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SUMMER 2015

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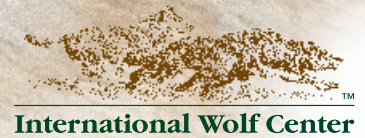
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INTERNATIONAL WOLF



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Daniela Nievergelt
www.flickr.com/photos/d-niev/



Alberta's Wolf Failures

Alberta's wolves appear to be living in their own wolf heaven, but something is amiss in this potential paradise. As municipal governments and local organizations continue to pay bounties for wolf kill and subsidize trappers, regulatory policies and frontier-style tradition allow for inhumane killing practices that do nothing to reduce wolf problems.

By Kevin Van Tighem



The Early History of the International Wolf Center

From the birth of the idea, to the facility and web presence that the International Wolf Center offers today, Dr. L. David Mech of the U.S. Geological Survey and University of Minnesota has continued his involvement with the Center and wolves. The commitment and energy of wolf advocates over the past 30 years have culminated in the Center as it serves today—as the world's foremost disseminator of objective science-based information about the wolf.

by L. David Mech



Mike Possis, Wild Thing Photography

On the Cover

Photo by Emmanuel Keller
To view more of Keller's photography, visit: www.flickr.com/photos/tambako/

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Norm Bishop Accepts Prestigious Award: Honored as One "Who Speaks for Wolf"

Norman Bishop has been honored as the International Wolf Center's 19th recipient of the "Who Speaks for Wolf" Award for his lifetime commitment to advancing conservation of wild places and wild wolves. The "Who Speaks for Wolf" award takes its name from a Native American Oneida tribal legend, teaching that humans can value wolves and live alongside them in peace.

As a Colorado native, Bishop put his advanced degrees in forest recreation and wildlife management to work during his 36 years in the National Park Service. During his 17 years with the Service in Yellowstone, he led the park's interpretive program about wolf restoration, and he has presented hundreds of programs and seminars about the park's wolves and wildlife.

"I'll never forget standing with Norm looking out over Yellowstone's Hellroaring Valley before wolf restoration and discussing how great it would be to see wolves from here," stated Dave Mech. "Norm's long educational work helped make it possible so that now we can do that."

The award and citation were presented by members of the IW Board of Directors (see photo) in Bozeman, Montana on March 22, 2015. ■



Pictured are Doug Smith, leader of the Yellowstone Gray Wolf Restoration Project; Dave Mech, founder and vice chair of the International Wolf Center; Award Recipient Norman Bishop and his wife Dorothy; Senator Mike Phillips, member of the International Wolf Center Board of Directors; and Rob Schultz, executive director.

From the Executive Director

Wolves That Influence the World

March 21, 2015. On the ridgeline ahead of us, four wolf pups played in the snow as other members of the Junction Butte Pack soaked up the bright morning sun. The individuals before us were among the most well-known and, therefore, influential wild wolves on the planet—Yellowstone wolves!

As wolf researcher Dave Mech and I watched in fascination, I couldn't help but imagine what it must have been like to be here at Yellowstone twenty years ago today as Steve Fritts of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Mike Phillips of the National Park Service swung open the gate to the Crystal Creek enclosure to release wolves back into the wild—a moment in history that would be a turning point for wolves.

Today, Yellowstone National Park is one of the best places on earth to watch wolves in the wild. Viewing its majestic, wide-open landscapes and abundant populations of elk, bison and grizzly bear, I couldn't help but feel as though I'd slipped back in time to a wild frontier much like that our early explorers and pioneers encountered.


In these past two decades, Yellowstone has become a classroom for the world, where we've learned more of the reality about wolves, in contrast to the myths and misperceptions that our society had been mistaken to believe.

Footage captured by filmmaker Bob Landis taught us that wolves are selective hunters who carefully test for the weakest of prey. Wolf researcher Doug Smith and his colleagues Dan

MacNulty and Dan Stahler discovered that when prey abounds, wolves often retain younger members that breed, along with their parents, in the same pack, thus resulting in packs of up to 37 members! These men have also shown that the optimal number of wolves for the greatest hunting success with elk is about 4 and for bison about 9 to 13. These and many other findings from Yellowstone are adding greatly to our knowledge about wolves.

But the most important effect that Yellowstone's wolves have had since 1985 has been the contribution they've made in shifting public opinions about wolves. Countless documentaries, publications and research projects from Yellowstone have inspired us to look differently at wolves for the fascinating, complex creatures they are.

The impact that Yellowstone wolves continue to have goes far beyond the boundaries of the park, and is measured not so much by the success of the wolves themselves...but in the opportunities they present for the world to get to know and understand them. ■



Rob Schultz, executive director



Dave Mech (right)



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Alberta's Wolf Failures

ALBERTA MIGHT HAVE BEEN MADE FOR WOLVES. Thousands of elk and deer thrive on the windswept bunchgrass slopes of the foothills. Further north, deer and moose thrive on abundant second-growth where industrial activity has broken up the boreal forest. Alberta may look like wolf heaven, but it is sometimes easier for a wolf to die than to live here.

by KEVIN VAN TIGHEN

Wolves were virtually eradicated from most of western Canada by a 1950s rabies-control campaign. Thousands of poison-laced meat baits were scattered across the landscape during a two-year campaign that killed off most of the wolves south of the Athabasca River watershed. But, so long as food is available, wolves will turn up again eventually. They've been coming back for years now.

I encountered my first wolf pack in 1975 in Banff National Park, west of Calgary. It wasn't long before my work as a biologist brought me into frequent contact with wolves. Later, I had an active role in managing them in southwestern Alberta.

My growing affinity for wolves, however, soon led me to realize that most of the wolves returning to the wildlife-rich southern foothills and mountains were simply coming there to die. Alberta's wolf management policies are designed so those who fear or distrust wolves can kill them. Alberta's regulatory regime makes it seem that the frontier war on wolves never ended.

The Alberta chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation is the most aggressive sponsor of Alberta's wolf kill. It subsidizes trappers who target wolves. In the winters of 2013 and 2014 alone, the sheep hunting group paid out \$32,500 in bounties to trappers for 115 wolves. In a recent email, the sheep hunting group's president asserted that "...predator growth is out of control," although he offered no evidence to support the statement.



International Wolf Center

"Is the ungulate enhancement program working and effective?" he added. "Based on these numbers, no, but the government is doing very little about predator management in this province, and this is where the WSFA... has stepped up and will continue to offer this program to the trappers of Alberta in the future."

It's hard to take seriously that oft-repeated complaint that predator numbers are out of control and the government is failing to protect game herds. Alberta's elk, deer and moose populations have never been higher. Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development (AESRD) is unable to sell all the big game licenses available.

And, in any case, the government does kill wolves to protect game herds. They do so both indirectly, by looking the other way when special interest groups pay out bounties (something that several municipal governments and local fish and game clubs continue to do), and directly, by conducting aggressive wolf kills where caribou populations are in decline.

The most notorious example of the latter has been going on for almost a decade. The headwaters of the Little Smoky River, northeast of Jasper National Park, were a pristine boreal wilderness when I visited in the 1980s. The river

itself teemed with arctic grayling and bull trout, as well as otters, mink and bald eagles. Its lichen-draped forests harbored a healthy population of woodland caribou, as well as a few moose, and very few wolves.

In the intervening years, ignoring a popular campaign to have the area protected as a boreal wilderness park, the Alberta government issued timber-cutting rights to a pulp company and sold oil and gas leases to energy companies that carved roads into the formerly intact watershed. As clear-cuts expanded, so did the lush second growth of willows and poplar that moose and deer thrive on. Ungulate populations grew. Predictably, so did the number of bears and wolves. The new roads and cutlines offered easy travel for the predators. Caribou numbers began to decline.

Rather than put the brakes on the actual problem, habitat fragmentation, Alberta's aggressive resource development culture required a different solution. Having declared the caribou a threatened species, the government decided to kill wolves to save the caribou.

For seven years the Alberta government used aerial gunning and a widely-banned poison, strychnine, in an effort to save the Little Smoky caribou herd from wolves. The program killed 841 wolves (154 by poisoning) as well as accidentally poisoning at least 6 lynx, 31 foxes, 91 ravens, 36 coyotes, 4 fishers, 8 martens, and 4 weasels. Unfortunately, the government allowed further habitat fragmentation by the forest and energy industry during those same seven years. There is now less caribou habitat than ever.

Even if the Alberta government were not mass-killing wolves to protect caribou or looking the other way while trophy-hunting organizations and other groups pay bounties for dead wolves, Alberta's wolf policy would still resemble full-scale war. Anyone, without a license, can kill as many wolves as they want, almost year round. In parts of northern



Lionel Arnould - France
www.flickr.com/photos/odradek78/

Alberta it is even legal to kill lactating mother wolves over bait in late spring, dooming newborn pups to starvation.

Parks Canada seems to be the only government agency regularly criticized for wolf deaths—ironic, since it actually strives to keep wolves alive. Parks Canada spent more than ten million dollars over two decades to stop wildlife deaths on the Trans-Canada Highway through Banff National Park. Wildlife-proof fencing along both sides of the highway, seven massive forested overpass structures, and several dozen underpasses have reduced wildlife deaths by over 80 percent. Wide-ranging animals like wolves no longer find their travels blocked by fast-moving traffic.

Unfortunately, wolves occasionally learn to tip-toe across the cattle guards at intersections. When one becomes roadkill, Parks Canada gets more bad press for failing to save a wolf. I retired as Banff's park superintendent in 2011—the same year I was shown a pile of decomposing carcasses near the park boundary. A trapper had snared eight wolves to collect bounty money. The skinned carcasses were left as bait for any survivors. The irony was a bit galling to me: Parks Canada had just endured

another week of public pillory for one roadkill, while far more wolves were dying, unseen and unreported, just outside the park.

The Provincial government is quick to defend its liberal killing of wolves and third-party bounties. Kyle Fawcett, the Minister of AESRD says, "There is no evidence that wolf bounties are causing a decline in Alberta's wolf population." His staff insists that wolves have increased from an estimated 4,000 in the early 1990s to 7,000 today—population estimates that they admit are based on guesstimates by trappers and wildlife officers.

AESRD is likely right that the wolf population is not threatened by the constant killing. But focusing on wolf numbers just deflects the discussion from the real questions which are, or should be: what is Alberta trying to achieve with wolves, and does the current regulatory regime achieve it?

If the management objective is simply to appease those who hate or fear wolves, then all is good. Regulations allow anyone to kill any wolf pretty much anywhere, any time. Trappers have no quotas and are encouraged to use choking snares. The use of strychnine by government wolf

control teams ups the ante further. If the goal is to kill lots of wolves painfully, the current system is working.

However, if the goal is to limit wolf numbers, that's not happening. Death and suffering doesn't stop wolves from quickly re-populating prey-rich habitat. Wolves compensate for mortality with increased reproduction, pup survival, and dispersal.

The ultimate goal should be to minimize wolf problems, not wolf numbers. Nobody wants wolves attacking humans or livestock, or to see critically threatened prey species wiped out. So how does Alberta's approach address these problems?

Human safety is a non-issue—abundant or scarce, wolves prefer to avoid us. One can't blame them. Livestock safety, on the other hand, is a real issue. But Alberta's "kill any wolf, any time, by almost any method" management regime doesn't reduce livestock losses. In fact, it probably increases them. I know at least one rancher in the Oldman River headwaters who works hard to keep "his" wolves alive. The pack currently ranging through his pastures leaves cattle alone; other wolves might not.



James Anderson
flickr.com/photos/jamesa1

His efforts are hindered by a regulatory regime that promotes random wolf killing, destabilizing packs, and creating more inefficient hunting units and disperser wolves. Those may well be the wolves most likely to start killing cattle.

For critically threatened caribou herds, predation can also be a real issue. But trying to save caribou by killing wolves is treating the symptom while leaving the disease untouched. Caribou decline is a symptom of ecosystem collapse. Declaring war on the rest of the ecosystem is a perverse solution. Alberta can afford to leave large tracts of boreal wilderness intact and to restore impaired habitats. That's the only real hope for caribou, not strychnine, aerial gunning and snares. Without habitat protection, caribou are doomed regardless of how many wolves die too.

Wolf Matters, an Alberta group promoting ethical wolf management, wants the province to ban third-party bounties, prohibit inhumane killing practices like snares and poison, and classify the

wolf as a species subject to special management. Special management might mean protecting wolves until problems develop, and then targeting specific problem packs rather than all wolves. It would probably involve radio-collaring wolves and monitoring them. While costly, that would likely be more cost-effective than the current approach. Basing 21st century wolf management on biology and ethics, rather than frontier tradition, would make more sense than today's often-cruel and counter-productive war on Alberta's wolves. ■

For Further Information
Check Out These Sites:



Alberta Environment and Sustainable
Resource Development (AESRD)
(esrd.alberta.ca)



Wolf Matters (www.wolfmatters.org)

Canadian naturalist and hunter Kevin Van Tighem is the award-winning author of several books and more than 200 articles, stories and essays on wildlife and conservation. His latest book, *The Homeward Wolf*, received the Jon Whyte prize in the Non-Fiction Mountain and Wilderness Literature category at the 2014 Banff Mountain Book Festival. Retired from his job as superintendent of Banff National Park, Van Tighem is a major contributor to a soon-to-be-broadcast documentary film, "Unnatural Enemies—The War on Wolves."

**Alberta may look
like wolf heaven,
but it is sometimes
easier for a wolf
to die than to
live here.**



Dan Grandmaiton

The Wolves and Humans exhibit was viewed by more than 2.5 million people across the United States including Hawaii. It was built and opened in 1984 at the nationally acclaimed Science Museum of Minnesota.

The Early History of the International Wolf Center

"A much-increased emphasis on the wolf is recommended for the [Superior National Forest] Visitors' Center. An entire regularly scheduled slide talk on the wolf is called for, as well as the frequent references to the animal now made in a number of presentations. The wolf could be to the Superior [National Forest] almost what 'Old Faithful' is to Yellowstone. A number of exhibits and displays could be set up. A whole new building the size of the Voyageurs Center could easily be filled to tell the story of the wolf, and such a structure might well be a good investment."

P. 9 from "A Plan for the Management of the Timber Wolf on The Superior National Forest of Minnesota" June 20, 1972, L. David Mech (by contract from the Superior National Forest).



by L. DAVID MECH

Thus was born the idea for the International Wolf Center. But ideas are easy to come by—implementation is more often the problem.

It was 10 years later when the next milestone along the road to development of the Center was reached. The Science Museum of Minnesota (SMM) contacted me in 1982 about developing a “*Wolves and Humans*” exhibit. The museum had obtained a substantial grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to build the exhibit and to send it to six other venues after its six-month display in St. Paul. I ended up chairing a committee to design the *Wolves and Humans* exhibit.

Wolves and Humans opened at the SMM in 1984 and was the first large natural-history exhibit anywhere to examine the social, biological, mythological and ethical relationships between an animal and humans. The exhibit presented a historical look at the myths, legends and folklore surrounding the wolf, current knowledge about wolf biology and behavior, and controversies that arise when wolves and humans interact. The exhibit was an instant success, and after its stint in St. Paul, was sent to Yellowstone

National Park. There it helped pave the way for the reintroduction of wolves into the park by galvanizing public support for this historic undertaking. *Wolves and Humans* later earned a place in the American Association of Museum’s book, *Riches, Rivals and Radicals: One Hundred Years of Museums in America*, as one of the most influential exhibits of the 20th Century. Originally scheduled for a six-venue, three-year tour, *Wolves and Humans* was seen by more than 2.5 million people in 18 cities in the US and Canada.

When the SMM informed me that, unless some special use could be found for the exhibit after its last venue, the museum would have to dismantle it, I seized the opportunity. We could use the exhibit as a lever to develop a wolf center. Several wolf advocates agreed to help. We organized in 1984, added a variety of new members, and incorporated in 1985 as The Committee for an International Wolf Center (the Committee). The offer of the exhibit, valued at \$500,000 at the time, was a crucial incentive to encourage support from various granting

agencies, governmental bodies, and private benefactors.

The Committee wanted a center to be located in Minnesota wolf range to demonstrate that the wolf had a positive, nonconsumptive economic value in addition to the value of its pelt and in contrast to its negative impact on livestock. Thus we asked the northern Minnesota communities in wolf range to compete for hosting the International Wolf Center. The word “international” was added because of my chairmanship of the World Conservation Union (IUCN) Wolf Specialist Group, an organization of wolf authorities from around the world. I could call upon wolf specialists from abroad to advise on the project, to visit the Center, and to inform audiences about the wolf in their own countries to help broaden the Center’s appeal and expertise.

Four communities submitted strong proposals for the Center: Duluth, Grand



Curator Lori Schmidt moved Jedadiah to the Center’s temporary exhibit in summer 1989 at the opening of the Voyageur Visitor Center wolf exhibit.



The *Wolves and Humans* exhibit challenged all ages with unique opportunities for learning.

Jeff Frey & Associates Photography



Board member Nancy Gibson helped raise the Center's pups



Early board members and supporters of the Center were Paul Schurke, Nancy jo Tubbs, Dave Mech, Bill Mills and Milt Stenlund.



In front: Mike Link, Chair of the Committee for an International Wolf Center and Elizabeth Olson. Behind: Jon Harris, Vermilion Community College president; Milt Stenlund, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources biologist; Roger Baker, USFS district ranger and Sig Olson, Jr.



Mary Ortiz was the Center's first full-time staffer, and eventually served as executive director.

*But ideas are easy to come by—
implementation is more
often the problem*

Rapids, International Falls, and Ely. The Committee spent three days visiting the cities, meeting with local officials, viewing potential sites, and examining statistics on visitation rates, tourism facilities, and several other factors. We conducted an elaborate analysis of the advantages and incentives each contending city offered. After much

discussion, the Committee chose Ely in November 1985. Not only was Ely in the heart of wolf range, but it was also where most of the state's wolf research was currently, as well as historically, headquartered. Both elements would serve the Center well in its planned programs and field trips.

Once Ely was chosen, Governor Rudy Perpich, who much favored the Center, flew to Ely and offered state help to build "the best wolf center" we could. Seed funding of \$55,000 came quickly from the Iron Range Resources Rehabilitation Board, allowing the Committee to continue our planning, including architectural work. Another \$259,000 was granted in 1986. The Committee hired an executive director, board member Mike Link, and recruited new board members from Ely including arctic explorer Paul Schurke. Mary Ortiz of Discovery Adventure began volunteering for the Committee in 1987. She was hired in 1988 to assist and later served in several positions with the Center, including executive director.

Shortly before the International Wolf Center opening in 1993, five bronze wolves by sculptor Rick Sargent were donated by Valerie Gates of Denver, Colorado.



Lynn Rogers

In 1987 a new feasibility study suggested that Ely may not have high-enough visitation to support a wolf center and recommended that the Committee reopen its site-selection process. We did so, but after Committee members visited new sites and heard presentations by local proponents, we again chose Ely. The legislature then granted the Committee \$150,000 in 1988, providing that a legislative committee be allowed to review the site-selection process. Several new members had also joined the board, including Nancy Gibson, public relations consultant, formerly with TV's *Newton's Apple* and the Minnesota Zoo, in 1988. An advisory board was formed, and Will Steger, co-leader of the Steger Polar Expedition, was made an honorary member.

The legislative site-selection committee ruled unanimously that the Committee had followed the proper site-selection process. We were then free

to continue garnering financial support for a center in Ely in 1988.

Also in 1988, the Committee opened an interim Wolf Center in the U.S. Forest Service's Voyageurs Visitor Center just east of Ely, which had been offered for the site of the permanent center. It housed a few displays, disseminated literature, and featured four captive wolves. This interim center was to be a promise of things to come. The following year the Minnesota Legislature granted \$126,000 to jump-start the education programs, and *International Wolf* magazine began publication in fall 1990.

During the 1990 legislative session, the Committee held an international wolf symposium in St. Paul (the first of five so far), attended by about 300 people, including wolf authorities from around the globe. The legislature invited the international wolf specialists to a full session, where all joined in an international wolf howl.

A few days later, the Committee's request for \$1.8 million reached the House-Senate Conference Committee. Intensive lobbying by board member Nancy Gibson and pro-bono lobbyist Ellen Sampson succeeded in obtaining an appropriation of \$1.2 million—a bittersweet victory. After we had scaled back the project from a \$3.8-million building to a \$1.8-million building, it was disconcerting to receive only partial funding. However, this appropriation provided leverage for obtaining private donations.

The Committee immediately set out to raise additional funds. A major contribution from Minnesota philanthropist and environmentalist Wallace Dayton greatly assisted and inspired others' support. In addition, a life-size bronze sculpture of five running wolves, valued at \$75,000, was donated for the Center grounds by Valerie Gates, of Denver, Colorado. The Committee also had to raise more funds to buy land and



In the summer of 1989, the Center featured a temporary exhibit of four pups, Jedadiah, Ballazar, Raissa and Bausha, under the care of Curator Lori Schmidt.

The first permanent pack at the Center included MacKenzie, Lucas, Kiana and Lakota.



Lynn Rogers

With some 6,000 members, and 1.5 million annual visits to its Web site, the International Wolf Center has become the world's foremost disseminator of objective science-based information about the wolf.

trade that land to the Forest Service for the Visitor Center land the Committee needed. Then, since state money would be used to build the Center, the land had to be donated to a state agency, in this case, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

Meanwhile, a new governor had been elected, and he froze all the bonding money the previous legislature had approved, including that for the Center. After considerable lobbying and land-

purchase negotiations by Nancy Gibson, however, Governor Arne Carlson released the Center's funds. Architectural plans soon gave way to construction of a 17,000-square-foot building that

incorporated the U.S. Forest Service's Voyageurs Visitor Center on a hill just east of Ely. (Several years later, the Minnesota legislature granted another \$750,000 to complete a second phase of the building, including a 120-seat auditorium from which to view a captive wolf pack, \$350,000 for the Little Wolf Children's Exhibit in 2000, and \$350,000 to remodel the building's entrance.)

The International Wolf Center opened in June 1993, and like the *Wolves and Humans* exhibit, it was an immediate success. Four captive wolves, Kiana, Lakota, Lucas, and Mackenzie were the first ambassa-

dor wolves. Nancy Tubbs, an Ely resorter and writer who lived in the middle of the Burntside Lake wolf-pack territory, joined the board in 1992 and left it briefly to become interim administrator until September 1993. Walter Medwid, hired earlier to start in autumn, became the first executive director.

Thus, some 21 years after the germ of the idea, the International Wolf Center came into full fruition, and the result has been an even better investment than originally envisioned. From a purely economic vantage point, a 1995 University of Minnesota study demonstrated that the Center produced a \$3 million impact on the local economy. Now, some 30 years after formation of the Committee for an International Wolf Center, annual visitation has reached 35,000-50,000 people at the Center itself. With some 6,000 members, and 1.5 million annual visits to its Web site, the Center has become the world's foremost disseminator of objective science-based information about the wolf. ■

Dr. L. David Mech is a senior research scientist for the U.S. Geological Survey and founder and vice chair of the International Wolf Center. He has studied wolves for more than 50 years and has published several books and many articles about them.

Tracking the Pack

The Health of the Pack Prior to Pups

by Lori Schmidt, Wolf Curator

During spring 2016, we are scheduled to adopt two pups into our Exhibit Pack. The pup source has been identified, and we are verifying the health records of the future parents. This is critical for our management plan as wolves can be susceptible to a variety of diseases and parasites. By ensuring that the pups' mother is vaccinated, we improve the chances of the pups maintaining a healthy immune system as they transition into the Center's Exhibit Pack.

So, what are the most problematic diseases and parasites? Our greatest concern stems from two viruses, Parvo virus and Canine Coronavirus. As with any viral infection, there are very few treatments for Parvo virus itself; often the greatest risk is from dehydration, and overall health declines can happen quickly. The other concern is with transmission of the disease. The virus can become airborne and has been known to survive on objects in the surrounding enclosure or lab settings. To prevent the

risk to pups, we vaccinate the Center's adult wolves for Parvo, and we monitor blood titers on the adults to ensure the vaccine is effective. Effectiveness may vary with the individual wolf. In our exhibit, despite an annual vaccination regime, Grizzer, an eleven-year-old male consistently shows low Parvo titer levels in his blood work.

The second viral infection concerning pups is Coronavirus which also impacts the small intestines and localized lymph node infections. Coronavirus on its own may be relatively mild, but if it occurs with Parvo, a pup's health can decline quickly. Raissa, one of the pups acquired for the Center's first captive wolf exhibit in 1989, contracted Coronavirus and suffered some respiratory issues, as well as anorexia, requiring stomach-tube feedings during her nearly week-long illness. It is not uncommon for the animals to suffer longer bouts of diarrhea, which magnifies dehydration issues. Another problem with Corona is that the viral strands can remain in the body and shed in the feces for several months. We will do a complete medical exam of the entire

pack prior to the pups' arrival to ensure there are no health issues.

When it comes to animal health, protocol on cleaning a facility is critical, but some animals are more susceptible to viral conditions based on external stresses. This is where pup care training can be most critical. As we prepare for pups in 2016, we will spend time in summer 2015 training potential participants in all aspects of pup care, including health issues and handling protocol. To learn more about the pup care program, check out our Web site at www.wolf.org, and go to Events, Seminars, Planning for Pups. ■



Wolf pups are typically socialized starting at between 12 -14 days of age, shortly after their eyes open.

Providing objects to chew when pups are teething helps keep pups healthy and active.



International Wolf Center

Regular veterinary checks are critical to reduce the risk of transmittable diseases. Ely veterinarian Chip Hanson (right) has cared for Center's pups since the early 1990s.



Awen Brem

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Sherry Downing	Nancy Jo Tubbs
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Janet Halpin	Kathryn and Robert Vizas
Phyllis Hughes	Joanne Wessels
Charles Inman	Ed Ward
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Kristine Karnos	Margaret J. Wyllie
Murray and Jeanie Kilgour	
Greg Korelich	
Bud Kraehling	
Don Gossett	
Pamela GronemeyerKriegh, M.D., and C. Stephen Kriegh	
Carol and Kent Landsberg	
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Bob and Carol Mucha	
Andi Nelsen	
Lavonne Newman	
Megan Norris	
James T. Nystrom Foundation	
Karen Ostertag	
Carol and Michael Petersen	
Steve Piragis	

Memorials

In Memory of James Craighead Margaret Bowles
In memory of Swirl Gobert: Alicia Gobert
In memory of Frances Moser: Margaret Clay
In memory of Raymond Newman from his children: Chris Howard Erik Law Newman Lynn Newman Scott Newman Tony Newman Julie Rokke
In memory of Nino: Kevin Northrup
In Memory of Joann Chipka Norquist Joan Gamble

In Memory of Margaret Roetman: Robert Carnine Marlene and Bruce Ehresman Louise and Ken Esveld Greg and Peggy Fay Jane Gibb Linda Herrick Pat Hjelmeland Carolyn Hoard Judy and Tom Jackson Jane Jones and Family Janice Kuiper Joyce Lanxon Ronnie Lindeman Barbara Mallon Kelly Poole Edward and Barbara Roetman Doug and Laurie Sorem Linda Sorenson Ken Toomsen Toni Wheelock Margaret Westvold
--

In memory of my sister,
Jean Stowell:
Kim Stowell

In memory of Sadie Sue:
Carol Green

In memory of Shadow and Malik:
Susan Myers

In Memory of Randy Toth:
Kevin MacDonald

In memory of Raul Velazquez:
Tina Velazquez

In memory of Aerion Viens:
Scott Forthman

Honorary

In honor of Ana Brown:
Norm Brown

In honor of Nathan and
Amaya Turner-Clarke:
Bruce Turner

In honor of Nancy Gibson
and Ron Sternal:
Elisabeth Bockoski

In honor of Betty Head:
Sarah Head

In honor of Droxy Hinchcliffe:
Deborah Hinchcliffe and
Jerry Sanders

In honor of Gustav Johnson:
Gustav Johnson

In honor of Dr. L. David Mech:
Renato Gullinoo

In honor of Walter Medwid:
Deborah Hinchcliffe and
Jerry Sanders

In honor of Shannon Noble:
Anonymous

In honor of Lori Schmidt
and Lori Aidan:
Joyce Wells

In honor of Nancy Schwartz:
Howard Schwartz

In honor of Nancy Simon:
Jane Hiller

In honor of Theresa Simpson:
Capt Eric Simpson

In Honor of Scott Stowell and
DyAnne Korda:
Kimberly Stowell

In honor of Gabriel Syring:
Laurel Syring

In honor of Marjorie Wight:
Scott Chambers

Matching Gifts

FaegreBakerDanielsFoundation
on behalf of:
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From Belgium to Ely...To Meet Our Wolves... Best Birthday Gift Ever

Now Daniele de Ponthière is a Regular Visitor

by Darcy Berus, Development Director

Daniele de Ponthière is a long-time International Wolf Center member, volunteer, program participant, and ambassador. She embodies the passion and excitement for wolves that is shared by so many International Wolf Center members; however, one thing that truly sets Daniele apart is the distance she travels to visit the Center's wolves and experience its programs.

A resident of the European Union's Kingdom of Belgium, Daniele flies to the U.S. every year to visit the Interpretive Center in Ely, Minnesota, to participate in programs and events, and to connect with other members and staff. Like Center members around the world, Daniele stays connected with the Center and its work throughout the year through its Web site and Facebook.

We interviewed Daniele to learn her story and get to know our international patron better:

IW: How did you first learn about the International Wolf Center?

Daniele: In 2007, my husband asked me what I wanted for my birthday. I told him that I wanted to go see wolves. He said, no problem, find a place! I started looking for a place, not only to see wolves, but also to learn and experience more about them. Searching on the Internet, I found the International Wolf Center in Ely, Minnesota, USA. I asked myself, where is Minnesota and where is Ely? Our first visit was in February 2008, and I returned for another visit in September of the same year. I have been back every year since!

IW: Tell us about your experiences with the International Wolf Center.

Daniele: My first experience was a "Behind the Scenes: with Lori" (Wolf Curator Lori Schmidt). Seeing wolves [in person] and finding how big they were was something amazing. I also did the "What's for Dinner" weekly wolf feeding program...I was so impressed seeing two arctic wolves for the first time and being able to watch them eat in front of me... I will never forget it. Since then I have loved all of the ambassador wolves at the Center.

IW: Describe a favorite memory from your experiences with the International Wolf Center.

Daniele: My favorite memory was being a [wolf pup care volunteer] for Luna and Boltz in 2012. My plane was diverted to Montreal due to bad weather, and I could not reach Minneapolis until the next day, the day I was supposed to start the nanny program at 1 p.m. I landed early in the morning and drove straight to Ely and the Center with hardly any sleep. I was exhausted but so excited that I forgot I was tired! This experience was a dream come true for me, and I had never thought it could or would happen.

IW: Why do you support the International Wolf Center?

Daniele: I support the Center because after visiting the International Wolf Center for seven years, it is clear that what I have learned from its dedicated and professional staff can only strengthen my opinion that wolves are needed wherever they live. The Center has proven

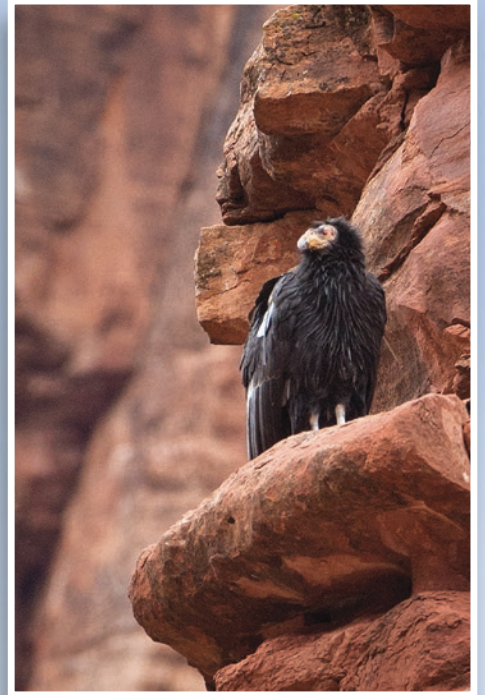


Photo courtesy of Daniele de Ponthière

with integrity that teaching people like me why we need to coexist with the wolves can only be positive for us and for our environment.

When we asked Daniele to reflect on her experiences with the Center, she replied, "I am ever so grateful to have met wonderful people and hope my involvement will continue for many years."

Thank you, Daniele, for all you do to support education about wolves! ■



Raptors

PREDATORS *from the* SKY





New Temporary Exhibit Lands at the International Wolf Center

by David Kline, photos by Heidi Pinkerton

Wherever in the world we find wolves, we are likely to find raptors soaring above. We are often rewarded with a glimpse of their grace in flight, their keen ability to hunt from above, and their majestic perch, as they watch for their prey. With planning and some old fashioned luck, we can walk away with the moment not just seared in memory, but also captured through the lens of a camera!

What makes a bird a raptor? Do wolves and raptors benefit from each other or work together? Are raptors as adaptable as wolves? These kinds of questions have long been on the minds of our members, so now we will take a deeper look into their lives and the role they play through our newest exhibit at the International Wolf Center titled, “Raptors: Predators from the Sky.”

For the next twelve months, you can join us in exploring the world of raptors in all their varieties, through the gener-

ous help of experts who have collaborated to bring together this unparalleled amalgamation of facts, observations, and breathtaking images of these fascinating creatures.

Leading organizations like the National Eagle Center will share their knowledge about the once-endangered American national symbol. Local naturalists will impart their observations of how raptors hunt in Minnesota’s northern forests. And the stunning images of soaring eagles and swooping owls by Minnesota wildlife photographer Heidi Pinkerton will bring to life the majesty and might of these lofty predators.

The “Raptors” exhibit is free with admission to our Interpretive Center in Ely, Minnesota. Check out wolf.org for

current details about daily raptor programs, live demonstrations and special presentations. Whether you are a first-time visitor or a returning nature lover, we look forward to welcoming you to wolf and raptor country in Ely this year!

Don’t miss the “Raptors” exhibit for a captivating look into these predators from above! ■

For detailed program and event information, visit

WOLF.ORG

This exhibit is in collaboration with Root River Photography



Heidi Pinkerton

ROOT RIVER PHOTOGRAPHY™

Wildlife, Nature & The Night Sky ©Heidi Pinkerton

Wolves of the World

Conferences Share Common Goals Across the Globe: Coexistence, Heightened Awareness of Wolves

by Tracy O'Connell

Several international conferences related to wolves are being held this year across the globe, and all have at least one common goal, to raise the awareness of wolves and their coexistence with humans and other animal populations.

Wolf Conferences in 2015

JAPAN:

The Japan Wolf Association is planning a June event to increase the familiarity of the public with the organization's concern that wolves need to be reintroduced into the country to help contain the over-population of sika deer. The event is intended to overcome the objections of the general population towards the proposed reintroduction.

The association's Dr. Naoki Maruyama notes the Department of Environment estimates the sika deer population will double to more than five million in the next decade. Japanese hunters, meanwhile, decreased from about a half million in the 1970s to less than half that number now. Damage from over-grazing is seen in almost all the forested areas of Japan from Hokkaido to Kyushu, he

notes, including World Heritage areas such as Mt. Fuji.

Maruyama is confused by the objections raised to wolf re-introduction, including many from scientists and nature conservation organizations like the World Wildlife Fund. "Our hope was that public support would rise to 40 percent, while objections would be below 14 percent," he said of the results of attitudes measured in 2013. But those expressing reservations about the idea have remained at around 45 percent. "Thus, we need more public enlightenment," he added; the symposia is planned as one of the group's education methods.

GERMANY:

The Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union (NABU) is planning an event September 24-26 in Wolfsburg, the fifth largest city in the state of Lower Saxony, located 230 kilometers (143 miles) west of Berlin.



Martin Harvey

Japan Conference Speakers:
Dr. Naoki Maruyama,
Dr. Markus Bathen, Germany,
and IWC's Dr. David Mech, USA:

June 3 – Tateshina

June 5 – Mishima

June 6 – Tokyo

June 7 – Sapporo

June 8 – Kawagoe



Kelly Godfrey



Three anniversaries are to be celebrated during the conference: 15 years since the first wolves' return to Germany, 10 years of NABU's "Welcome Wolf!" campaign, and 5 years of establishing a network of NABU "wolf ambassadors."

Co-sponsored by NABU's partner, the car maker Volkswagen, which is based in the region, the focus will be on potential conflicts from humans and wolves sharing overlapping territories in a densely populated country. It will address the human dimensions of wildlife management—dealing with attitudes, emotions, and fear as the basis for coexistence with wildlife in general and large carnivores in particular—and the exchange of successful management practices that reduce the potential for conflict.

Field trips will provide the chance to meet livestock owners dealing with wolves. "We are looking forward to participants from academia, practitioners, and the interested public to discuss strategies and potential implications for wolf management in Germany," said NABU's Dr. Erick von Ruschkowski, who adds that German presentations will be translated and can be followed by attendees in English via headphones. Dr. David Mech will present the keynote address and participate in a panel discussion. More information and registration can be found at www.nabu.de/wolfconference.

SCOTLAND:

Several names and faces familiar to followers of the International Wolf Center will participate in a two-day event in Edinburgh in mid-September, celebrating Wolf Awareness Week. It is sponsored by Action 4 Dogs UK, an organization founded by Maxwell Muir, who is committed to humane dog training. The Center's founder Dr. David Mech will discuss his research, and Lori Schmidt, the Center's wolf curator, will

participate live via Skype video from the wolf enclosure in Ely, speaking about her experience educating the public through the Center's programs.

Bob Landis, videographer, will show his films of wolves in Yellowstone and the life of Wolf 06, a park favorite. Sabina Nowak, who presented during the October, 2013 symposium sponsored by the Center in Duluth, will discuss "The Wolf in Crowded Europe." Others will address the last wolves in Scotland and the potential for reintroduction, as well as the concept of co-existing with this large predator. The Web site to learn more is www.wolf-awareness2015.com.

European Study Suggests Successful Coexistence with Predators...

A study reported late last year notes that the re-introduction of four major predators—wolves, brown bear, lynx and wolverine—across Europe has been successful. Involving 76 scientists across 26 countries, the study, published in the U.S. journal *Science*, noted that at least one of these four predators was permanently established somewhere across a third of mainland Europe.

The study found 17,000 brown bears living permanently in 22 countries, making them the most numerous of the four species. The gray wolf came next, with more than 12,000 found in 28 countries. There are 9,000 Eurasian lynx, found in 23 countries, and just over 1,200 wolverines, found only in Nordic countries.

All four species live mostly outside protected areas, suggesting they can coexist with humans, the authors wrote. Europe today has twice as many wolves as the United States outside of Alaska, even though its territory is half the size of North America and its population twice

as dense. The study cites reasons that include the existence of laws protecting the carnivores, large populations of wild prey animals such as deer and boar, and a human population exodus to the cities from the countryside in much of Europe.

Meanwhile, elsewhere...

The study referenced above provides us with recent population trends of predators in Europe, but we can gain additional insight into the wolves of the world from stories gathered in widespread agrarian regions:



FRANCE:

Last November shepherds brought their flocks to graze at the foot of the Eiffel Tower to protest what they called the overprotective governmental stance towards wolves. Supporters of the canids held a counter-rally nearby. Numbering around 300, the predators were considered responsible for more than 4,800 attacks on livestock in 2014, up by 20 percent over the year before.



GERMANY:

Sheep farmers complain that efforts to reimburse them for livestock protection against wolves or losses due to predation are inadequate and slow to arrive—for instance, they can receive funding for guard dogs and electric fencing but not for dog training or fence installation. Using the field rotation method which nets farmers additional subsidies, the fences must be continually moved.

The *Week UK* interviewed a farmer whose six guard dogs patrol his fields to protect his 750 sheep. It's been successful, but feeding the dogs costs \$8,000

(nearly 6,000 Euros) per year. The farmer's experience mirrors the complexity of the issue—he described his feeling of exhilaration when he first saw a wolf, but later lost 27 sheep in a single night to the predators, leading to the acquisition of the massive dogs. With no federal agency to oversee such concerns, Germany's wolf population relies on protection at the state level instead, where research and monitoring are left to volunteers who are said to be often poorly trained. Most of Germany's wolves are in Saxony, a state located in the comparatively rural eastern part of the country, formerly called East Germany, where the human population declined due to emigration to urban centers after Germany's reunification.



SPAIN:

Spain holds Western Europe's largest population of wolves, according to a January article in *The Irish Times*. That's estimated at 2,500, and the region with most wolves, Castilla-León, a central plateau bordered to the west by Portugal, has seen just over 2,000 livestock killed by them, according to the local farmers' association. Over the past decade, more than 20,000 head of livestock have been killed or wounded by wolves, according to

local government figures, with the trend picking up noticeably since 2008.



KAZAKHSTAN:

A new form of wolf protection is on the rise in Kazakhstan according to the BBC—rural people are raising wolf pups to protect their flocks from the pups' wild kin. While local wolf experts warn that this is not a good solution and fear the trend will spread to wealthy land owners wanting a unique means to protect their land, some locals talk of walking their purchased, pet wolf around town without problems, noting that the animal, however, does eat more than a dog.



UNITED ARAB EMIRATES:

A show in Dubai last fall marked the slaughter of 20,000 wolves in 17th century Ireland. Irish artist Michael John Whelan used photography, video and sculpture in the work called *Lupus*, to focus on the place where the last wolf was slain, as a reminder of human interventions and their consequences. Whelan said he invited viewers to contemplate the changing relationship between human beings and nature and to construct their own narrative about the legacy of the wolf.



SWEDEN:

Sweden cancelled its planned wolf cull at the 11th hour, in January, 2015, according to reports from *The Local.se*, an online publication presenting Swedish news in several languages. The nation's stance has swung with the political pendulum, with hunts held in 2010 and 2011, which led the European Commission to protest. Since then, environmentalists successfully fought the Swedish government's wish to allow culling the variously reported 370 to 400 wolves down to a population of 270.

"It is remarkable that the hunt is stopped 12 hours before it's supposed to begin. A number of people have taken time off and gone out into the wilderness," the Swedish Hunters Association's chairman Björn Språngare reportedly told news agency TT.



ENGLAND:

Another art-based story drawing on the UK comes from Wolverhampton in the West Midlands. A plan with the goal to increase tourism by 100,000 and draw in 7 million pounds (\$10.5 million USD, or just over 9 million Euros) involves the installation of 40 wolf statues, each about six feet tall. Modeled on similar efforts elsewhere, like Berlin's bears, Northampton's lions, and Norwich's elephants, which saw similar boosts in tourism and cash, the event is expected to open this month and wrap in September 2016. The statues, envisioned to be scattered about areas of public attractions in the city, will be painted by groups of children, celebrities, and others, then auctioned off to benefit charities. ■

Tracy O'Connell is associate professor emeritus of marketing communications at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls and a member of the International Wolf Center's communications and magazine committees.



Dotty Weber

Book Review

Wolves on the Hunt: the Behavior of Wolves Hunting Wild Prey.

L. David Mech, Douglas W. Smith and Daniel R. MacNulty
with embedded video by Bob Landis in the e-book edition
and in a restricted Web site for hard copy readers.

by David Kline

Life and death drama. A fitting description for this fascinating new book by a trio of wolf experts spanning thousands of field observation hours. With chapters individually devoted to deer, moose, elk, bison and other prey, Mech, Smith and MacNulty present their collective findings and answer dozens of intriguing questions.

What characteristics does a wolf take to the hunt? What kinds of teamwork tactics are common? Do hunting techniques differ by prey species? How successful are wolves when they hunt? What defenses do prey use to survive?

In the book's foreword, Isle Royale wolf biologist Rolf Peterson offers this encapsulating insight: "What does this book accomplish that can't be found in other books about wolves? It has rare breadth, presenting wolf-prey encounters across a diversity of prey that no single person has ever seen, even biologists with a life-long opportunity to observe wolves in the wild. Many lifetimes, then, went into the making of this book. It is safe to say that there has probably never been a single wolf that has seen everything represented here, as most wolves live out their lives within a few hundred miles of where they were born, with access to only one or two primary species of prey. If wolves could read, this might very well be their favorite book."

Loaded with first-hand accounts of the various stages of gray wolf (*Canis lupus*) hunting, chronicled throughout mostly North America, the book

is illustrated with a captivating collection of photographs and informative comparison data charts. For the e-book reader, Bob Landis' video clips take the reader up close to, sometimes seemingly-calculated and other times spontaneous, risk-reward decisions wolves and prey face.

Some clips show the natural tenacity of wolves as they strike their prey, as well as the harm a powerful ungulate can inflict on wolves. As such, the saying "viewer discretion is advised" is applicable, especially for younger viewers.

The authors observe commonalities and differences as they discuss the characteristics of each prey species. The authors explore, explain, and raise questions about the hypothesized roles of nature and nurture in the individual wolf's abilities. Each informative chapter addresses and challenges myths and previously held assumptions.

Thanks to the combination of increased wolf populations world wide, the 1995 wolf reintroduction into Yellowstone National Park (in which two of the authors were key figures), and the advent of new technologies over the past few decades, such as better tracking collars, scientists have many more high-quality observations on record. This book is a celebration of the boon to the emerging knowledge base about wolves.

Mech summarized the purpose of the volume nicely. "Our intent is to immerse the reader in the wolf's life



Wolves on the Hunt will be incredibly valuable to conservation scientists and citizens alike who appreciate wild places and wild things. It's a great illustration of the constant battle between predator and prey and of dogged determination."

—Ted Turner, Chairman,
Turner Endangered Species Fund

as this intrepid creature strives to find, catch, and kill its wide variety of prey." Mission accomplished. ■

EDITOR'S NOTE: The authors are donating their royalties from the sale of this book to the education efforts at the International Wolf Center and to Yellowstone wolf research. Proceeds from books purchased at the Wolf Den Store (shop.wolf.org), as with all retail products, benefit the International Wolf Center, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Personal Encounter

The Mysterious Wolves of Belarus

by Shannon Barber-Meyer

It was just after 3 a.m. as we very quietly exited the van, making sure our water-resistant clothes didn't make too much noise. A wolf researcher howled into the cold and murky mist. We waited in darkness, hoping for an answer. A single wolf howl from about 300 meters in front of us broke the silence. We peered into the agricultural and forested expanse, straining to get a glimpse of the wolf in the faint starlight. Suddenly, from behind, another howl countered. The expedition's leader explained that we were standing between two female wolves and their pups—both being tended to by the same male!

Our group, comprised of scientists, conservationists and policy-makers from over 20 countries, gathered in Belarus for the conference "European Large Carnivores: Problems of Small-sized Populations, Study on Reproduction, and Challenges of Reintroduction Programs." The conference was held at an ecotourism resort in Krasny Bor, an ecologi-

cal research base and game husbandry area, and was hosted by the Center for Biological Resources of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus along with a private company. Belarus is a landlocked country just north of Ukraine on the eastern border of Russia and west of Poland. Krasny Bor is a semi-natural, forested area in northern Belarus. The area contains numerous glacial lakes and rivers and hosts gray wolves, lynx (at about 23.5 kg or 52 lbs., quite a bit larger than the lynx in the US), brown bears, and multiple prey species such as bison, red deer, roe deer, wild boar and moose.

Foreign travel to Belarus can be tightly regulated, depending on one's citizenship, so we were very excited to have the opportunity to learn firsthand about these mysterious wolves of Belarus. Reports of unusual behavior among wild wolves, wolves breeding as yearlings, hybridizing with dogs, and producing multiple litters tended by a single male, had us hungry for details!

At the conference I presented research on the "Proportion of Breeders by Age Class in Wild Female Gray Wolves," coauthored by L. David Mech, to approximately 50 conference attendees. Researchers exchanged information on large-predator ecology, conservation and management, visited several local enclosures where large ungulates are being raised as prey for large carnivores and for human hunting, and took time out to feast on national dishes like draniki (fried potato pancake).

Following the conference, we departed for a 3½-day field excursion in Naliboki Forest, approximately 80 kilometers (50 miles) northwest of Belarus' capital, Minsk, to examine wolf denning habitat. Our expedition leader Dr. Vadim Sidorovich is a wildlife research scientist at the Center for Biological Resources of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and author of 122 scientific articles and six books on predators. In addition to possessing an incredible depth of knowledge about local natural history and Belarusian history, he also discovered 41 wolf dens with pups during 2000-2013 in the approximately 1,900 square kilometers (735 square miles) encompassed within Naliboki Forest. While in



The sun rises over the edge of Naliboki Forest where wolves howled in response to the researchers. The agriculture in this picture is intended to provide food for the large carnivore prey species in the area.

Shannon Barber-Meyer

Naliboki, Sidorovich expertly led us on wolf-howling surveys starting at 3 a.m. and hikes through the forest dotted with brilliantly-colored, fantastically-shaped mushrooms in search of wolf, badger and red fox dens. We even detected sign from brown bear and encountered the invasive, but, nevertheless, by my vote, the cutest, raccoon dogs.

Without maps or navigational aids, Sidorovich guided us with his amazing field skills to numerous previously-used dens, described the detailed history of each, and expounded that often wolves will select dens under vegetation or in a burrow to escape mosquitos. International Wolf Center Wolf Curator Lori Schmidt has observed the Center's ambassador wolves selecting similar resting sites to find refuge from flying insects. As we wound our way through the lovely forest, I was struck by how similar the landscape was to the glacially-derived terrain in northeastern Minnesota. It makes sense—Minnesota is known as the “Land of 10,000 Lakes,” likewise, Belarus is nicknamed the “Country of 10,000 Lakes.”

Sidorovich believes the breeding by yearling wolves, hybridization of wolves and dogs, and multi-litter breeding are unusual occurrences, likely a consequence of low wolf population density due to the high human persecution of wolves (in some cases the killing of resident breeding females during the mating season), and also generally high prey densities. His estimates, based in part on winter censuses that he and others have conducted, is that some 800-1,200 wolves inhabit Belarus during early winter and about 600-800 are killed each year. Hunting wolves in Belarus is allowed year-round, but apparently most are killed during December-March. Although Belarus does have an important livestock industry, mostly cows and pigs, the main reason some people favor wolf eradication is because wolves are perceived as competitors for the economic resource of large-ungulate trophy game.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, hunting wolves became much more efficient with newly constructed forest roads and off-road vehicles resulting in



Piero Genovesi

Our group prepares for the 3 a.m. howl survey.

easier access to wolves by hunters. With so many wolves killed each year, how is an overall population of 800-1,200 wolves possible? Sidorovich suspects it is because of relatively high production, such as larger litters during lower wolf densities, earlier breeding of females, multi-breeding packs and, perhaps, dispersal from Russia. The wolf management plan that he authored in 2008 prohibited the killing of wolves in protected natural areas like Naliboki Forest, but there is not always adherence to

...the main reason some people favor wolf eradication is because wolves are perceived as competitors for the economic resource of large-ungulate trophy game.



Dr. Vadim Sidorovich describes the history of this particular den.

the prohibition policy, as is sometimes the case elsewhere in the world. Since 2000, wolves in Naliboki Forest have not been heavily persecuted, and Sidorovich estimates there are currently about five to seven packs inside Naliboki.

Sidorovich is interested in conducting further studies of the wolf-dog hybrid situation in and around Naliboki Forest over the next three to five years, and he is searching for sponsors for that research.

During winter 2014-2015 he tracked a female dog and large male wolf that have three pups on the outskirts of Naliboki Forest. It will be interesting to follow his research to learn if the unusual behaviors of the mysterious wolves of Belarus persist. If changes in wolf persecution occur, will breeding yearling wolves, multi-breeding packs, and wolf-dog hybrid packs become more rare? Only research and time will tell! ■



Dr. Barber-Meyer outside of a wolf den in Naliboki Forest. Note the black scat just inside the entrance of the den and to the right.

Dr. Shannon Barber-Meyer is the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) wildlife biologist implementing the Superior National Forest (SNF) Wolf and Deer Project under the direction of Dr. L. David Mech. Prior to joining the USGS, she taught graduate students in Grand Teton National Park, researched tiger conservation in Asia, emperor penguin populations in Antarctica, and helped reintroduce Mexican gray wolves into the Southwest. In 2001 and 2002 as a graduate student Shannon researched optimal foraging of wolves in the SNF and, in 2003-2006, elk calf mortality in Yellowstone National Park.



Belarus landscape.

A Look Beyond

The Endangered Red Wolf: Shutting Down Tomorrow?

by Cornelia Hutt

“Artificial extinction shuts down tomorrow... Destroying species is like tearing pages out of an unread book, written in a language humans hardly know how to read.”

“Duties to Endangered Species”
— Holmes Rolston III

Late spring has coaxed wildflowers into bloom at the Red Wolf Education Center pollination garden in Columbia, North Carolina. Nearby, a group of children and parents sit quietly under a canopy of trees outside the wolf enclosure, all eyes focused on two wolves moving with silent grace through the pine needles and damp leaves, their rich copper and gray pelage blending with the sun-dappled colors of their forested habitat. “Shy shadow from the long past,” Christopher Camuto calls the red wolf in his hauntingly beautiful book, *Another Country*... “Unseen shape between the trees.”

Kim Wheeler, the Red Wolf Coalition (RWC) Executive Director and program leader, weaves stories into her narrative about the red wolf's close brush with extinction and its 1987 return to the wild in northeastern North Carolina. Her treasure trove of lore about the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Red Wolf Recovery Program brims with details about the first reintroduction 28 years ago and the individual wolves that represent the resilience and tenacity of these critically endangered animals. She tells the visitors about the brutally hard job of field work in the 1.7 million-acre (680,000 hectares) recovery region. Her reminiscences about the pioneering men and women who devoted their lives to

bringing the red wolf home to North Carolina flow naturally into her core message: how to tackle the challenges of ensuring this rare species' future in the wild. And challenges there are, some of them old, some more recent.

Coyotes, once absent from most of the area east of the Mississippi River, have expanded their range and filled the niches historically occupied by the wolves the Cherokee called Wa'ya. If their population numbers are healthy, red wolves typically choose members of their own species as mates. But red wolves are more closely related to coyotes than are gray wolves, and dispersers may breed with their small cousins if

they cannot find red wolf mates. Thus, hybridization remains a concern for red wolf restoration.

Despite their greater size and distinctive coloration, red wolves are sometimes mistaken for coyotes, and this misidentification has caused a recent increase in red wolf gunshot mortality. Additionally, strong evidence exists that some wolves are being deliberately shot. Because the red wolf is listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), killing one intentionally is a felony. But catching lawbreakers is difficult in a rural region with vast expanses of row crops, dense forests and impenetrable wetlands.

How will the RWC address solutions to the problems and coordinate strategies to secure a future for the red wolf?

The Coalition will: 1. Monitor closely the November 2014 Settlement Agreement in federal court between

continued on page 28



Wild Kids



Notes from the Field

Wolves around the world mostly eat hoofed animals scientists call ungulates. This includes deer, antelope, musk ox, caribou, elk, bison, and moose. Each season of the year, some ungulates move around, or migrate, to find grasses, shrubs and other vegetation to eat. For example, elk and moose will go up mountains in the summer and down to valleys in the winter. Antelope and bison herds often migrate to wintering grounds. If there is not enough prey in their territory, wolves will follow migrating ungulates so they have enough food.



Meet the Pack



Denali is a Rocky Mountain subspecies of the gray wolf (*Canis lupus occidentalis*). He is the largest member of the Exhibit Pack at the International Wolf Center, weighing approximately 135 pounds. Despite Denali being the largest member of the pack, he is not the dominant male. That is a role his brother Aidan retains at this time. Dominance is not always measured by the largest member of the pack, but more by attitude. Denali is a mild mannered member of the pack. He plays with Boltz and Luna and enjoys exploring the enclosure. ■

← Denali



Word Find

Use the Word Bank below to find as many behaviors as possible in the Word Find puzzle. Words can run horizontally, vertically, diagonally, forward and backward.

Dominance

Boltz

Deer

Attitude

Ungulates

Muskox

Denali

Migrate

Caribou

Aidan

Antelope

Herd

Grizzer

Bison

Pack

Luna

Moose

B	E	M	F	N	B	X	O	K	S	U	M	J	O
R	D	O	M	I	N	A	N	C	E	G	P	E	R
G	T	B	P	A	C	N	G	T	Z	Q	P	G	P
W	J	D	A	M	I	A	L	A	J	O	P	Y	N
C	U	F	C	J	S	D	R	S	L	E	I	B	M
A	N	Q	K	F	W	I	A	E	F	X	R	I	F
R	G	I	B	A	O	S	T	N	Z	E	G	S	Z
I	U	L	O	U	T	N	C	O	Z	R	T	O	P
B	L	A	L	W	A	T	Y	Z	A	H	G	N	M
O	A	N	T	M	Y	C	I	T	H	E	R	D	F
U	T	E	Z	I	O	R	E	T	I	D	R	M	G
R	E	D	H	U	G	O	D	Z	U	P	M	H	Q
T	S	N	P	A	X	B	S	J	C	D	I	J	E
M	C	Q	L	U	N	A	R	E	T	R	E	E	D



Parents and Grandparents:

As an education-focused nonprofit organization, the International Wolf Center wants the rising generation to form positive attitudes about wolves through science-based facts. Please share these *Wild Kids* pages with your children, grandchildren and other kids. They may enjoy the photos in articles geared towards older readers throughout the issue. We hope the puzzle on this page is an activity young and old will enjoy doing together! ■

Vocabulary

Ungulates Hooved mammals (having hoofs) such as deer, elk, mountain goat, bighorn sheep, moose, antelope, caribou and bison.

Migrate When animals, fish or birds move periodically from one area or climate to another and back again.

Territory An area occupied by a pack of wolves that they defend from other packs and that can provide sufficient prey to support the pack.

Continued from **A Look Beyond**,
page 25

the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) and the plaintiffs (including the RWC) in a lawsuit filed by the Southern Environmental Law Center (SELC). The Settlement Agreement strongly favors red wolf conservation and includes some key components:

- NCWRC agrees to list the red wolf as a “threatened” species in North Carolina. This is a huge victory, as previously NCWRC refused to recognize the red wolf and to afford it protection.
- Coyote hunting is forbidden on public lands in the five-county restoration area, and coyote permits are required on private lands.
- NCWRC is subject to various requirements for reporting canid deaths and for hunter education and outreach.
- These requirements end the “open season” mentality that has, until now, surrounded coyote hunting and that, in turn, has inflicted harm on red wolves.

2. Reinforce the message of the recent litigation which demonstrated that red wolves have earned their place on northeastern North Carolina’s landscape. The RWC must also motivate honest and useful communication among local citizens, landowners, and government agencies. The organization must lead an initiative to bring together stakeholders with various interests and engage them in a cooperative council to determine how the red wolf and its habitat can be managed to minimize conflict and to maximize the animal’s value.

3. Convince ethical hunters to rid their ranks of unethical hunters and poachers and urge hunters to adopt the notion that preserving predators is part of their hunting experience.

4. Continue to support the Red Wolf Species Survival Captive Breeding Program (SSP) so that genetic variation in the red wolf population remains a priority. These accredited zoos and nature centers also teach visitors about the value of red wolf conservation. The

RWC undertook a major fundraiser in 2014 to assist the SSP partners.

5. Urge the USFWS to renew its commitment to red wolf recovery and to the long-term survival of wild red wolves. In the fall of 2014, the agency conducted an internal review of the Red Wolf Recovery Program. The result was a recommendation to develop and implement a revised recovery plan. Despite this, North Carolina’s state wildlife commission (NCWRC) sent two formal resolutions to the USFWS asking the agency to terminate the Recovery Program and to declare the red wolf extinct in the wild.

The transfixed visitors at the Education Center are reluctant to break away from watching the wolves. There is something about these lithe, sinewy predators—a fierce wildness that seems undiminished by captivity behind the chain link fence. Kim Wheeler delights the children by leading them in a group howl. She tells the youngsters and their parents that it’s the song of the red wolf that speaks to her heart and reinforces her determination. “It’s that sound,” she

says, “and knowing that it could have been silenced.”

At this writing, the USFWS is poised to announce the fate of the Red Wolf Recovery Program. The agency’s decision will determine whether or not there will be a tomorrow for the red wolf in the wild. ■

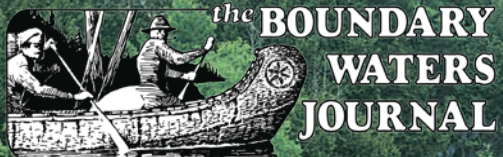
Cornelia Hutt is a retired teacher and the chair of the Red Wolf Coalition Board of Directors.

For More Information About Red Wolves:

- Red Wolf Coalition on Facebook at www.facebook.com/redwolfcoalition
- Web sites: www.redwolves.com and www.fws.gov/redwolf/index.html.
- Additional reading:
- Beeland, T. DeLene. *The Secret World of Red Wolves: America’s Other Wolf*.
- Camuto, Christopher. *Another Country: Journeying Toward the Cherokee Mountains*.
- Holmes Rolston III. “Duties to Endangered Species.” *BioScience*, Vol. 35, No. 11, 1985.



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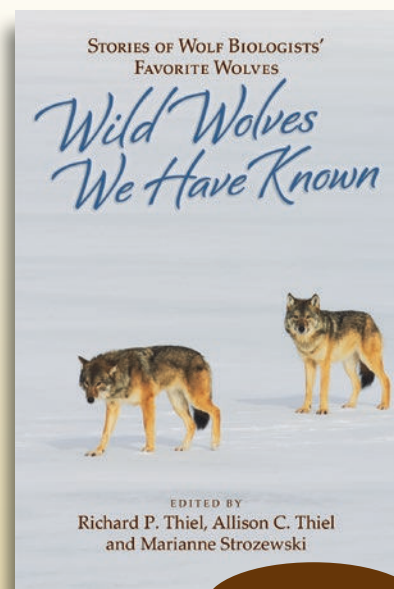
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...But even this minuscule sliver of 3410's life told us some remarkable things about tundra wolves' dependence on caribou, and the difficulty of following their ever-moving prey...

...and in front of us was Timish. ... I was sure the wolf must have heard my hammering heartbeat, but the animal just stood there looking at us. Then she moved on in a slow trot, passed us at the edge of the trees, and disappeared into the darkness...

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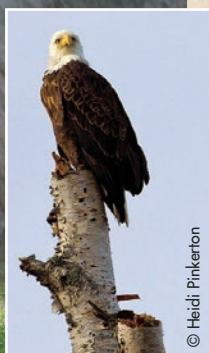
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