INTERNATIONAL WOLF

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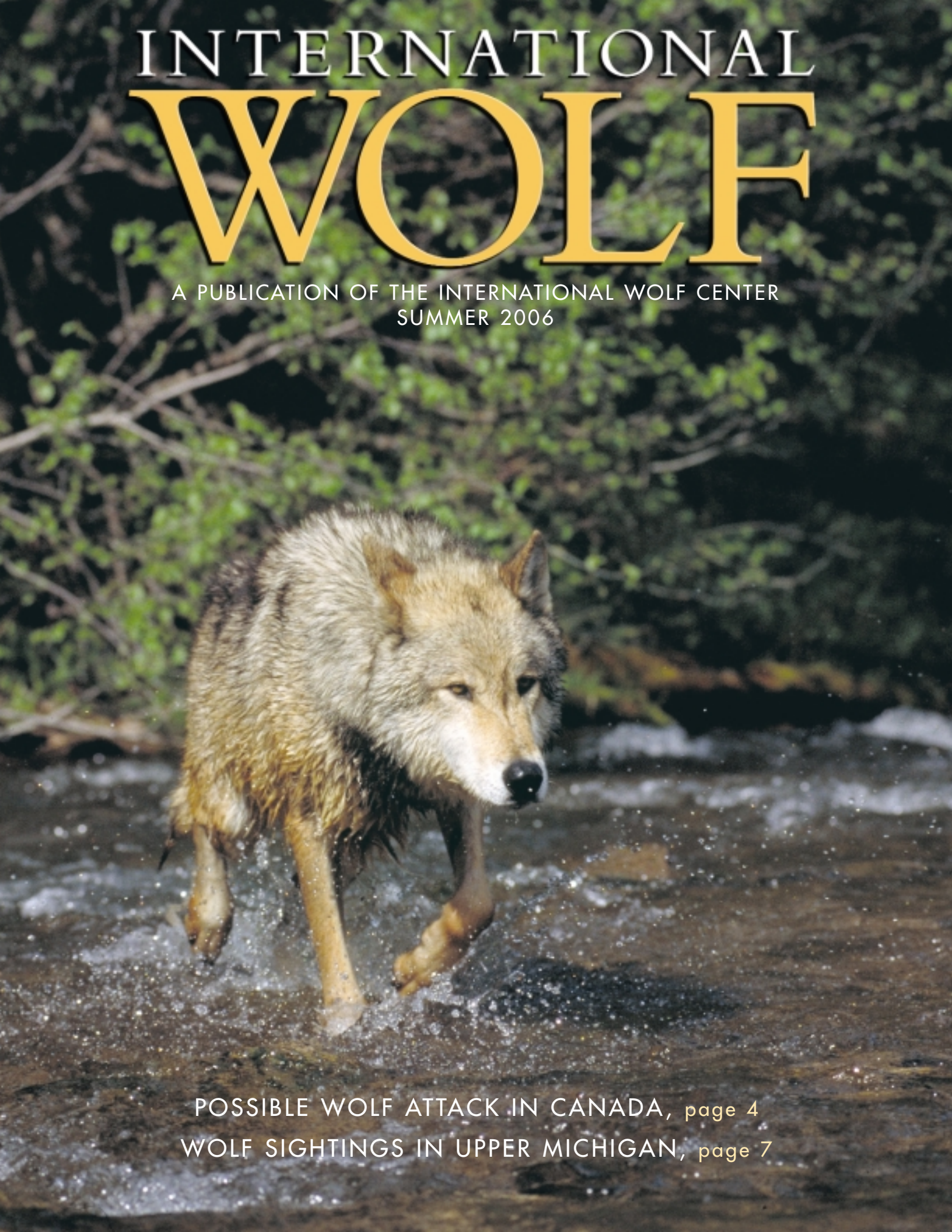

INTERNATIONAL
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International Wolf welcomes submissions of personal adventures with wolves and wolf photographs. Prior to submission of other types of manuscripts, address queries to Mary Ortiz, publications director.

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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

Question: Are there any wolves in Oregon?

Answer: Currently, there are no known reproducing wolves in Oregon. However, an increase in wolf populations in western Idaho may lead to wolves migrating into Oregon from Idaho in the near future. ■

New Question

What is the most recent technical book published about the wolf?

West Gate

From the Executive Director

A Question of Elbow Room

The chorus of hoots coming from my backyard and beyond on a midwinter night signaled that it was mating season for the great horned owl despite temperatures in the teens. The fact that these birds will nest before the end of winter is remarkable. Even more striking is the fact that these predators have adapted so well to the suburbanized environment. As long as pockets of wooded areas exist in the landscape, the owls' tolerance of human activities remains surprisingly high.

Contrast this owl with the grizzly bear, an animal requiring large tracts of contiguous wild lands, large numbers of sizable prey, and protection, if not relative isolation, from human activities.

Walter Medwid

After some 30 years of federal protection the grizzly bear population in the lower 48 may be removed from the endangered species list as "recovered."

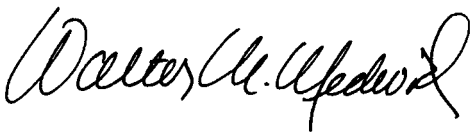
Author David Quammen in a *New York Times* op-ed article published earlier this year challenges our thinking about recovery as it applies to grizzlies. He argues that we deceive ourselves if we think that the bears are now safe, especially those in Wyoming's Yellowstone National Park, which he describes as "isolated" and "marooned" from any other grizzly bear population. This isolation, he contends, creates its own set of vulnerabilities. Only three other states in the lower 48 harbor grizzly bear populations.

Quammen's fundamental tenet is that without adequate wild lands along with safeguards that those wild lands won't be developed, the perceived recovery of the bears, should they be delisted, is only temporary at best, and at worst political window dressing to prove that the Endangered Species Act works. It lulls us into thinking that the job is done—time to move on to the next species on the list.

Looking back to the threats faced by bald eagles, ospreys and peregrine falcons, we can breath easier about their recovery because the key threat—DDT, which caused egg thinning, resulting in significant drops in populations—was phased out of use in this country. No such "easy" fix exists for those species that require big landscapes except ensuring that big, wild landscapes will exist in the future.

And that's the rub. Yes, we can point to the numbers of grizzly bears and wolves and show that they have increased through federal protections, and that recovery-plan population targets have been met, thus triggering the delisting process. But a very real question is whether the legal, political and environmental conditions that exist today to foster a species' recovery will be there tomorrow. Legally and politically the Endangered Species Act is under intense scrutiny, which may lead to a reduction in the protection it affords, and we know that public and private lands face ever-increasing development pressures.

Wolves, grizzlies, cougars and other species that require lots of elbow room on the landscape are today's canaries in the coal mines. Their success will deliver an objective report card on our efforts to ensure that wild lands remain a part of the landscape. ■



Implications of a Possible Wolf Attack

Jacquelyn Fallon

by STEVE GROOMS

Now that humans have finally made great progress toward accepting a troublesome animal species, we might need to introduce a limited amount of aggression into wolf management plans.

Nothing has changed; everything has changed.

Several decades ago when a few progressive wolf researchers began arguing against the persecution of wolves, most people assumed that wolves were dangerous to humans. Few people doubted that wolves would kill a human if given a chance to do so.

To quell that irrational fear, researchers made a startling claim: "There is no authenticated report of wolves killing a human in North America." That powerful statement did much to rehabilitate the reputation of wolves and convince the public that a world with wolves would be better than a world without wolves. If wolves had never killed a human, they were obviously not much of a threat.

Over time, the statement had to be qualified: Wolf-dog hybrids, rabid wolves and wolves in confinement have killed people. The tweaked statement became: "There is no authenticated report of wild, non-hybrid, healthy wolves killing a human in North America."

Now there may be one such report. Does that mean we need to throw out that claim that wolves don't kill humans in North America? Hardly.

The statement could be tweaked again: "There is *only one* authenticated case of wild, non-hybrid, healthy wolves killing a human in North America." That is still a dramatic assertion. Many thousands of humans have traveled safely in wolf country. In terms of statistics, wolves are a negligible threat. One fatal attack wouldn't prove that wolves are dangerous so much as it would highlight how extraordinarily rare it is for wolves to harm humans.

Or we could add another qualifier: "There is no authenticated report of wild, non-hybrid, healthy, *non-human-habituated* wolves killing a human in North America." In other words, *wild* wolves still have a clean

record. Wolves that have lost their fear of humans, however, are proving to be a slightly more significant threat.

In recent years, human-habituated wolves have injured or threatened humans several times. Aggressive incidents (some slightly ambiguous) have been documented in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Alaska and Ontario. These incidents have become more frequent, presumably because more wolves are losing their fear of humans.

Habituation to humans occurs on two levels. According to ecological consultant Diane Boyd, speaking at the recent International Wolf Center conference, habituation to humans is a natural response to "frequent non-consequential contact with humans." If wolves repeatedly encounter people and suffer no adverse consequences, they adjust by fearing people less.

This claim is somewhat controversial. Some wolf advocates claim that fear of humans is an inherent quality of wolves. Some argue that fear of humans has become part of the wolf personality as a result of centuries of persecution.

Many experts disagree. Wolves are highly intelligent and adaptable animals. Much of their behavior is shaped not by instinct, but by social and individual learning. Wolves are observant, flexible and quick to change their behavior when their environment changes. That's one major reason we find them so fascinating.

Wolves have feared humans for the excellent reason that humans have consistently subjected wolves to the worst imaginable treatment. Now people are tolerating wolves more and more, raising the possibility—or even the probability—that wolves are learning that humans are not dangerous, especially in North America, where wolf tolerance is advanced.

This observation raises concerns because this kind of habituation is not a single event but an ongoing process. If more and more wolves interact with humans and suffer no harm, more and more wolves will become bold and potentially dangerous.

There is another kind of bad habit that wolves can acquire. Some wolves learn that humans are a source of food. The wolves that may have killed Kenton Joel Carnegie had been feeding at a dump and might have been fed directly by humans. Several recent incidents of wolf aggression toward humans involved wolves that were being fed by people or were scavenging food that people left around. Such wolves are known as food-conditioned wolves.

Wolf advocates should pay serious attention to the death of Kenton Joel Carnegie, even though it is just a single and seemingly aberrant event, because that attack might represent a new reality: namely, that wolves are becoming more of a threat to humans than they were several decades ago. This new reality could have implica-

Wolves Possibly Responsible for Death of a Man in Saskatchewan

The body of a 22-year-old geology student was discovered November 8, 2005. While governmental officials have yet to issue a final report, many signs indicate Kenton Joel Carnegie may have been killed by wolves. (See *International Wolf,* Spring 2006)

According to early news reports, Carnegie went out for a walk near Wollaston Lake, a remote area in northern Saskatchewan. When he failed to return, a search party found his body. If Carnegie was killed by wolves, this is the first authenticated report of such an event in the past century in North America.

There are several indications that wolves killed the young student:

Carnegie and others had encountered a pack of four unusually bold wolves shortly before his death, obtaining close-up photos of them.

Another man was reportedly attacked by wolves in the same general region, although he was able to escape.

An autopsy indicated Carnegie died as a result of an animal attack, and there were wolf tracks in the snow around his body. His body had been partly consumed by animals.

Officials shot at least two wolves in the area following the death, and by some reports at least one had human remains and bits of cloth in its stomach. Lab results are still pending.

Wildlife officials have ventured the theory that these four wolves became emboldened by becoming habituated to humans and associating them with food. These wolves may have been getting food from a dump near a local mining camp. By some reports, they might even have been fed directly by humans, possibly including Carnegie.

Officials in the United States and Saskatchewan have emphasized the rarity of this event. Wolves are not a general threat to humans, although human-habituated wolves have been involved in an increasing number of attacks in recent years.

Editor's note: An expected official report on the death of Kenton Joel Carnegie failed to appear in time for inclusion in this issue of International Wolf. *The story above is a short version of facts reported in the first newspaper articles on Carnegie's death.*

International Wolf Center

Habituation of wolves to humans is not a single event but an ongoing process. If more and more wolves interact with humans and suffer no harm, more and more wolves will become bold and potentially dangerous.

Kelly Godfrey

According to ecological consultant Diane Boyd, speaking at the recent International Wolf Center conference, habituation to humans is a natural response to "frequent non-consequential contact with humans."

tions for wolf managers as well as anyone interested in wolves.

First, managers probably need to criminalize the feeding of wolves. It will not be difficult to craft legislation that makes it illegal to feed wolves directly. It will be harder to craft legislation that discourages inadvertently feeding wolves by being sloppy with livestock carcasses or by failing to keep wolves away from food in dumps.

Beyond that, managers need to prevent the generalized human habituation that occurs whenever wolves interact with people without suffering adverse consequences. Every nonviolent wolf-human encounter—theoretically, at least—can promote the sense in wolves that they need not fear humans.

What steps should be taken to convince wolves that people are dangerous? Space limits the discussion here, but we've already noted that wolves are observant and clever. It will not impress wolves if humans begin hollering and waving their arms. Bluff hostility will not convince wolves to fear us.

There is a terrible irony in this situation. Wolves have been irrationally hated and persecuted for centuries. In recent decades, a remarkable truce has developed in the old antagonism between wolves and humans. Many humans have learned to enjoy wolves. Thousands of wolves live relatively close to humans in parts of North America with almost no conflict. People and wolves are getting along better than at any time in recorded history.

Now it seems that we cannot, after all, just decide to live with wolves amicably. A policy of "live and let live" might not work in the long run because wolves will gradually absorb the lesson that people are not dangerous. And bold wolves are a threat that spooky wolves are not.

Now that humans have finally made great progress toward accepting a troublesome animal species, we might need to introduce a limited amount of aggression into wolf management plans. In other words, the price we must pay to have wild wolves in North America might be that we have to kill, trap or at least seriously threaten wolves.

There is no need to be drastic or to return to the days of irrational persecution. After all, one human death in a century is not cause for panic. It remains true that wolves are not a significant threat to humans. But while there has been only one possible death, that death might signal the need to alter wolf management in ways that teach wolves to fear humans. ■

Steve Grooms has recently rewritten his best-selling book, The Return of the Wolf.

Isaac Babcock

Thousands of wolves live relatively close to humans in parts of North America with almost no conflict. People and wolves are getting along better than at any time in recorded history.

The first of Jackie Winkowski's sightings of a wolf occurred while she was running her sled-dog team.

Subtle Return

Text and Photos by JACQUELINE WINKOWSKI

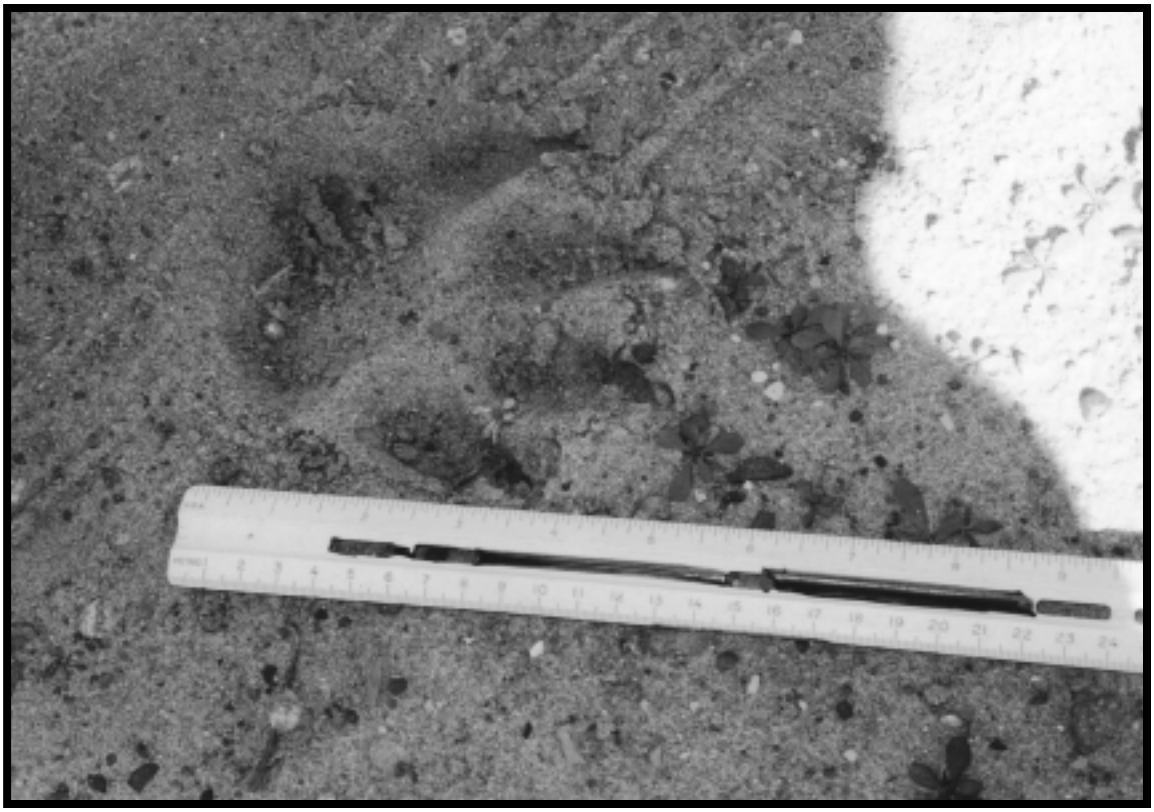
In late January 1994, a videographer friend was filming my sled-dog team on a trail parallel to the railroad grade east of Harvey in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. We saw what we thought were two collarless dogs running toward us, down the railroad tracks. We were concerned. What would happen as they neared the dog team? However, the pair of large animals—one black, one white—gracefully, silently ran past us, perhaps 30 feet to our north through the powdery snow, with little more than a glance our way. They appeared to move in synchrony. "I think those were wolves!" my friend exclaimed.

What do people do when they think they may have seen a ghost? Not tell everyone; perhaps tell no one. Although I agreed with my friend's assessment, I told few people about our sighting. That we had seen wolves didn't seem plausible. A decade before, the Upper Peninsula had virtually no wolves. In 1993 a population of just 30 wolves had been verified by Department of Natural Resources biologists.

As years went by, signs recognizable even to an amateur surfaced: large doglike tracks in isolated areas and sizable scats containing fur and other remnants of prey. The gray wolf population had increased to 248 animals by the year 2000. Still, a sighting would hardly be expected.

Eventually, they came to our door—almost literally.

On a warm night in December 2001, a pair of large eyes looked back at my husband, Jim, and me, reflecting green in the light of our headlamps, as we walked our leashed dog Reba near our home in Sands Township, south of Marquette. What we were encountering was unlike anything we had observed in the night before. The eyes followed our every move, but the creature was stationary. More curious than afraid,



After one of Jackie Winkowski's sightings of a wolf near her home, she found wolf tracks in the mud.

One winter Jackie and Jim Winkowski saw possible wolf tracks crossing their dog-sledding trails and running parallel to the dog pens housing their puppies.

Jim and I remained still, speaking to each other in whispers. We could not make out its form, and there was no snow on the ground for tracking. Then it slipped away noiselessly into the woods. What was it?

Later that winter, we found four- to five-inch-diameter doglike tracks on portions of our snow-covered acreage. The animal had crossed, but not used, our dog-sledding trails. A single set of tracks exited the woods and ran parallel to two dog pens housing our six-month-old puppies. It appeared that the animal had paused, then continued on its way. I thought that if it was a wolf, it might have been seeking a kindred spirit. But after further study, I concluded a wolf's objective would more likely be a meal. However, it made no attempt to penetrate our six-foot-high fences.

In early April 2002, melting snow had frozen to a crust, and it was evident that a large animal had traveled though our land. I carved out a section of crusty snow with perfect wolf

tracks—they couldn't have been more clear if cast in concrete. I showed Jim. He just shrugged his shoulders.

On a Sunday in mid-April, Reba and I set out for a walk down our county road. Just outside our driveway, I glanced to the south and saw a large all-black animal walking toward us, unaware of our presence. I searched my mind to identify it, ruling out a bear and dog. It had a large head, long legs and straight tail, and was tall at the shoulders. A *wolf!*

I'd waited a lifetime to see one, but fear prevailed. I shouted, "Get outta here!" About 150 feet away, the wolf looked up; its eyes met Reba's, then it ran into the woods. It left perfect tracks in the snow and mud, along with scats, for Jim to study when he returned home from work.

I was pleased about the wolf sighting but disappointed to have scared it away so quickly. I knew it would be unlikely for a wolf to attack a human or leashed dog. Knowing that some professionals who study wolves seldom see one, I didn't expect to encounter another.

The next Saturday, as Reba and I walked down our county road, a snowshoe hare ran across the road in front of us. Reba tugged at the leash in hopes of pursuing it. As we crossed the hare's path, I realized I'd never seen one run faster or appear more frightened. We stopped to listen and heard something substantial running up the ravine toward us. Suddenly, out of the woods and onto the roadway, perhaps 20 feet away, burst a beautiful gray wolf, 6 feet or more in length from its huge head to the tip of its tail. Its facial expression—one of apparent joy in pursuit of the hare—turned to surprise. The wolf hesitated briefly, its eyes fixed on us as it walked across the road, directly before us. I tried to absorb every detail: the animal's size, its striking face, its lovely, thick coat, its long legs and large feet, its lengthy tail—its beauty and magnificence.

The wolf stopped on a small hill about 30 feet south of the road. Behind the young aspen trees, it turned and exchanged stares with Reba and me for several seconds, then bolted away, continuing its pursuit of the hare.

Though elated after this sighting—how often does a person witness a wolf pursing prey?—I regretted that Jim hadn't shared these sightings. If he were to see a wolf, it would have to be without me, for surely my "wolf cards" had all been drawn, and another wouldn't be crossing my path again.

A year later Jim and I attended a picnic at the home of a relative near Baraga. A guest there was openly demonizing wolves. Not usually one to debate, Jim spoke from his knowledge and heart in defense of wolves, pointing out that wolves kill not for sport but to survive, that they prey on old, weak and infirm deer, that roadkill accounts for a good part of a wolf's diet, and that they are very unlikely to threaten humans. On the way home, we continued to chat about wolves, a favorite topic. What occurred next is not how life usually is, but it's true.

A half mile west of the Canyon Falls parking lot, a beautiful gray and white wolf ran directly in front of our car. Jim had to brake to avoid hitting it, and we pulled over onto the shoulder. The wolf trotted beside the highway. Other motorists pulled over to observe the wolf for several minutes before it disappeared into the woods.

Jim and I keep our eyes open as we travel in Upper Michigan, where the population of wolves has grown to over 400. We continue to monitor animal tracks in our area, and although we have seen no evidence of wolves since 2002, we expect they might visit again. The forests surrounding our home have seemed more rich and enchanting since we realized that wolves, once eradicated from the Upper Peninsula, have traveled there. ■

Jackie Winkowski, an Upper Michigan native, lives near Gwinn, Michigan, with her husband, Jim, and 28 sled dogs. She is employed by the Marquette Area Public Schools as administrative assistant to the Superintendent and Board of Education. She has had a lifelong appreciation for wildlife and the outdoors.

Suddenly, out of the woods
and onto the roadway,
perhaps 20 feet away,
burst a beautiful gray wolf,
6 feet or more in length from its
huge head to the tip of its tail.

IWC Pursues ITV

by Kevin Strauss

Adapted from an article printed in the Ely Timberjay

For more than a decade, the International Wolf Center has been educating the public about wolf biology, wolf ecology and how humans interact with this elusive canine predator. But while the Minnesota-based education center attracts 40,000 to 50,000 visitors each year, the Center's reach extends far beyond Minnesota.

"Today, we reach outside Minnesota with our traveling exhibits, Web site, international conferences, educator workshops and magazine," said Center Assistant Director Jim Williams. "Now, we want to find a way to bring our Ely-based educators and exhibits to the world as well."

The way to extend the Center's reach seems to be "Two-way Interactive Television." Starting in the spring, the Center will begin offering ITV classes about wolves to schools across the country. In those classes, an instructor at the Center will use animal artifacts like skulls and pelts, video clips of wolves hunting or interacting and live footage of the Center's ambassador wolves to teach school children about the biology and ecology of wolves. This system will also allow Center staff to answer questions from students in real time.

"This gives us the opportunity to bring our professional educators and our unique educational resources to the rest of the country and the rest of the world," said Williams. "Last week we had a video conference in Australia with an instructor who does education programs about the Great Barrier Reef, and most of his clients are schools in the United States."

The Center is the first wolf organization to offer this kind of programming, but larger zoos have been doing this for a few years. The Center will also be the first nonprofit in the state to provide "virtual field trips" that bring content experts into classrooms for a short time to support teachers in the classroom.

The Center's ITV project owes its existence to the Community Wireless Initiative Grant that has been coordinated by True North at the Ely Economic and Technology Center. The grant provided some matching funding to help the Center set up a high-speed wireless Internet connection, purchase hardware and get the training it needed to start the program.

"This was a critical leg up for us," said Williams. "Something we couldn't have done on our own and we are grateful for the help."

The Center for Interactive Learning and Collaboration has been a valuable advisor in shaping the project, and the Northeast Alliance for Telecommunications (NEAT) has been a great help to the Center as well. In addition to grant-funded work, NEAT has also loaned the Center equipment and been generous with their technical support.

"As a partner they are a lifesaver," said Williams. ■

CILC
Center for Interactive Learning and Collaboration

N
Ely Economic & Technology Center
True North

SUMMER 2006
Wish List

Hundreds of ideas and resources come together to make the International Wolf Center a premier education center. You can help us continue to educate the world about wolves as cost-efficiently as possible. Please consider contributing any of the following items so we can make your membership dollars work harder!

WOLVES AND WOLF CARE:

- Insulated coveralls
- Medication: Cosequin double-strength chewable tablets; Vita-Min Tabs, senior and regular; Fly-Off ointment
- Closed trailer for hauling prey food

GENERAL:

- Child- and adult-size snowshoes
- Spotting scope with tripod
- High-quality binoculars
- Tanned pelts, hides, antlers and bones from animals associated with wolves (deer, beaver, elk, moose etc.)

TECHNOLOGY:

- Set of Audix PH 5-VS speakers with electrical outlet
- Microphone headset system for 15-passenger van
- Lexmark printer cartridges 31, 32/34, 33/35
- Business-band long-range walkie-talkie set
- Slide scanner
- 17-inch iMac G5
- 14-inch iBook G4
- 12-, 15-, or 17-inch Powerbook G4
- Power Mac G5 (Dual 2GHz, 2.3 GHz or 2.5GHz)
- iSight cameras
- Adobe Photoshop Elements or Adobe Photoshop CS2 (preferred) for Macintosh
- Final Cut Studio or Final Cut Express HD
- HP Printer ink #97 and #96
- Blank CDs and DVDs

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Lifespan of a Wolf: Captive versus Wild

by Lori Schmidt

If you've been reading "Tracking the Pack" for awhile, you know about the Center's first permanent resident ambassador wolves, the 1993 litter that is now the Retired Pack. As this pack's members, Lucas, MacKenzie and Lakota, age, the wolf management team is preparing for inevitable age-related mortality. First comes the graying muzzle or tail, then the stiffness as the wolves slowly lower their hips to their beds, then the small lumps that appear under the skin, until the day when their appetite seems to dissipate and a series of medical tests leads to the conclusion that they are just old.

Years ago, the Center's management team drafted a euthanasia document that discusses animal health, quality of life and a process for decision making that recognizes an animal's suffering. As I write this, the pack is still active and mobile, but any responsible animal management program needs to plan for the future. Captive wolves may live up to 16 years or more, but the majority of facilities that our management program has consulted acknowledge that 14 years is a common mortality age for wolves in captivity.

While the inevitable loss of one of the Retired Pack will be difficult for staff and members of the Center, it is important to recognize that the care given to captive wolves more than doubles the lifespan of a typical wild wolf. Wolves in the wild rarely live past 6 to 8 years of age, and very rarely to 14 years. What causes mortality in the wild? If human-related wolf mortality is low, the main cause is starvation and aggression between wolves for territory or in pack conflict. Wolves can also be injured when hunting prey equipped with defensive weapons such as hooves and antlers. The Russian proverb "a wolf is fed by its feet" is appropriate when discussing wolf mortality. When those feet get too old to keep up, food becomes hard to obtain. By age 7 or 8, a bit of stiffness in the joints may make the difference between a hunting success and another day without food.

Fortunately for captive wolves, food is delivered in a wheelbarrow once a week, and roadkills don't kick. The Center would like to thank Andi Nelson and Pam Dolajeck for their continued donations of medicines and vitamins, which help keep the older wolves healthy. We may have several good years left with the Retired Pack, but the staff think about the inevitable and cherish every day of wolf care. ■

International Wolf Center

International Wolf Center

Top: Lakota is starting to show her age in her graying face and desire for more sleep.

Below: Although the Retired Pack wolves are aging, they can still race around the enclosure.

Wolves of the World

WOLVES IN POLAND

Long-Term Survival of Wolves Depends on Attitudes and Habitat

by Cornelia Hutt

The current status of the wolf in Poland belies its history. By the end of the 19th century, the gray wolf *(Canis lupus)* was extinct in most densely populated parts of Western Europe. Viewed as a pest with no value to humans, wolves in Central Europe were also systematically exterminated in all but relatively remote regions. In Poland, a government wolf-control program included hunting (often by entire villages), poisoning, destroying pups in dens and paying high bounties for wolves killed. By the 1970s, fewer than 100 individuals inhabited the forests of northern and eastern Poland, regions totaling less than 10 percent of the wolf's historic range. But in 1973, poisoning was banned, and in 1975, Poland listed the wolf as a game species. Gradually, wolves rebounded. By 1993, an estimated 900 wolves inhabited approximately half the country, with highest density in the northeastern and southeastern regions and with isolated populations residing in the Beskidy Mountains of western Poland. Then in 1998, pressure from scientists and environmental organizations led to strictly protected status for the wolf throughout the country.

Although forest complexes with prey (red deer, roe deer and wild boars) for predators remain in some regions of Poland, wolves are in danger of decline due to habitat destruction and illegal shooting by hunters who remain vehemently opposed to wolf conservation. According to Henryk Okarma, member of the World Conservation Union's Wolf Specialist Group, wolves have not increased since 1998 despite legal protection,

Henryk Okarma

Henryk Okarma

Currently, an estimated 600 to 700 wolves inhabit approximately half of Poland, with highest density in the northeastern and southeastern regions and with isolated populations residing in the Beskidy Mountains of western Poland.

nor has there been an expansion in their distribution. Approximately 600 to 700 wolves exist in Poland, although estimates vary. Okarma acknowledges that while livestock damages have escalated by about 60 percent over the past eight years, the government has responded by paying compensations to farmers.

Wolf advocates are working hard to transform attitudes toward wolves and environmentalism among local people. These advocates promote ecotourism to benefit regional economies and attempt to establish alternatives to killing predators. For example, biologist and regional conservationist Sabina Pieruzek-Nowak has written an information manual for preventing predator attacks. The manual includes advice about the Tatra Mountains Shepherd (a livestock-guarding dog) and information about legal assistance and compensation for livestock losses. But many farmers remain resolute in their resistance to accommodating the presence of wolves. They insist that compensation payments are inadequate and predator deterrents are ineffective.

If wolves are to survive over the long term in Poland, alienation and fear must be replaced with solutions and cooperation in areas where people are adversely affected by predators. At the International Wolf Center conference in Colorado Springs, Colorado, in October 2005, Okarma stated that in addition to changing negative attitudes, fragmentation of habitat must be controlled and a national wolf management plan established.

WOLVES IN SWEDEN

Government Increases Effort to Educate Citizens About Wolves

by Cornelia Hutt

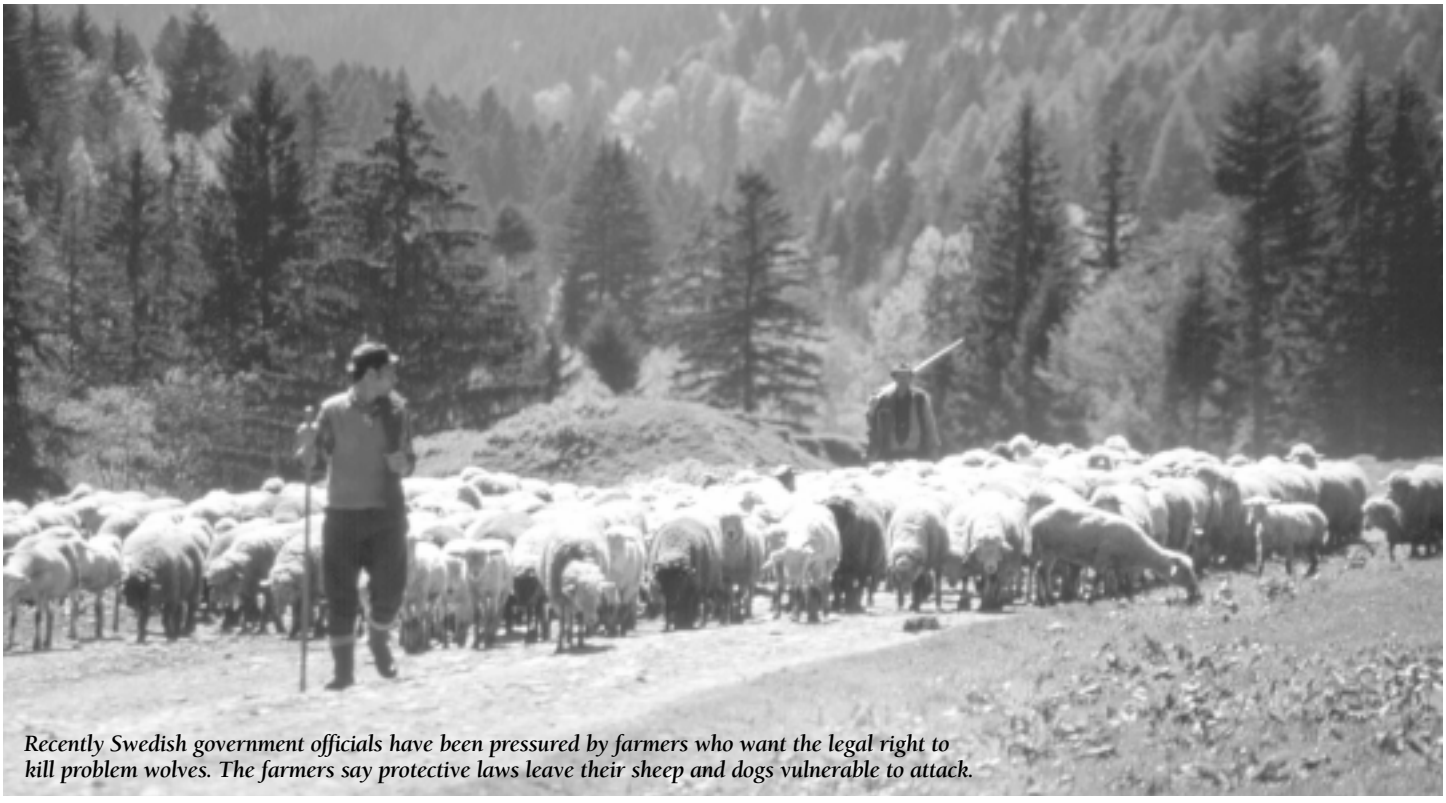
Norway and Sweden share a wolf population of approximately 100 animals that range on both sides of the border between the two countries. Because wolves know nothing of political boundaries, they roam back and forth, but most live in Sweden. In winter 2005, the Norwegian nature directorate issued permits for hunters to kill 5 of Norway's estimated 20 wolves in response to reports that the predators were killing domestic pets and livestock. The proposed hunt received worldwide attention. Wolf opponents insisted that Norway should be "wolf-free." Wolf supporters in central Scandinavia, encouraged by the gradual reestablishment of wolves after near extinction, opposed the government-sponsored cull. At the political level, Sweden's Minister of the Environment decried the Norwegian policy and, according to one news report, accused Norway of putting the full burden of Scandinavian wolf restoration on Sweden.

Sweden has made a sustained effort to educate the public and to rebuild the nation's devastated wolf population. This effort has paid big dividends. Attitudes among citizens of Sweden are mostly positive, with anti-wolf sentiment existing mainly among older people and among the reindeer herders of Lapland in northern Scandinavia. But recently Swedish government officials have been pressured by farmers in central Sweden who want the legal right to kill problem wolves. The farmers say protective laws leave their sheep and dogs vulnerable to attack. On

New Year's Eve 2006, 3,000 farmers, some with banners proclaiming "One Wolf Is One Wolf Too Many," protested a 2001 law that permits wolves to be shot only if they are proven killers or are caught in the act of attacking domestic animals. One farmer, who received a six-month jail sentence in May 2005 for shooting a wolf in 2003, petitioned the Swedish government for a pardon. Farmer Stig Engdahl said the wolf killed 10 of his sheep and attacked his neighbor's animals as well.

In response to the increasing conflicts over large carnivores—wolves, brown bears, lynx and wolverines—the Swedish government has acknowledged the need to provide the public with credible objective information about these controversial animals. After intensive study, the government recommended creating a private education organization modeled on the International Wolf Center. The new center opened in June 2005 at its home in Jarvzoo, a private zoo located north of Stockholm in Jarves, Sweden. On Friday, February 3, 2006, Director Olle Larsson and fellow Swede Gun-Marie Swessar visited the International Wolf Center to see the inspiration for their own carnivore education center. They spent several hours with Center Assistant Director Jim Williams, taking photographs, touring the exhibits and sharing educational ideas and materials. Larsson presented the Center with a wolf paw print cast taken in 1983 from one of the first two wild wolves to return to Sweden after they were exterminated. ■

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



B. & C. Promberger

Recently Swedish government officials have been pressured by farmers who want the legal right to kill problem wolves. The farmers say protective laws leave their sheep and dogs vulnerable to attack.

Personal Encounter

Wolves Give Strength to Deer and Hunter Alike

by Steve Foss

This article was originally published in the Ely Timberjay, *January 24, 2006.*

I packed up and moved toward the howling wolves. It turned out to be my final day hunting this deer firearm season. I'd been sitting in a likely spot for two hours with no action, and when the wolves began howling about 11 a.m. to my northwest, it seemed an interesting thing to do. Maybe they've found something interesting over there.

Wolves and their impact on the deer population have been a topic on the online fishing and hunting discussion board I've been a member of for the past several years.

Many who have posted on the topic complain that, from their stands in the woods, they've been seeing fewer and fewer deer over the last couple of decades as the wolf population has rebounded. Some say they see more wolves than deer. Others say there ought to be some kind of open season on wolves to keep the deer herd from being pushed too far down.

Deer, of course, are at near record populations in Minnesota, thanks to a recent series of warm winters. It's likely that part of the reason for the increased population also is development and agriculture. Development creates deer habitat in many cases, and gardens and corn, grain, hay, soybean and sunflower fields offer fine foods for deer.

In our area here near Ely, it's the development and logging that carve good deer habitat out of thick woods, and the big woods were historically only fair or poor deer habitat before that development.

And we're thick with wolves up here, and were even when wolf populations in other parts of Minnesota and the nation were nonexistent.

That online thread had begun to descend into a festival of wolf blame, as though wolves weaken the deer herd and rob hunters of their right to see large numbers of deer.

A fellow like me can only take so much of that.

I am, of course, a deer hunter. I hunt in some places up the Echo Trail that only hold higher numbers of deer because man has carved those niches out of the woods. Big woods deer may travel for a couple miles or more to logging cuts that eventually produce lots of tender young aspen leaves on saplings that put them within reach of deer, and deer focus heavily on such leaves.

Where there are deer in northern Minnesota, there are wolves.

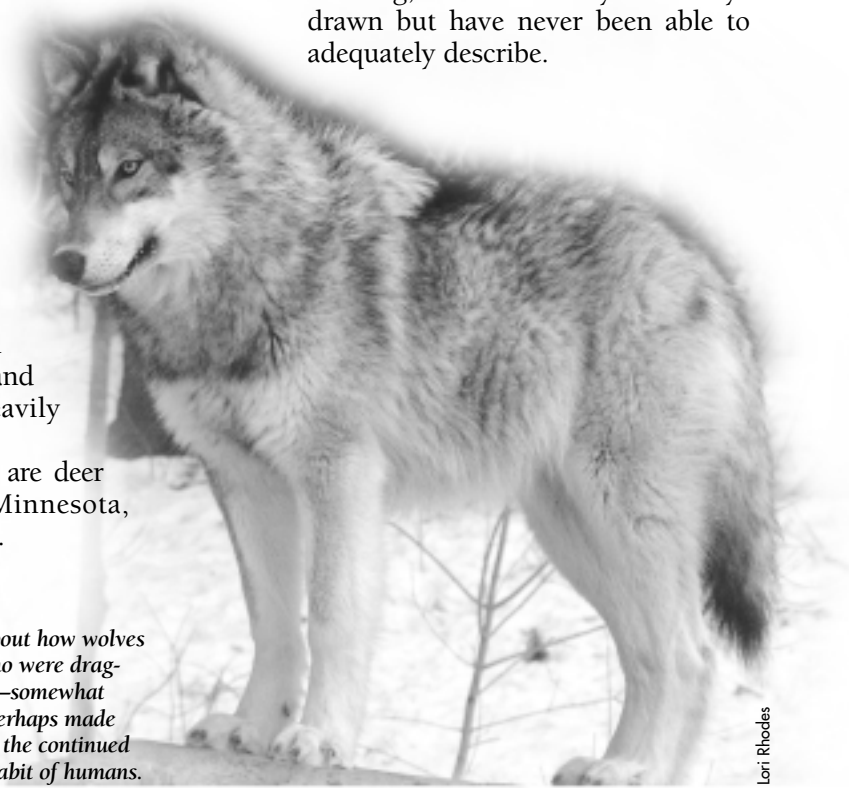
It's something a hunter thinks about, now and then. Because memories are long and stories get handed down. Stories about how wolves came in on hunters who were dragging out their deer. Occasionally, somewhat hair-raising tales, perhaps made more spectacular in the continued retelling, as is the habit of humans.

But I'm sure there's more than a grain of truth to them.

A cold time, hungry wolves, fresh blood trail with a deer at the end of it. Yep, that'd be enough to focus the attention and whet the desire of any wild canine.

And when you've shot that deer at last light two miles from the road and begin the drag-out in the dark, after sundown has removed from us the most important of our six senses, imagination brings possibility to life.

Nevertheless, on that day I walked toward where the wolves were howling, drawn in a way I'm always drawn but have never been able to adequately describe.

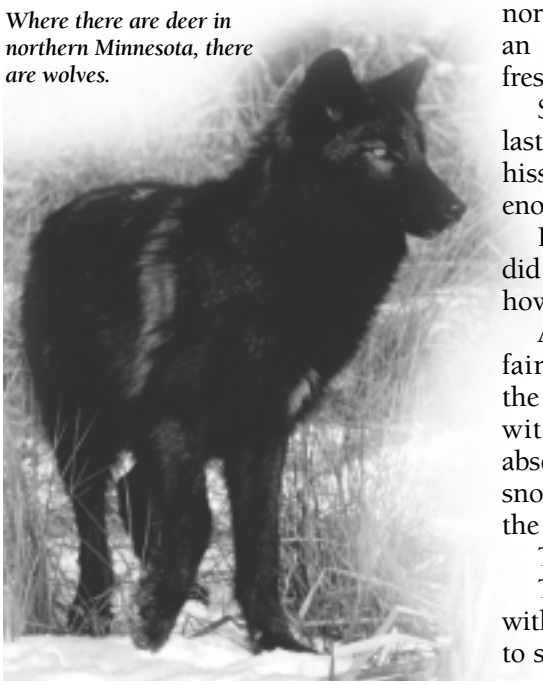


There are stories about how wolves came on hunters who were dragging out their deer—somewhat hair-raising tales, perhaps made more spectacular in the continued retelling, as is the habit of humans.

Lori Rhodes

I did not come upon those wolves.

It was a day of wind gusts punctuated by calm periods, a day of above-freezing temperatures that kept the snow wet and made for fairly loud, low frequency thunks every time my boot put weight on the snow. Such noises carry through quiet woods, and as I still-hunted my way to the northwest, I moved very slowly along an ATV trail that was marked with fresh deer sign.



Where there are deer in northern Minnesota, there are wolves.

Mike Possis

Still for as long as the calm periods lasted, I moved only when wind hissed through the pines loudly enough to mask footfalls.

I'd hoped for more howls, but did not expect them. Daytime wolf howling is uncommon enough.

After 10 minutes in one spot, fairly close to where I'd guessed the howls had come from, and rooted without moving because of the absence of strong wind, I heard a deer snort about 50 yards downwind, on the other side of thick brush.

That figured. Busted again.

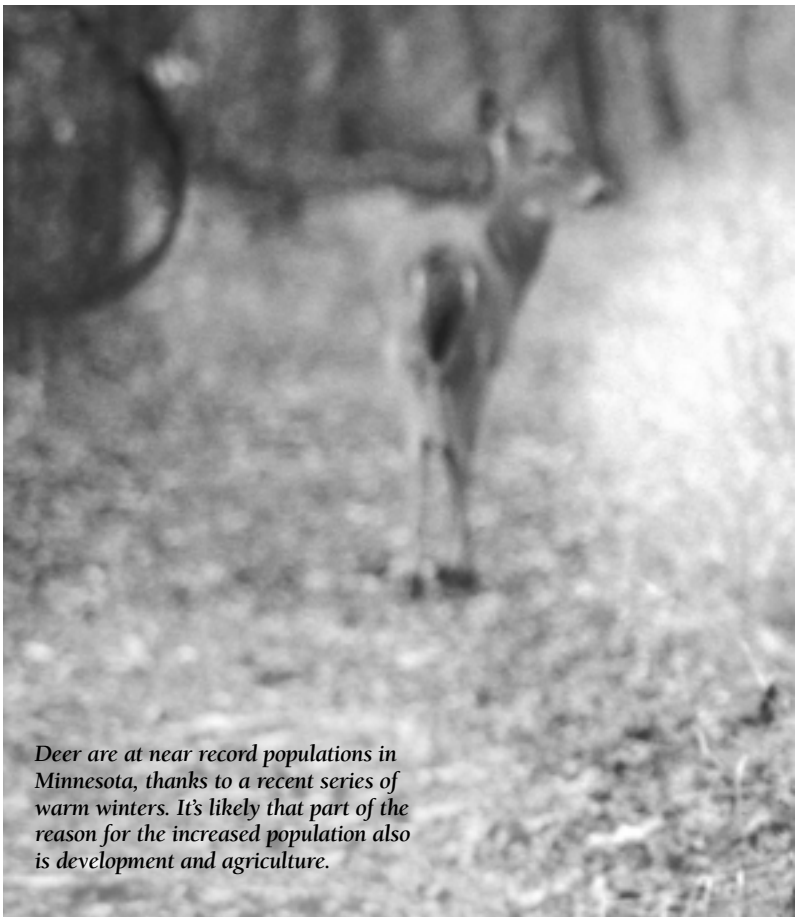
The deer stayed where it was, and with nose full of human, continued to snort every 30 seconds or so.

I was about to give up and walk a quick 200 yards along the trail to start hunting again when a flicker caught my eye. It was a deer ear, and it led to the shape of a yearling fork buck. His attention was on the snorting deer, and I only saw him in time because he'd taken a couple steps out of the thickest brush, a prelude to bounding away after being alerted by the other deer.

For five minutes he continued to look back at the other deer. He had no knowledge of my presence. Finally, when the wind rose, I took one step back, still having to lean into an awkward stance to get the scope on him, and found a small gap in the brush through which to shoot.

Ten minutes later I was walking back to the truck about a mile away, where the plastic tub sled waited, promising a much easier drag over the snow.

As I was lashing the deer to the sled, I remembered the tales I'd



Deer are at near record populations in Minnesota, thanks to a recent series of warm winters. It's likely that part of the reason for the increased population also is development and agriculture.

heard, and blood trail the deer had left as I dragged it to the ATV trail and the sled. Gray jays had found it already, and half a dozen of them were calling in anticipation.

But no wolves came.

It occurred to me as I was pulling the sled back to the truck that it's true, the part about wolves keeping the deer herd strong. Hunting as I do in the heart of wolf country in a place where deer numbers aren't that high to begin with, I've always seen decent number of deer while out hunting.

And if a wolf, or more than one, came upon me while I was dragging out a deer, I guess events would have to take their own course.

If they were determined to have that deer and were continuing to threaten aggressive action, I imagine I'd fire a couple warning shots, and then leave the deer if such were necessary.

In that case, they'd deserve the deer. If I could drive them off, then the deer was mine. It would make little difference to them who'd killed it. Food is food, and one does not closely ponder the source when survival is the issue.

Likely this never will happen, and it's happened rarely enough anyway in deer and wolf country.

But I posted on that online board that the wolves in wolf and deer country don't only keep the deer strong.

The thought of them out there, coursing through the woods, noses to the wind in search of food. The knowledge that they are the supreme non-human predator of the North Country, that they will be determined when they find prey and not especially choosy where they find it.

Such things add strength not only to the deer but to the hunter. ■

Steve Foss is an Ely freelance nature photographer and writer. You can view his work at www.stevefossimages.com.

Mike O'Connel

Wolf Tracks

Yellowstone Wolf Population Drops: Canine Parvovirus May Be the Cause

by Jay Hutchinson

The number of Yellowstone National Park's wolves, one of the recent main attractions of our oldest national park, has dropped from 171 to about 118 as of early January 2006. Following this population drop, the number of wolf packs also fell, from 16 packs to about 12.

As yet scientists have not positively determined the cause of the decline. Several adults perished of unknown causes last summer. However, the drastic loss of 68 percent of the park's pups leads them to speculate that the population may be infected with a disease called canine parvovirus (CPV). As the name indicates, CPV is a malady shared with domestic dogs and coyotes. CPV in wolves has been most studied in Minnesota. Before CPV, biologists in Minnesota believed that wolf populations mainly fluctuated with changes in the numbers of their prey such as white-tailed deer. However, about 1986, these scientists documented the presence of CPV from antibodies in the blood of the wolf population and found that the disease could be fatal to pups. So this disease, like the numbers of wolf prey, can influence the number of wolves.

Sherry Jokinen

Canine parvovirus probably affects 1- to 12-week-old-pups the most.

Before 1979 almost nothing was known about CPV, though some evidence showed this viral strain resulted from a mutation. As early as 1973 blood samples from Minnesota wolves showed some evidence of antibodies to the virus. The disease also showed up in dogs in Europe in the mid-1970s, in Texas dogs in 1977, and in coyotes in Texas, Utah and Idaho in 1979.

In studying CPV, Minnesota wolf biologists appear to have been the first to trace the long-term course of a disease in a wild animal population from its inception. The biologists live-trapped wolves from May to November each year in a 2,000-square-kilometer area of northeastern Minnesota where the wolf population is contiguous with the Canadian population and has never been wiped out. Highways and towns lay within the study area, and domestic dogs (which were sometimes killed by wolves) are common around residences. During the study, the captured wolves were radio-collared, and blood was drawn from 9 to 30 wolves each summer and fall. After release, the wolves were observed and counted from fixed-wing aircraft throughout the winter.

CPV infection was slow to affect the Minnesota wolf population. For the first 5 years of the study, CPV incidence was sporadic, and apparently did not affect wolf population change. But after that, the disease appeared to settle into the wolf population and become endemic, so that the more wolves that were infected, the more effect it had on the population. This was especially true for wolf pups—the percentage of pups captured in summer and fall declined as the prevalence of CPV increased in the population. The disease probably affects 1- to 12-week-old-pups the most. By the early 1990s, 87 percent of the adult population showed antibodies for CPV. Based on overall data, however, researchers concluded that the winter wolf population would decline when CPV prevalence consistently exceeded 76 percent. (This prediction turned out not to be true, as the study population has been relatively stable or increased slightly.)

But what does having antibodies mean? The presence of antibodies to CPV in a wild animal means the animal has been exposed to the disease. And those exposed may die, show symptoms and recover, or resist

symptoms. Wolves stressed by lack of food or parasitized could be more severely affected. Infections that don't kill an animal can still incapacitate it for up to 3 months. Dogs that recover from CPV are immune for up to 18 months after, but scientists don't know if this holds true for wolves.

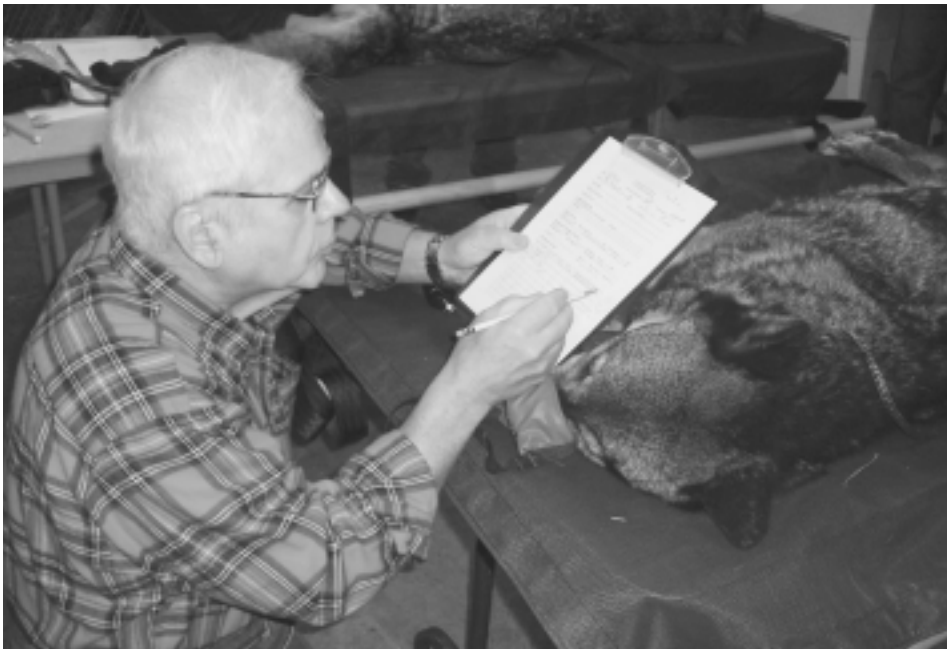
A large population of wolves with blood testing high in CPV means exposure to CPV has been high and will probably stay high. Feces from infected animals contain the virus, which may be able to infect others for up to 5 years.

The results of the Minnesota wolf study posed an intriguing question: if the numbers of pups dropped as prevalence of CPV in the population rose, why didn't the population decline through this period? Apparently wolves that would have died from starvation and conflicts with other wolf packs before the advent of CPV instead died of CPV infection, perhaps made worse by starvation and parasitism. And since CPV reduced the number of new pups surviving, there were fewer wolves killing other wolves in neighboring packs in competition for prey and territory, mortality that restricted the population before CPV infection.

Based on the Minnesota findings, there may be little that wildlife managers in Yellowstone National Park can do to prevent CPV in their wolves. Despite the setback in the number of surviving wolf pups, this result may only reduce the number of young wolves that become dispersers, while the overall wolf population may maintain itself in the long run, as has happened in Minnesota. ■

Reference: Mech, L. David, and S. M. Goyal. 1995. Effects of Canine Parvovirus on Gray Wolves in Minnesota. Journal of Wildlife Management *59 (3) 566–70.*

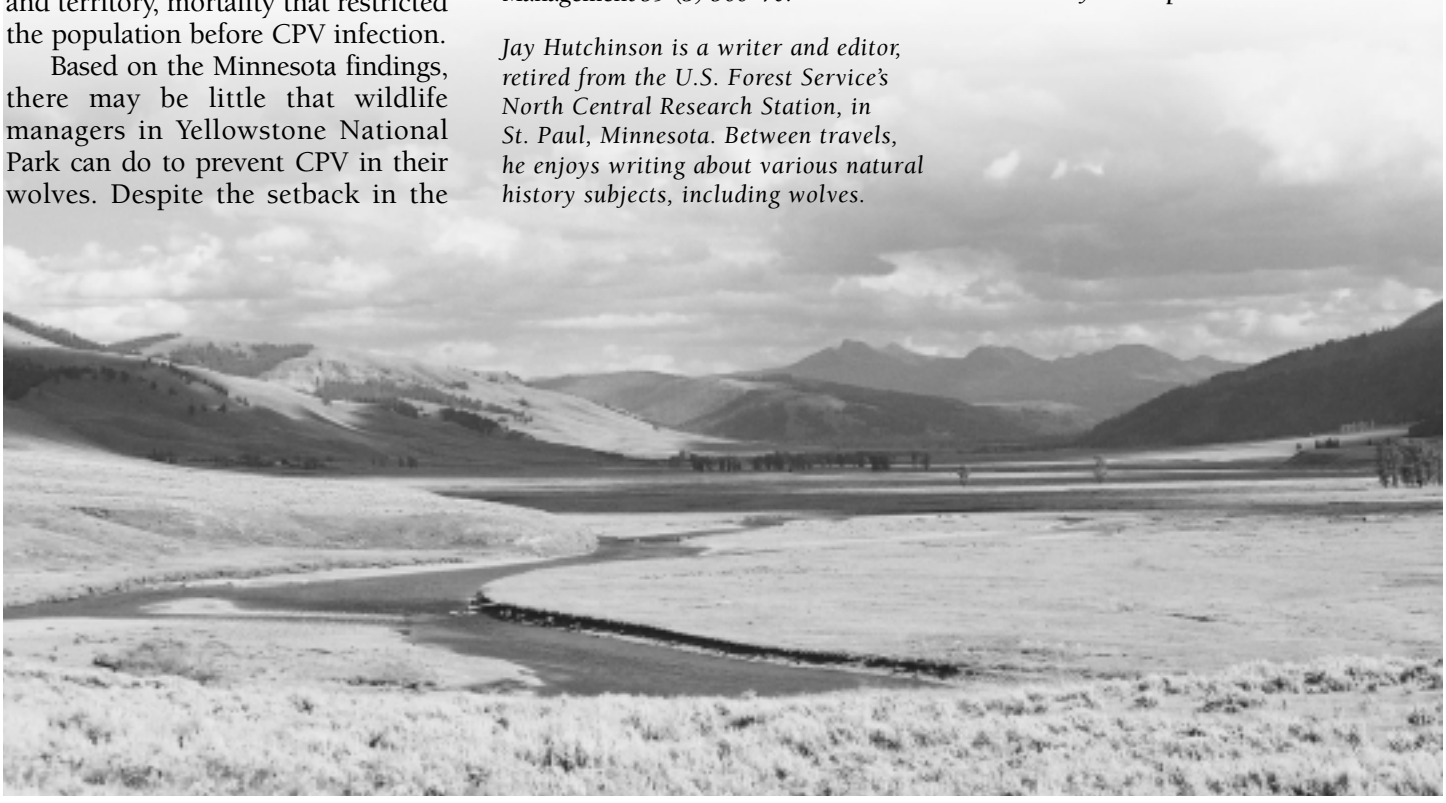
Jay Hutchinson is a writer and editor, retired from the U.S. Forest Service's North Central Research Station, in St. Paul, Minnesota. Between travels, he enjoys writing about various natural history subjects, including wolves.



Sherry Jokinen

Above: In a Minnesota study, the percentage of pups captured in summer and fall decreased as the prevalence of canine parvovirus increased in the population. Dr. Larry Anderson pictured.

Below: Lamar Valley, Yellowstone National Park. The number of wolves in the park has dropped from 171 to about 118 as of early January 2006. Scientists suspect that part of the cause of the drop is infection of the wolves by canine parvovirus.



Kathie Lynch

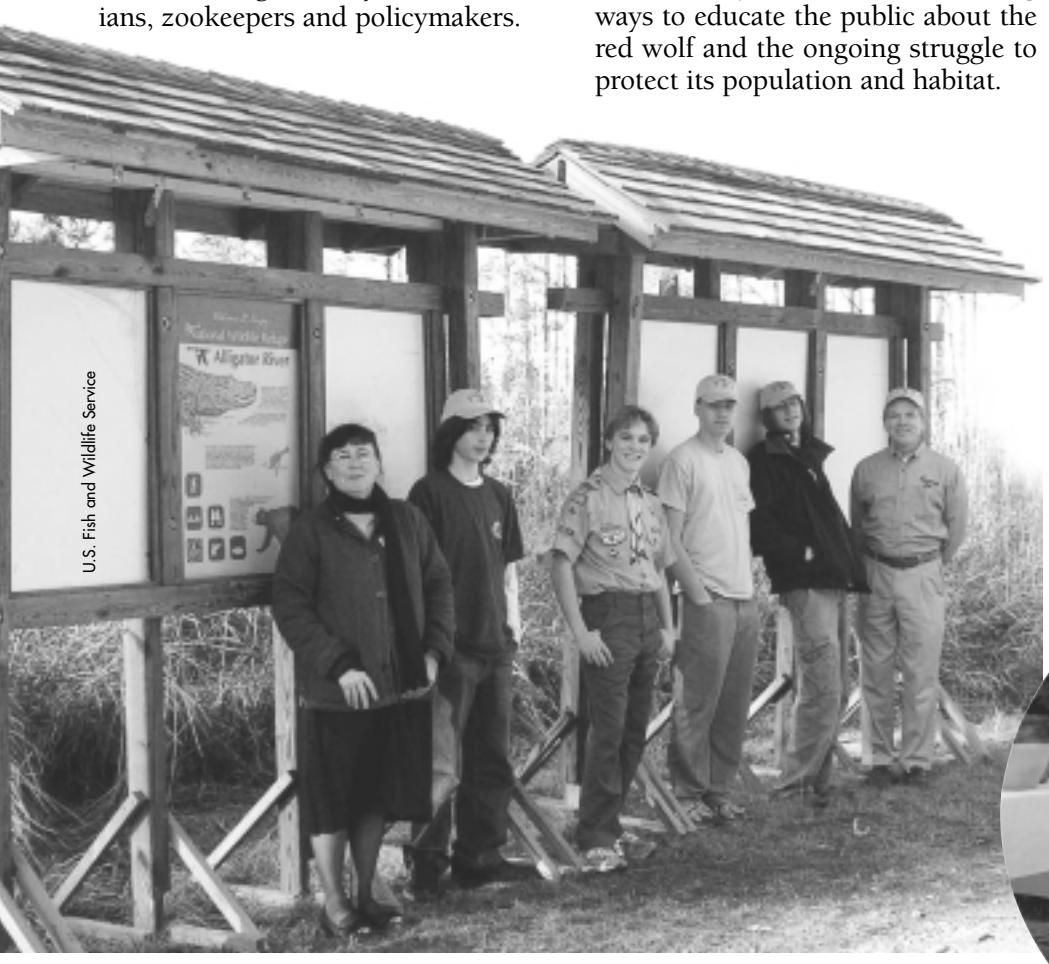
Wild Kids

Kids Lead the Way on Red Wolf Education

by Mark MacAllister

Endangered species recovery is generally considered the domain of adults. People commonly perceive efforts to shield animals from the threat of extinction to be in the control of experts—wildlife biologists, lawyers, veterinarians, zookeepers and policymakers.

But it doesn't take long to dispel this perception. The Red Wolf Coalition has for years watched children undertake valuable projects on behalf of red wolf recovery. Two projects in particular demonstrate the creativity of children in devising ways to educate the public about the red wolf and the ongoing struggle to protect its population and habitat.



Above: Eagle Scout Alec Grubbs built two information kiosks with six display panels to provide information about red wolves and their recovery for use at the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge. Left to right: Rosemarie Haskell, Henry Garagan, Alec Grubbs, John Sommerville, Josh Hartzog, and Andy Grubbs

The Wildlife Kids, led by three California siblings, is a true grassroots educational group. During Wolf Awareness Week 2005, Wildlife Kids members sold homemade drinks, cookies and jewelry and distributed wolf-related information flyers and stickers. More importantly, they made the most of every opportunity to speak with their customers about the wolf's situation in the world. By the end of the day, they had raised nearly $200, which they then donated to the Red Wolf Coalition.

Wildlife Kids also organized a recycling program at their school, with the money raised going to support wildlife organizations. Their most important legacy, though, is a $300 donation to the Coalition in 2004. We acknowledged this gift by attaching a small plaque honoring Wildlife Kids to a wild wolf's radio-tracking collar.

Eagle Scout Alec Grubbs of North Carolina took a different route toward educating the public

Right: Members of Wildlife Kids raised nearly $200 for the Red Wolf Coalition by selling homemade drinks, cookies and jewelry. Left to right: Lizzy Mayersohn, Emma R., Kalli Kouf, Whitney Browne, Rebecca Weitzel, Amanda Gould, and Emily Gould

about red wolves—one that promises long-term benefits for both wolves and the Coalition. As part of his scouting project, Alec built two huge information kiosks, each measuring 10 feet by 10 feet and weighing 600 pounds. These kiosks support six large display panels that provide important information about red wolves and their recovery. They were delivered to the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, site of the Coalition's howling safaris, in early January 2006.

Projects like these—and there are dozens more like them in support of endangered species everywhere—are important on a number of levels. They extend the educational capacity of small nonprofits, and they help children develop intellectual skills useful in school and in later life. The most exciting aspect of their work, though, is that it demonstrates that all people, expert or not, can play an important role in advocating for wildlife. ■

Mark MacAllister is vice president of the Red Wolf Coalition.

Terri Gould

Two Losses to the Pack

On February 28, 2006, Darian Rhyder Willette, a friend of the International Wolf Center, died as the result of an accident in Cuzco, Peru. Darian was an exceptional young man. As a wolf educator intern during summer 2002, he touched many lives with his engaging and humorous presentations about wolves and their environment. Those of us who worked with him will remember his artistic nature, humor, sense of adventure, desire to learn about the natural world and above all his kind and thoughtful manner. Darian had begun a post-graduate degree at the University of Minnesota at Duluth and was transferring to Southern Oregon University. He will be missed by all those whose lives he touched.

International Wolf Center

Darian Rhyder Willette, (left) and Carol Coffin (below)

Courtesy of Coffin family

Longtime International Wolf Center volunteer Carol Coffin passed away December 15, 2005, at the age of 68 after a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer. She was well known for her willingness to help out at booths and her faithful attendance at the Twin Cities volunteer bimonthly meetings. She was always fun to work with and dedicated to supporting the survival of wolves and other wildlife. All at the Center will miss her.

The International Wolf Center extends our deepest condolences to the families of Darian and Carol.

A Look Beyond

Red Wolf Recovery: Facing the Challenges, Celebrating the Successes

by Kim Wheeler and Cornelia Hutt

It is long past sunset, and the group gathered for the "howling" is shivering from the December chill and from anticipation. Will the wolves sing tonight? As suspense mounts, no one moves or speaks, not even in a whisper. And suddenly from the distant darkness of the wildlife refuge, the haunting notes rise and hang suspended before fading into silence. The red wolves are out there!

Once officially extinct in the wild and still one of the world's most endangered canids, the red wolf now ranges wild and free in the lowlands of coastal North Carolina.

Nevertheless, those of us who value this elusive predator must confront the hard realities of the species' long-term recovery. The greatest of these is the threat of hybridization with coyotes. A fragile population of 100 red wolves inhabits the region; thus, coyotes are ever-present antagonists despite the Red Wolf Recovery Team's remarkable success at reducing their numbers within the recovery area.

Another challenge is the scarcity of unoccupied space in the Southeast. "A look beyond" rural northeastern North Carolina reveals three sobering facts: high human density, a labyrinth of roads and few large tracts of undeveloped land. Experts have judged that two additional reintroduction sites for the red wolf must be designated to ensure the creature's survival. But where? Additionally, there is the issue of human attitudes. In the recovery area, where red wolves range on federal, private and state land, some landowners remain hostile to predators—especially wolves.

Increasing genetic diversity among the wild population is also an issue. The "gene pool" is limited. Just 14 red wolves founded the present wild population, the remnants of a once wide-ranging species.

Despite these and other challenges, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Red Wolf Recovery Team and the Red Wolf Coalition (a non-profit group of red wolf advocates) are optimistic about the future. Their hopeful outlook is based on some positive trends. The skilled and dedicated USFWS biologists have reduced coyote numbers in the recovery area, thus allowing red wolf packs to become established. And the Recovery Team's bold experiment with captive-to-wild "pup fostering" has worked. This method for infusing new genes into the population involves the placing of very young captive-born red-wolf pups into the dens of red wolves, where they are then raised by wild parents.

Encouraging public investment in red-wolf conservation through education is paying dividends. The Coalition reaches out to schools, community groups, hunters and other local citizens through a variety of projects and initiatives. The organization's major goal is to build a Red Wolf Center, a facility that will teach people about the red wolf's role in the regional ecosystem and provide a tourist destination to benefit the regional economy.

The recovery goal of 220 red wolves in the wild seems remote and unreachable at times, but each spring brings a new crop of pups and fresh hope. "A look beyond" energizes us and reinforces our determination to keep the red wolf on the road to recovery. And like the group on that December night, we listen for the howls that sing the message: the red wolf is back and thriving. ■

Kim Wheeler is the executive director of the Red Wolf Coalition.

Cornelia Hutt is president of the board of the Red Wolf Coalition and an International Wolf Center board member.

Greg Koch

Once officially extinct in the wild and still one of the world's most endangered canids, the red wolf now ranges wild and free in the lowlands of coastal North Carolina.