site at [www.wolf.org/wolves/learn/basic/resources/books\\_videos.asp](http://www.wolf.org/wolves/learn/basic/resources/books_videos.asp)

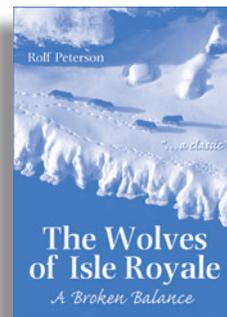
## WOLVES IN NORTH AMERICA BY REGION

### UPPER MIDWEST

## *Keepers of the Wolves: The Early Years of Wolf Recovery in Wisconsin and The Timber Wolf In Wisconsin: The Death And Life Of A Majestic Predator*

RICHARD P. THIEL

Both take readers straight to the Wisconsin wolf recovery effort, providing insight into thorny issues surrounding efforts to preserve endangered species.



## *The Wolves of Isle Royale: A Broken Balance*

ROLF O. PETERSON

First-hand account of the more than half-century study of the wolf/moose relationship on Isle Royale.

## *Recovery of Gray Wolves in the Great Lakes Region of the United States: An Endangered Species Success Story*

ADRIAN P. WYDEVEN, ET AL. (EDS.)

Filled with excellent data and biological information about wolves in the Great Lakes region.

## *The Wolves of Minnesota: A Howl in the Heartland*

L. DAVID MECH (ED.)

Compelling story of the wolf's comeback in Minnesota and the implications for humans as well as wolves.

## NORTHERN ROCKIES

### *Decade of the Wolf*

DOUGLAS SMITH, GARY FERGUSON

Stretches beyond general information to give the readers a generous, candid and often funny account of the raw realities of life for wolves and the field scientists who study and manage them.

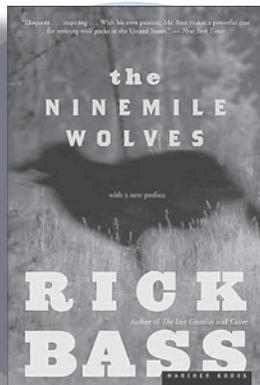
### *In the Company of Wolves*

PETER STEINHART

### *The Ninemile Wolves*

RICK BASS

Eloquently written, endlessly fascinating.



### *The Wolves of Yellowstone*

MICHAEL K. PHILLIPS AND DOUGLAS W. SMITH

Insightful chronicle of the first year of the reintroduction of wolves to Yellowstone.

## SOUTHWEST

### *The Wolf in the Southwest: The Making of an Endangered Species*

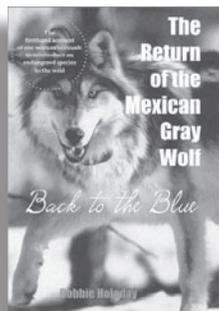
DAVID E. BROWN (ED.)

Well-researched, highly readable, valuable for the stories Brown tells and for the historical perspective.

### *The Return of the Mexican Gray Wolf: Back to the Blue*

BOBBIE HOLADAY

A determined woman who started a pro-wolf organization in a hostile environment, Holaday recounts the 15-year effort to restore the Mexican wolf to New Mexico and Arizona.



## SOUTHEAST

### *Meant to Be Wild: The Struggle to Save Endangered Species Through Captive Breeding*

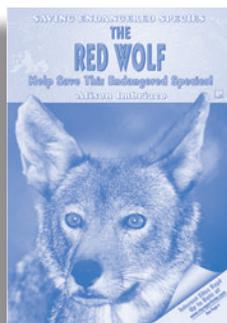
JAN DEBLIEU

Story of the red wolf and other animals removed from the wild and bred in captivity to save them from extinction.

### *The Red Wolf: Help Save This Endangered Species*

ALISON IMBRIACO

Colorful, highly useful guide to learning about red wolves.



### *Another Country: Journeying Toward the Cherokee Mountains*

CHRISTOPHER CAMUTO

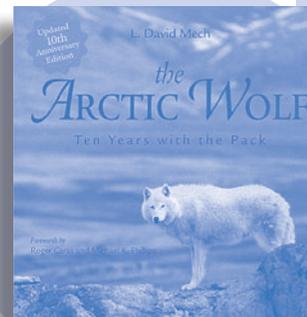
In-depth, richly textured narrative about the reintroduction of the red wolf to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the importance of red wolves in Cherokee mythology and culture.

## HIGH ARCTIC

### *The Arctic Wolf: Living with the Pack; The Arctic Wolf: Ten Years with the Pack; Wolves of the High Arctic*

L. DAVID MECH.

For all wolf fans, enrichment for Ellesmere Blog (<http://international-wolfcenter.blogspot.com/>).



## CANADA

### *The Last Wild Wolves: Ghosts of the Rain Forest*

IAN MCALLISTER

Stunning photographs of a wild coastal British Columbia archipelago and the wolves that inhabit it. ■



Cornelia Hutt chairs the International Wolf Center board education committee and is a contributor to International Wolf magazine.





## Tracking the Pack

### Finding a Place in the Pack

by Lori Schmidt

The 2008 introduction of wolf pups, Aidan and Denali, into our Exhibit Pack was a great success, and as predicted, their presence changed the pack's dynamics. Several positive outcomes occurred after the pup introduction, including the strong social bond formed with the pups by Grizzer and Shadow, two of our adult wolves.

Shadow showed clear leadership and dominance but also provided a strong social influence that yearlings seek for reassurance. It's not uncommon to have Shadow roll over in a submissive posture and paw at the yearlings, encouraging them to roll with him. Then he delivers a hard muzzle bite to remind them that he is still in charge. However, Grizzer rarely exhibits dominance over the yearlings. Instead, he continues to allow them to scruff bite, ride up\* and mob him with no repercussions. This behavior has created some conflicts between Grizzer, the second-ranking male, and Malik, the third-ranking male.

Before addressing the specifics of this conflict, it is important to note the differences between captive and wild wolf packs. Recent scientific publications have downplayed the use of the term "alpha" since evidence from direct observations suggests that a wild wolf pack is not maintained by dominance struggle. A wolf pack is a family unit, with parents in charge of the pups of the current year as well as the previous

year's offspring. Status in the pack occurs naturally because of these familial relationships rather than because of dominance contests to stay on top.

This is not to say that dominance testing doesn't happen in the wild and that it isn't an important component of social behavior. However, genetically non-related wolves in a captive environment are more likely to display this behavior to establish rank and maintain pack hierarchy. Rank order is usually gender specific, meaning the males have an order and the females have an order. The Exhibit Pack's yearlings will not attain rank in the hierarchy until they mature when they are 18–24 months old. That will be sometime during the winter of 2009–2010.

The Center is intentionally managing a one-female exhibit due to a tendency for females to be more aggressive; hence Maya is the dominant female by default. But that doesn't keep her from asserting dominance. In the absence of another female, she has focused on Aidan, at times stalking him and dominating him any time he demonstrates too much excitement during social behavior, such as a pack howl.

Since the pup introduction in the fall of 2008, Grizzer had always done very little to demonstrate his status as a second-ranking male. He was always tolerant of the two newcomers grabbing, pulling, or chasing him and generally using him to practice predatory skills. Malik, as a third-ranking male, was very observant of Grizzer's



International Wolf Center

Above: Aidan places a submissive paw and muzzle licks to Shadow, respecting Shadow as the dominant male. Denali watches and drops his head with flat submissive ears.

Right: Grizzer is tolerant of the yearlings but has his limits.

\*Ride up – when a dominant male wolf mounts the back of another male and directs threat bites to the rival's neck. Both wolves may growl. Sometimes this behavior involves three wolves.

slack of posturing and spent the fall and winter taking advantage when Grizzer was preoccupied with pups. This included grab-bites, foreleg stabs, lunges and a significant amount of growling. Ritualized dominance is noisy, with threat displays that use vocalization to get the point across, but usually these are short-lived and not problematic.

On May 12, 2009, Grizzer put an end to Malik's testing in the most intense dominance display the wolf care staff has ever witnessed. In a split second, Grizzer grabbed Malik by the neck and started headshaking and dragging him around the enclosure. There was no sound from any of the pack members or Grizzer. This was not a threat display; this was a dominance attack.

Wolf-care staff members were able to break it up, hold Grizzer and the yearlings off long enough to assess Malik's condition, and then reunite the pack. It was critical for Malik that the separation be as short as possible. Lengthy separations even for veterinary care can be viewed as a wolf dispersing, with the pack not accepting the missing member back. Malik clearly wanted to be with the pack, and isolation was not in his best interest.

Since the attack, Malik has been accepting his role as the third-ranking wolf and is still socially interacting with all pack members, but the number of direct eye stares from Grizzer, a sign of dominance, is a reminder that Grizzer will not give up his status. It is likely that Malik may be retired from the

Exhibit during the next year. Staff is very mindful of the tension between Grizzer and Malik and will be extremely cautious as the fall hormones and aggression increases.

The biggest factor of concern is the role the two yearlings will play in the male rank order. It is expected that Denali will climb rank, as he is larger and hasn't been subject to the dominance that Aidan receives from Maya. The question is: How will Malik fare when Denali and Aidan find their places in the pack? This will be the focus of wolf-care staff's management in the coming months. Watch the wolf logs at [www.wolf.org](http://www.wolf.org) and the monthly YouTube or podcasts to stay in touch with the Exhibit Pack. ■



International Wolf Center



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# Thank You!

# Wolves of the World

## The Wolf Returns to Germany

By Steve Grooms

**H**istory can dish up some delicious ironies. Germany has not had resident wolves ever since the last beleaguered survivors were killed in the 19th century. No continent exhibited more wolf hatred than Europe, and no European country is more associated with wolf hatred than Germany. Moreover, Germany is a modern, highly developed nation with a dense human population of 82 million people . . . hardly an appropriate home for large wild predators, or so many people might think.

Even so, Germany is now home to at least 20 wild wolves in two packs. If wolves have not exactly roared back to their position as the apex predator of German forests, at least the wolf has what is often called “a pawhold” in Germany along the eastern border with Poland. And more wolves are coming.

Wolves reportedly made occasional appearances in Germany starting after the Berlin Wall fell. What is new is the fact that they have established healthy, stable populations. In addition to the 20 adults confirmed to be living in the country, researchers believe that 20 dispersers have left in an effort to establish new packs. This surge in wolf numbers seems to be driven, in part at least, by steady increases in the numbers of wolves in neighboring Poland.

How could this happen in a modern European country? And why now?

Wolves have no enemies except for humans, and humans—for two reasons—are now less of a threat. For one thing, public attitudes toward predators are becoming increasingly positive in many areas. Secondly, wolves are protected by law against public taking. Still, some wolves die as a result of



poaching or accidents when they encounter humans.

The main reason wolves are infiltrating forested lands in eastern Germany is that the region has experienced a significant loss of human population, which is one of many unforeseen consequences of German reunification. The wolves are setting up territories in areas of eastern Germany where Communist leaders tried to establish mining and military training centers. One tenth of the local population has abandoned that region, mostly heading toward larger cities. As human populations sag, wolf populations increase. “They’re following ancient migration routes back to Germany, partly because of the growing numbers (of wolves) in Poland, Slovakia and other parts of Eastern Europe which means they have to

*“ . . .the wolf has what is often called ‘a pawhold’ in Germany along the eastern border with Poland. And more wolves are coming.”*

spread out and go somewhere,” said Roland Melisch, head of the species conservation section at the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in Germany.

Wolves in Germany are benefiting from programs to compensate farmers for livestock losses. The programs are very similar to depredation-compensation programs in the United States. Brandenburg state, which surrounds Berlin, not only made it a crime to shoot wolves but offers farmers cash compensation for any farm animals that fall prey to the wolves. It also provides subsidies to farmers to buy electric fences to keep wolves out.

Wolves being wolves, people being people, the return of wolves to the former East Germany is controversial. Because of fears, the German Environmental Ministry recently held a conference named “Who’s Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?” It was informational and intended to reduce anxieties about wolves.

That hardly stopped the arguing. Some hunters have complained about competing with wolves for game.

Farmers have fretted about livestock losses, although those have been remarkably light so far. Other critics are simply repeating the old stereotypes about wolves being vicious and dangerous. Yet many Germans, both in the scientific community and in the general public, are delighted to see the return of an animal that was missing for over a century.

Wolves have also been returning to other countries where they were nearly extinct, including Italy, Austria, France and the Baltic states. In addition to wolves, cranes, eagles and other wildlife species are rebounding as people move, making more room for wildlife in some areas.

Early in the 19th century, brothers Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm were publishing collections of dark fantasies and fairy tales that included their most famous, “Little Red Cap.” That single story is often seen as resulting in the deaths of great numbers of wolves. Somehow it seems fitting that wolves today are returning to the country that did so much to give them a poor reputation.

## The Czechoslovakian Wolf-dog (not a wolf and not a dog)

by Steve Grooms

It is not often that conservative kennel authorities recognize a new breed of dog. It is even less usual when the “dog” is the result of breeding animals usually thought to belong to different species. That is part of the mystique of the Czechoslovakian Wolf-dog, a relatively new breed arising from an experiment conducted in 1955 that involved cross-breeding a German shepherd dog with a Carpathian gray wolf.

Of course, there is nothing new about breeding wolves and dogs. But the process is usually casual, unscientific and even sometimes furtive. The offspring are sometimes called “wolfy mutts” because they reflect an unpredictable mix of qualities from both parents. (See the article in this issue by Tracy O’Connell on this topic).

Unless done with care and discipline, breeding hybrids can produce random results. Cross breeding is as likely to produce offspring featuring the worst qualities of both parents as it is to produce offspring with the best of both parents. Wolf shelters all across America are filled with wolf-dog hybrids that did not turn out as intended.

There is not a great deal of documentation for the rationale behind the creation of the Czechoslovakian Wolf-dog. The original impulse might have been to create a dog that would handle well in military work, combining the strength and endurance of the wolf with the famous willingness of German shepherds to work well with humans.

For a breed to be recognized, it must be stable or predictable. In appearance and behavior, animals recognized as a particular dog breed should consistently meet breed standards. This new breed has been carefully developed by breeders who weren’t chasing novelty or looking to make a fast buck



William Rideg, Kishenehn Wildlife Works



Simon Frazier

*With an unmistakable wolf appearance, but a more stable temperament than found in other hybrids due to generations of planned breeding, the Czech Wolfdog has been accepted as a standard breed by the International Cynological Federation (ICF).*

with a “wolf” they could sell. The Czechoslovakian Wolf-dog was recognized as a national breed in Czechoslovakia in 1982. In 1999 it was accepted as a standard breed by the larger ICF (International Cynological Federation).

In general, the Czechoslovakian Wolf-dog resembles a light wolf more than a massive dog, although the coat is clearly lighter (shorter) than that of a wolf. Males weigh at least 57 pounds (26 kg), females at least 44 pounds (20 kg). Males stand at least 26 inches (65 cm) at the shoulders, females at least 24 inches (60 cm). These animals, although lighter than wolves, are powerful and athletic. They have the ground-eating trot of wolves and are capable of covering great distances with ease. Czechoslovakian Wolf-dogs have exceptional skills for trailing. They withstand severe weather with no apparent distress.

The temperament of the Czechoslovakian Wolf-dog is particularly interesting because it highlights some of the distinctive qualities of wild wolves as contrasted with domestic dogs. Czechoslovakian Wolf-dogs are calm, confident and more independent than dogs. They are less likely to look



Simon Frazier

to their masters for clues about how to respond to novel events, although their loyalty to masters is absolute. Czechoslovakian Wolf-dogs have a quality of keeping track of their owners without seeming to look at them. The focus of Wolf-dogs is more on their surroundings. They rarely bark but will find other ways to communicate with their owners.

All observers agree that Czechoslovakian Wolf-dogs are highly playful and inclined to be independent. The breed is known for going through a “stormy” adolescence, although females are more cooperative and pleasant then. The breed is often described as lively, courageous and energetic.

Maintenance is easier than with many dogs. These dogs do not require bathing. A little light brushing of their

*“This new breed has been carefully developed by breeders who weren’t chasing novelty or looking to make a fast buck with a ‘wolf’ they could sell.”*



coats is desirable, but the breed does not require fussy attention.

It does, however, require a great deal of exercise. Czechoslovakian Wolf-dogs should not be confined in a small living space, but having roomy living quarters is less important than exercise. One or two brisk runs a day will keep them healthy and content. Failing to exercise a dog would risk making that animal frustrated and rebellious.

Training Czechoslovakian Wolf-dogs has special challenges. They are highly intelligent and biddable, but they learn better when trained with techniques that feature variety. Dog trainers know the value of brute repetition, putting the dog through its paces over and over. That works because dogs have been bred for many generations to take instructions from a master. Czechoslovakian Wolf-dogs can turn sour and lose motivation when subjected to the same training exercises too many times. They might need to be motivated to learn, yet they learn very quickly when they are involved with the training.

Like wolves, Czechoslovakian Wolf-dogs form tight bonds with their “pack.” Also like wolves, they can be suspicious of strangers, human or animal. That means they are fiercely loyal to owners, to the families of owners and even to other animals that live in their own household. They might usually tolerate strange animals, but owners need to socialize Czechoslovakian Wolf-dogs well and then monitor their responses to animals not in their recognized pack. If a strange animal shows any inclination to be hostile, the response of the wolf-dog could be dangerous.

Czechoslovakian Wolf-dogs might be an appropriate breed for owners who are experienced with dogs and are alert to issues of dominance and aggression. This is not a breed that should be owned by a casual person or someone who does not care to demonstrate leadership (even dominance) over a pet. Czechoslovakian Wolf-dogs have strong personalities. They require an owner who is self-confident, assertive and disciplined about monitoring all

social interactions so they do not lead to aggression.

This, in other words, is not a “dog” that would suit just any potential owner. But for someone who admires wolves, knows dogs well, is prepared to offer plenty of supervision and exercise, the Czechoslovakian Wolf-dog could be a fascinating pet. The breed offers many of the impressive qualities of wolves, but it comes with the relative safety of a recognized dog breed.

The breed is new enough that it is still exotic and expensive. A recent search of internet sites turned up only a single breeder with puppies for sale. The price was \$1,400 apiece. ■

*Steve Grooms has been writing about wolves and wolf management since 1976. He is the author of the book Return of the Wolf, and he serves on the International Wolf advisory work team.*

*(Author's note: there are many film clips of Czechoslovakian Wolf-dogs on the Internet. Simply go to [www.YouTube.com](http://www.YouTube.com) and put in a search string for Czechoslovakian Wolf-dogs.)*

# Research on the Wolves of the High Arctic Uses a New Approach

by Carissa Winter

Biologist Dave Mech and a Canadian colleague, Dean Cluff, teamed up with me again last summer on a project to take people from all around the world on a “virtual” research trip. The 2009 expedition marked Dave’s 24th summer studying wolves on Ellesmere Island, a destination so remote it can take several days to get there. Thousands of adventurers accompanied Dave and Dean through their blog, *The Wolves of the High Arctic*. (<http://internationalwolfcenter.blogspot.com/>)

On July 1, 2009, Dave and Dean departed for Ellesmere from Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. Until last year, Dave had conducted his High Arctic research “the old fashioned way”—searching for a wolf pack through binoculars, hiking over the rugged terrain and spending long hours observing and recording.

This year, however, the researchers added a strategy never applied this far north. On July 9, Dave wrote: “We had been hoping to help answer so many of our questions about these wolves by using a brand-new approach for this area. Although many people elsewhere, including ourselves, have placed radio collars on wolves, we have never done that here. However, after 23 previous summers of just watching the wolves and learning so much from them, it was clear that any new breakthroughs here would require this new approach.”

The *Wolves of the High Arctic 2009* blog chronicles the biologists’ daily search for a breeding pair of arctic wolves. Their goal was to place sophisticated GPS/ARGOS tracking collars on both the male and female. Read the blog and learn about this amazing technology and what it can enable Dave and Dean to discover as they sit at their computers!

Start at the beginning on July 1, 2009. That’s where the suspense begins!

Read about the men’s disappointment at discovering no wolves at the Rock Den (click on the 2006 Blog to learn about this den site). Then experience their first encounter with the pack! View Dean’s photographs of the flora and fauna to better appreciate this region. And read about the muskoxen and arctic hares that are counted and indexed each year so their numbers can be compared with past years.

There’s much more! This is just a sampling of what you will read in the 2009 *Wolves of the High Arctic* blog.

The blogs covering the 2006 and 2008 Ellesmere expeditions are ever popular. But as Web Specialist, I sought a new approach to spreading the word about Dave’s and Dean’s 2009 research. I “tweeted” daily snippets using Twitter to entice people to the blog. I also posted snippets to the Center’s Facebook



Dean Cluff

group and fan page, and I used Flickr to provide a virtual photo album to share all the images from the trip. The “Wild about Wolf Research” challenge raised \$2500 from blog readers, and the challengers matched that amount! And with the use of social networking, we were able to “teach

**The International Wolf Center invites you to follow us at our Social Den sites:**

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*Because they have never been persecuted by humans, wolves of the High Arctic often react to people with curiosity rather than fear. A yearling female wolf glances at the researchers as she passes close by their observation place.*

the world about wolves” to thousands of people as far away as Belgium, Egypt, New Zealand, and Algeria, just to mention a few of the countries on the list of virtual travel! ■

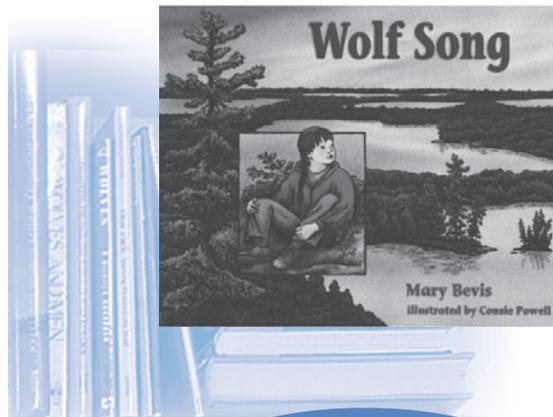
*Carissa Winter is the International Wolf Center Web Specialist.*

# Book Review

## Introducing Children to the Wonder of Wolves

by Nancy Schwartz

In a world where time with parents is being replaced with technology, reading to and with your children as well as getting them outside will instill a love and appreciation of both books and nature. Parents hold the cards to the winning hand for wild things and wild places! Parents play a key role in children's knowledge of the natural world and in their ability to tell the difference between real and imagined animals. Here are two titles for your consideration if you want to begin now to grow the resources on your bookshelf. If you're like me, you'll never regret the investment!



*Wolf Song*  
by Mary Bevis

Few things intrigue us as much as the possibility of communicating with wild animals. In Mary Bevis' gently told children's story, *Wolf Song*, young Nell and Uncle Walter attempt to do just that. The tension builds as they travel into the dark night in Uncle Walter's pick-up truck to the end of the road where they attempt to connect with wild wolves through their human howls. Beautiful scratchboard illustrations by Consie Powell blend the world of Nell and Uncle Walter with the ever-present world of the wild wolves nearby.

Having spent hundreds of nights out in the dark with my husband Jim howling for wolves, I find this book a wonderful representation of the fear and pleasure associated with being in the woods at night trying to connect with wolves.

The story is a great interactive "read-to-me" story but is difficult to read in spots because the words are laid over the rich illustrations. Additionally, the non-fiction section at the end of the book mistakenly leads the reader to believe that wolves eat smaller prey in the spring. However, overall *Wolf Song* is engaging and worth having on your bookshelf.

Reading level: Ages 4-8

Publisher: Raven Productions  
(October 10, 2007)



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*Is My Dog a Wolf?  
How Your Pet Compares to  
Its Wild Cousins*

Jenni Bidner

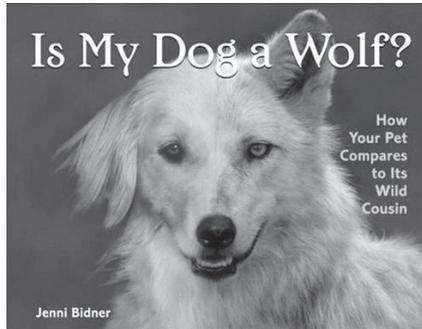
I've been waiting a long time for a book of this caliber to finally hit the shelves. *Is My Dog a Wolf?* is informative, easy to read, full of photos and priced under \$10!

Jenni Bidner has done her homework, and the result is a well-researched comparison between wild wolves and the dog in your home. In it you'll find the answer to these questions: "Why does my dog love to lick my face? Why does my dog chew my stuff? and, "Why does my dog dig?"

The book includes short, conversational chapters comparing the eyes, ears, and noses of wolves and dogs. Other topics include: fighting, hunting, howling, food, rolling, tails, hair, and training. It's easy to see why this book has received The ASPCA Henry Berch Children's Book Award. ■

Reading level: Ages 9-12

Publisher: Lark Books; illustrated edition (June 28, 2006)



*Nancy Schwartz has been with the International Wolf Center Retail Department since August of 2000. She is responsible for selecting products that depict wolves in a biologically accurate way. She resides in Ely, MN and bears the reputation of howling for wolves, before it was cool.*

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with great surprise I realized what  
I was looking at. My eyes  
eyes were staring, both and only  
100 feet away. And then, I heard  
a muffled half-bark followed by  
a deep, smooth, heavy sound rising  
into the air. None of the other...

# Personal Encounter

## Neighbors adjust to wandering wolves

Reprinted with permission from the Idaho Mountain Express

By Jason Kauffman,  
Idaho Mountain Express Staff Writer



Curt Tidwell

*Editor's Note: This article appearing March 25, 2009 in the Idaho Mountain Express, describes the way wolves have moved into new areas to take advantage of heavy elk populations.*

The wide-ranging Phantom Hill wolf pack, which has been moving throughout the Wood River Valley this winter, has changed the views many locals have from their dining room tables.

Just ask Jan Main, who along with her husband, Bob Main, lives out the East Fork of the Big Wood River near Triumph. In the early morning hours before daybreak last Wednesday, Main went to let her dogs out.

But first, she scanned the backyard with a large flashlight to make sure it was safe. The couple began doing this after a cougar attacked a neighbor's dog last year.

Main spotted what looked like an elk carcass with a coyote feeding on it in the darkness just 40 feet from the back of her house. This was especially surprising given that when she and her husband went to sleep the night before

there wasn't anything in the spot. Based on the location of blood in the snow and a lack of drag marks, Main believes the elk was attacked right there.

"We never heard a thing," she said. "We slept through the whole thing." After feeding on the elk for a while, the coyote disappeared.

Then, around 7 a.m., Main got a call from her next-door neighbor. She told her to look up on the nearby hillside at what looked like a black dog. But it wasn't a dog; it was a member of the Phantom Hill pack. Main saw it sitting on its haunches looking down at the dead elk in her backyard.

Calls were quickly placed to other neighbors in the area.

"We're running to lock up all the dogs in the neighborhood," she said. Throughout the morning, Main watched the wolf walk down to her yard to feed, then return to the hillside. Main, who was able to watch the animal close up through her binoculars, said the scene was riveting. She said it was a lot like the trips to the African bush she's taken, except in this case, all she had to do was look out her window.

"This is Mother Nature at its finest," she said. "That's part of the reason we decided to live out there."

After the wolf left, Main called the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. Lee Garwood, a Hailey-based conservation officer, came out and hauled the elk away.

Later that day, Garwood and another Fish and Game official located six more Phantom Hill wolves that they hazed with "cracker" shells fired from a shotgun as part of an ongoing effort to convince the 10-member pack to stay away from residential areas.

Less than a week before Main's wolf encounter, Bellevue resident Curtis Tidwell also came within feet of a member of the pack while he was taking a lunch break out Greenhorn

Gulch, on the western side of state Highway 75. Tidwell, who is managing a residential construction project nearby, decided to drive up the valley with his foreman after hearing that the pack had been seen hunting elk on the valley's open hillsides.

The two men spotted a single black wolf angling along an open, south-facing hillside. At the same time, down off the hill and across the road, three large Alaskan malamutes were barking at the wolf from a fenced-in yard.

The barking drew the wolf down the hill and across the road to within yards of the dogs, Tidwell said. For perhaps a minute or more, the wolf walked back and forth along the fence

with the malamutes following in tandem, he said.

"That wolf was real hesitant to go in there," he said.

When its curiosity finally got the better of it, the wolf jumped the fence and began running through the field in a wide loop alongside the three dogs, Tidwell said. Seconds later, it jumped the fence and ran back onto the road, he said.

Tidwell suspects the wolf was trying to draw the dogs out.

"I think it would have been the end of those dogs," he said.

Tidwell said he opposed the original reintroduction of wolves to the northern Rockies back in 1995. He said he's

concerned about the impact wolves have on Idaho elk herds.

Though Tidwell now believes there's a place for wolves in the state, he thinks they need to be managed with hunting. He says he wouldn't have had a problem shooting a wolf in the past. But seeing the wolf so close changed his perspective somewhat.

"I wouldn't have wanted to harm it at all," he said.

Like others in the valley, including Fish and Game officials, Tidwell thinks the wolves are taking advantage of an easy food source. In the Golden Eagle subdivision in lower Greenhorn Gulch, homeowners have been feeding wintering elk near Timber Gulch for years.

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“I think we have a congregation of elk that’s not natural,” Tidwell said. “It’s like a smorgasbord for these wolves.”

It was wintering elk that originally drew the pack out of its normal range in the mountains north of Ketchum to the foothills above Sun Valley several weeks ago. Randolph Williams, a resident of Elkhorn, was able to view all 10 wolves from a distance with the help of local wolf advocate Lynne Stone.

“They were high up on the face of a ridge above the Elkhorn Bluffs and were walking, rolling and lolling in the snow, very near to the carcass of an elk they had recently taken down,” he said.

At least two more times, Williams was able to drive out to a viewpoint to view the pack. When he and several others met up with Stone the last time,

they spotted the pack near another downed elk.

“They all seemed to be napping,” Williams said.

The Phantom Hill wolves’ recent advances into the mid-valley in places like East Fork, Greenhorn Gulch and Deer Creek have a lot to do with the pack’s growing ranks. With more mouths to feed, the wolves must cover more ground.

When the pack was smaller, the small groups of wintering elk north of Ketchum were enough for the pack, said Regan Berkley, Magic Valley regional wildlife biologist for Fish and Game. But now, she said, the pack is probably seeking out a larger home range that covers more winter elk range.

Though Fish and Game plans to continue hazing the pack whenever it comes too close to residential areas of the valley, in the end it will likely be Mother Nature that pulls the wolves away. As soon as slopes begin to green up and draw elk higher into surrounding ranges, valley residents will have likely seen the last of this year’s easy wolf viewing. ■

<http://www.mtexpress.com/index2.php?ID=2005125337>

*This wolf (outside fence, looking in at dogs) is among several seen in the winter of 2008 in Idaho’s Wood River Valley. It is believed elk feeding in area yards brought the wolves closer to homeowners than in the past, creating a stir.*



Curt Tidwell

# A Look Beyond

## New Conservation Model Turns Opponents into Partners

by Hank Fischer

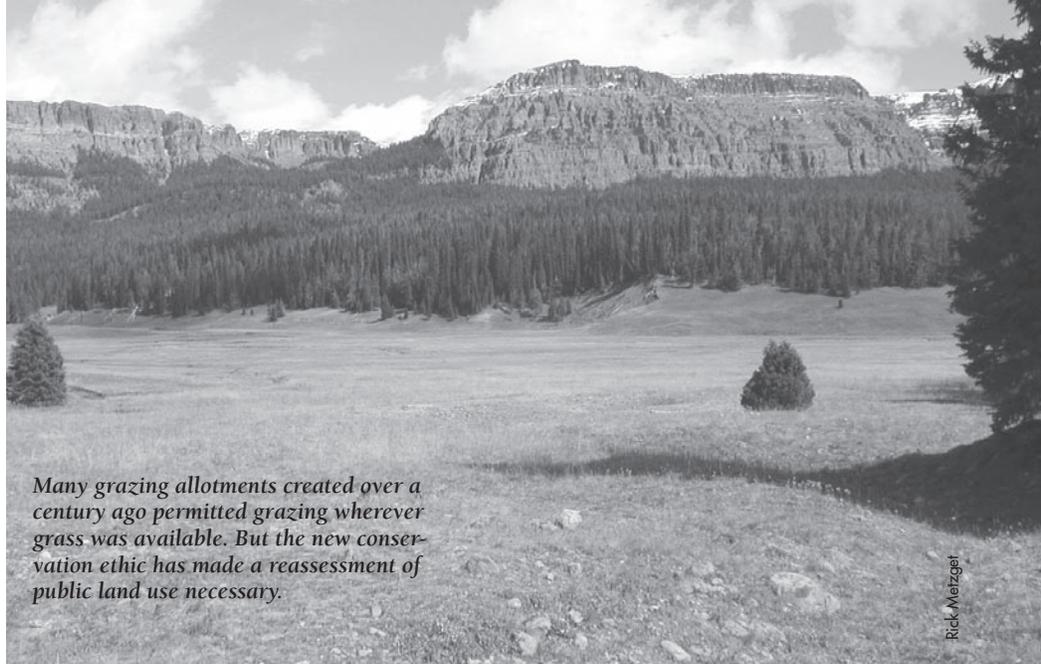
Sometimes we ask the Endangered Species Act to do more than it is capable of. That's the case with wolf recovery in the northern Rockies where environmental groups have filed lawsuits in hopes of gaining further protections for wolves in Yellowstone and central Idaho.

Wolf populations are doing quite well in both areas. Because there are an estimated 1,600-2,000 animals, many biologists believe they are near their biological capacity. But when wolves leave core protected areas (comprised primarily of national parks and federal wilderness areas), mortality rates rise dramatically. What's to be done?

The National Wildlife Federation (NWF) believes there are options far more effective and much less polarizing than calling in the lawyers. In 2002, NWF began a project designed to retire public-land grazing allotments that experience chronic conflict with wildlife such as wolves and grizzly bears. Many of these wildlife/livestock conflicts have been festering for decades. The standard tactic has been to try to compel federal agencies to administratively cancel troublesome leases. Over the last thirty years, this approach has generated a tremendous amount of controversy and a small measure of change.

NWF believes the approach fails because it doesn't recognize that grazing leases have economic value. Ranchers have the ability to sell public land grazing permits to one another, and banks even loan money based on their value. So it is understandable why canceling a lease without compensation causes so much controversy and ill will. Many of these grazing permits are

*continued on page 24*



*Many grazing allotments created over a century ago permitted grazing wherever grass was available. But the new conservation ethic has made a reassessment of public land use necessary.*

Rick Meitzger

### What is a Grazing Allotment?

#### A Short "Q and A" Conversation with Hank Fischer

For members and readers living east of the Mississippi River, the term "grazing allotment" may be vaguely familiar but not clearly understood. However, the legal status of grazing allotments constitutes one of the most controversial issues in western public land management. Hank Fischer agreed to answer some key questions about the ranching industry and the use of these allotments.

**IW:** What is a grazing allotment? Is it the same thing as a grazing lease?

**FISCHER:** A grazing allotment is a specified area of public land where federal agencies allow private individuals to graze livestock. The lease is the

*"The need to weigh and balance competing uses (of public lands) . . . became more acute as Congress passed new laws dealing with multiple-use, conservation of watersheds, and protection of endangered species."*

legal document that specifies the terms for grazing livestock. The typical term for a public land grazing lease is ten years.

When federal agencies created public land grazing allotments more than a century ago, they were permitted almost anywhere grass was available. But as conservation on public lands evolved, the need to weigh and balance competing uses increased. This became more acute as Congress passed new

*continued on page 24*

## New Conservation Model

continued from page 23

worth hundreds of thousands of dollars.

NWF grazing retirements are completely voluntary. The organization only approaches ranchers who hold grazing allotments that have a history of chronic conflict. Because these are difficult places to run profitable operations, we have found that livestock producers holding these allotments are frequently motivated to make a change.

NWF offers ranchers a cash payment in exchange for agreement to waive their grazing permit back to the U. S. Forest Service. We simultaneously reach an agreement with that land-management agency to permanently retire the allotment. The cash payment is significant enough to allow the rancher to secure new grazing in areas without wildlife conflicts.

This may be the most successful wolf-conservation program that no one has heard about – that's the consequence of change without controversy. In fewer than seven years we have closed thirty grazing allotments totaling more than 550,000 acres – an area larger than Grand Teton National Park. These include what agency experts have suggested are the five most problematic grazing allotments in the Yellowstone ecosystem.

A market approach to changing grazing patterns can turn opponents into partners and provide a positive solution to chronic conflicts between livestock and large carnivores. NWF believes this grazing retirement approach can provide a new conservation model that reduces litigation, sustains agriculture and reconfigures grazing to locations where it is compatible and sustainable. ■

*Hank Fischer has been involved with wolf restoration in the northern Rockies for over thirty years. His book *Wolf Wars* chronicles the bio-political battle to bring the gray wolf home to Yellowstone. He currently works for the National Wildlife Federation in Missoula, MT. He can be reached at [hfisher@nwf.org](mailto:hfisher@nwf.org).*

Want to find out more about the NWF's Wildlife Conflict Resolution Program? Visit [www.nwf-wcr.org](http://www.nwf-wcr.org) to learn how you can help.



Lisa Robertson

*The vast tracts of public lands in the West include federal wilderness areas, national parks, Bureau of Land Management lands and national forests. As the conservation ethic has become established, these public lands are managed for multiple uses including recreation, wildlife habitat and livestock grazing.*

## Grazing Allotments

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laws dealing with multiple-use, conservation of watersheds, and protection of endangered species

**IW:** Why do ranchers need grazing allotments?

**FISCHER:** Many western states have substantial acreage of public land. These lands are managed for multiple uses, and livestock grazing is one of the permitted uses. Because the West is so arid, larger acreages are necessary for raising livestock.

**IW:** Can anyone get grazing allotments? Are there rules for qualifying for allotments?

**FISCHER:** Ranchers applying for grazing permits must have private property near the area where they seek the lease.

**IW:** What government agency or agencies administer grazing allotments? What rules, if any, apply to the use of land under the allotment system?

**FISCHER:** Both the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management administer grazing allotments. Grazing laws are defined by the Taylor Grazing Act and the Public Rangelands Improvement Act.

**IW:** If grazing allotments are on public land, does that mean anyone can use these lands for other purposes such as recreation (hiking, horseback riding, etc.)? If so, is there conflict between recreational users and ranchers?

**FISCHER:** Recreational uses are generally compatible with livestock grazing,

although conflicts do sometimes occur. Hikers and horseback riders sometimes don't close gates, and hunters sometimes mistakenly kill livestock or frighten them with gunfire. Many campers don't like sleeping near cow pies and flies, and many outdoor enthusiasts object to the presence of livestock in wilderness areas. But by and large, conflicts between recreationists and livestock are manageable.

**IW:** How can International Wolf Center members contribute to this program, and what is a reasonable amount to donate?

**FISCHER:** IWC members can make donations to NWF's Wildlife Conflict Resolution project at 240 N. Higgins, Missoula, MT 59802. To date the size of our contributions has ranged from \$10 to \$50,000. Because the cost of many of our grazing retirements exceeds \$100,000, we rely heavily on large donors and foundations, but everything helps! ■



International Wolf Center