

# INTERNATIONAL WOLF

A PUBLICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL WOLF CENTER  
SPRING 2010



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# INTERNATIONAL WOLF

THE QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL WOLF CENTER  
VOLUME 20, NO. 1 SPRING 2010

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International Wolf Center

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*Bruce Erickson*

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Photo by Dr. Pierre Fogal,  
October 2009.

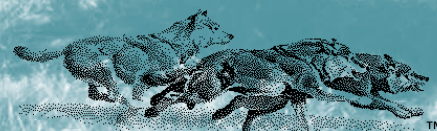
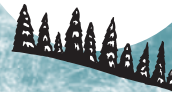
In the polar regions, the sun does not appear above the horizon in winter. Fogal got a pleasant surprise when he looked at his hauntingly beautiful image. "It was a tough shoot...300mm hand held at twilight. I'm pretty amazed that anything turned out at all!" he said.

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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 Bruce Erickson, magazine coordinator.

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

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## International Wolf Center • 2010 • Celebrating 25 Years of Teaching the World About Wolves



Becki Johnston





## From the Executive Director

### Back to the Future

Perhaps you remember the *Back to the Future* movies in the 1980s and '90s. In the movies, eccentric inventor Doc Emmett Brown builds a time-travel machine and zips back to the past and into the future with his young friend Marty McFly. George, Marty's father, offers him encouraging advice: "If you put your mind to it, you can accomplish anything."

This year, the International Wolf Center celebrates its 25th anniversary and its history of making a difference in the survival of wolf populations. In 1985, a small group of people led by Dave Mech created this nonprofit educational organization dedicated to teaching the world about wolves. If you put your mind to it, you can accomplish anything—and they did. At that time, Minnesota had the largest wolf population in the contiguous United States, with approximately 1,500 and only a few in Wisconsin and Michigan.



Mary Ortiz

Today, approximately 4,000 wolves live in these three states. In 1995 and 1996, history was made when 66 wolves were introduced into Yellowstone National Park and central Idaho. At the end of 2008, the estimated minimum number of wolves in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming was at least 1,645. Mexican wolves have been reintroduced in Arizona and New Mexico, and wolves are starting to travel down from Canada into the Northwest and possibly the Northeast. Red wolves are also making a comeback in northeastern North Carolina.

Since 1993, more than 750,000 people have visited the Center's interpretive exhibits in Ely, Minnesota. Members from more than 70 countries have financially supported our educational efforts, "teaching the world about wolves."

It is truly amazing what we have done by "putting our minds to it" — helping to accomplish wolf recovery that seemed impossible only 25 years ago. Our members, volunteers, staff and board are part of this tremendous success story. We look back with pride and look forward with a sense of adventure and purpose at our organization's opportunities to help populations of wolves in the next 25 years.

**Please take time to celebrate with us in-person, in Ely, or online.** Watch for the many celebratory activities soon to be announced on our Web site, [www.wolf.org](http://www.wolf.org), in this magazine, and in other correspondence.

Now, on to the future...there is so much more to do! ■

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# A Conversation with Suzanne Stone

## EDITOR'S NOTE:

In the Fall 2009 issue of *International Wolf*, we interviewed Ed Bangs, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's wolf recovery coordinator for the Northern Rockies. In an effort to provide a different perspective surrounding the delisting of the Northern Rockies wolf population, we talk with Suzanne Stone, the Northern Rockies wolf specialist for Defenders of Wildlife.

Photo courtesy of Defenders of Wildlife



*Suzanne Stone has worked in wolf restoration in the Northern Rockies since 1988. She currently oversees Defenders' programs for wolf conservation and restoration in Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming.*

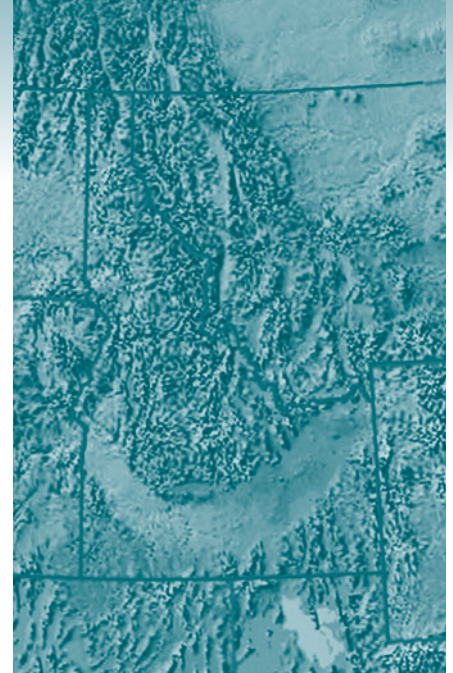


**IWC: How long have you been a professional wolf conservationist, and what is your position with Defenders of Wildlife?**

STONE: I've worked in wolf conservation in the Northern Rocky Mountains (NRM) since 1988. I served as a member of the U.S./Canadian wolf team to reintroduce wolves to Yellowstone and Idaho. Since 1999, I've been the Northern Rockies wolf specialist for Defenders of Wildlife, working directly with ranchers to provide more than \$1 million in fair-value compensation for verified livestock losses and to develop and implement proactive, nonlethal methods and tools to help avoid or lessen wolf predation on livestock.

**IWC: Does Defenders of Wildlife support wolf delisting in the NRM?**

We have repeatedly called for a new two-pronged process to achieve wolf delisting in the NRM. First, a technical team consisting of agency personnel as well as independent scientists with relevant expertise in genetics, wildlife population dynamics, and recovery planning should be convened to analyze the current science on wolf metapopulation, distribution and genetic requirements to establish what constitutes long-term recovery for wolves in the region. And second, the process should address the polarized conflict over wolves that has plagued this issue for decades by bringing together a group of regional stakeholders including ranchers, tribal representatives, hunters, scientists, wildlife conservationists and outdoor recreationists, religious community leaders and others to work together under a professional mediation process to develop wolf management solutions.



**“We’ve already seen situations when scientifically valuable wolves, such as members of Yellowstone’s popular Cottonwood pack, were killed as they crossed the park boundary resulting in the loss of radio-collared wolves that offered park biologists years of critical data on wolf behavior.”**



International Wolf Center

**“Our main concern is what happens to the population level and distribution of wolves *after* delisting.”**

**IWC: Do you support state management of wolves when they are delisted?**

STONE: If wolves are properly delisted under adequate federal and state plans, we fully support state and tribal management. However, some state politicians in our region use the word “manage” when they mean “kill.” Managing wildlife means being responsible for conservation of the species. Conservation of state-managed species such as elk, deer, and bears includes all levels of management from promoting reproduction and genetic connectivity to protecting the species from illegal killing to regulating hunting seasons. Unfortunately, wolf management is often politically driven and culturally charged.

**IWC: What numbers and distribution of wolves would you require for delisting to occur?**

STONE: There is no magic number. However, the current delisting rule and state policies allow for numbers so low that they are completely incompatible with maintaining healthy wolf populations long term. Our main concern is what happens to the population level and distribution of wolves *after* delisting. While wildlife scientists often agree that the approximately 2,000 wolves in the NRM may be sufficient for recovery, many do not believe that 150 wolves per state or 450 wolves region-wide — the minimum requirement under the current delisting plan — would be enough to secure a recovered, sustainable population into the future. Beyond the numbers, distribution is key to long-term viability of the wolf population. The three subpopulations in the NRM ecosystem must be interconnected to the Canadian wolf population to ensure genetic viability and ecological function.





**IWC: Do you agree with the current government control of wolves depredating on livestock?**

STONE: Some government control actions are helpful in reducing wolf depredations, including helping livestock owners better understand wolf behavior to better protect livestock. Agencies can help livestock owners by implementing appropriate non-lethal, proactive measures to deter wolves from preying on livestock. Some of the most effective methods include: removing dead or dying livestock, increasing human supervision of livestock when possible, using guard dogs to protect sheep, installing different types of fencing and lighting, and using a variety of scare devices. The effectiveness of these deterrents is highly dependent on a number of factors, including type, number, and age of livestock, grazing and pasture conditions and season. However, most solutions are based on common-sense practices that elevate a wolf's sense of risk associated with preying on livestock. Lethal control should be a last resort and only to remove wolves that have become habituated to killing livestock.

Some other government actions tend to have no effect or worsen livestock losses. These include randomly killing wolves in the vicinity of livestock, which can result in a pack splitting up. This is problematic because wolves under 10-months-of-age are typically inexperienced at hunting wild prey and might be more likely to kill livestock when left to fend for themselves. Randomly killing wolves rarely addresses the problem because new wolves typically recolonize habitat within a year after resident wolves are killed. This situation often spirals into a chronic loss of both livestock and wolves. Addressing the root cause of livestock depredation can help break this cycle.

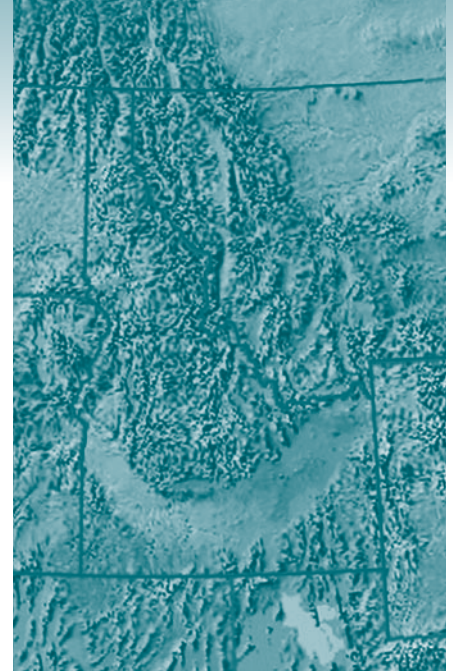
After working closely with other groups and agencies, Defenders published *Livestock and Wolves: A Guide to Nonlethal Tools and Methods to Reduce Conflicts*. To download a copy, go to [www.defenders.org/proactive](http://www.defenders.org/proactive).

**IWC: Do you think there would ever be a reason for allowing the public to participate in wolf hunting or trapping?**

STONE: In this case, hunting is premature and irresponsible given the inadequacy of the federal delisting rule and the state management plans. With that said, hunting is part of our Western heritage, and Defenders represents members who are hunters as well as those who oppose hunting. In fact, responsible hunters are some of the most knowledgeable advocates for wildlife conservation. Many people support fair-chase hunting for animals that provide food like elk and deer but oppose hunting just for sport. Any hunting of wolves should be done with the goal of managing and continuing to recover and maintain wolves — and conducted with as much professionalism and respect as other hunts.

**IWC: Do you think hunting quotas in these states will harm the NRM wolf population?**

STONE: Yes. We've already seen situations when scientifically valuable wolves, such as members of Yellowstone's popular Cottonwood pack, were killed as they crossed the park boundary resulting in the loss of radio-collared wolves that offered park biologists years of critical data on wolf behavior. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game commissioners stated at their August 17 meeting that the current hunting quotas were set intentionally low to avoid the consequences of ongoing litigation against delisting. They also announced that their next step was to reduce the state's wolf population from an estimated 1,020 wolves to 518. ■



**“Any hunting of wolves should be done with the goal of managing and continuing to recover and maintain wolves — and conducted with as much professionalism and respect as other hunts.”**



# WOLF HUNT: Updates and

The states opened wolf-hunting seasons last fall, with a quota of 220 in Idaho and 75 in Montana. Seventy-two were harvested in Montana and 131 in Idaho as of December 21, 2009.

Opinions about the hunt vary considerably, and here *International Wolf* presents a sampling of perspectives. Please note several hunters who harvested a wolf declined to answer questions because of colleagues who had been harassed. In addition, we tried to get opinions from more Idaho residents but were unsuccessful.

**What is your opinion of the 2009 wolf hunts? What worked well and what needs to be improved next time?**

**Ralph Maughan, president, Wolf Recovery Foundation:** The Montana hunt seemed well run. The wolf quota filled rapidly. Detailed data were made available soon afterward. The Idaho hunt continues until March 31 and was extended once it was underway. The Idaho quota is higher than Montana's and is being filled slowly. I worry the Idaho hunt will disrupt next year's pup "crop." Montana needs to have much more refined hunting zones — smaller, each with a quota. There should be no hunting directly adjacent to Yellowstone, neither in Idaho nor Montana. Idaho's quota is too high.

**Carolyn Sime, Montana statewide wolf coordinator:** We started a new chapter for wolf conservation and man-

The Endangered Species Act worked so well in restoring wolves to several states that, after federal delisting and the return of wolf management to states, Idaho and Montana judged that there are enough wolves (1,000 plus in Idaho and 600 plus in Montana) to allow the public to hunt them.





# Perspectives

agement, and that in our view is very positive. What we have begun to do is develop an interest in this species more broadly than just with wolf advocates where you begin to manage wolves similar to other wildlife and in conjunction with other wildlife. This requires the wolf-advocacy community to make some room at the table for the hunter conservationist, and it requires the hunter conservationist, to make room for folks who really like wolves but do not want to hunt them. There is some give and take all the way around, and that is a very positive development. That is a success. The population is secure, and everyone's worst fears did not come true. Unfortunately, despite how well and smoothly everything went, people continue to use the wolf as a symbol to argue their value system.

**Steve P., Montana hunter:** I bought a wolf license to support wolf management and to celebrate the fact that wolves are back in Montana in huntable numbers. However, I had no intention of seeking out a wolf and might well have chosen not to harvest one even if I had the opportunity to do so. I think the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) demonstrated it could professionally manage a scientifically justifiable wolf harvest in Montana. We need to get to a place where wolves are treated no differently than black bears and mountain lions, and this year's hunt was a big step in that direction. Even though I did not see a wolf, my 12-year-old son and I saw very fresh

tracks of a large male and a second smaller wolf. We followed the tracks for almost a mile as they were headed back toward the truck. My son very much enjoyed unraveling the story in the snow.

**Trav B., Idaho outfitter and fifth-generation Idahoan:** The wolf hunt was as I expected, but I think it caught a lot of people off guard. I think some hunters thought it would be easier. Wolf hunting has mostly been just a secondary species to hunt along with elk or deer. Now that elk and deer seasons are over, my guess is we will not see many more wolves harvested before March 31 because there are not many hunters running around in the woods. I do not believe many hunters will specifically target wolves this winter. What has worked well is the unlimited tag sales. It has worked well to have the wolf season coincide with elk and deer season to allow the largest harvest possible. What needs changing is the harvest. The bottom line is we need to get the wolf numbers down to the 500 level.

**Mike Leahy, Defenders of Wildlife:** About as expected. Wolves were easier to find than many anticipated, and packs were disrupted. Montana filled its quota early, while Idaho extended its hunt almost up to the denning season to make sure its target of 220 wolves — about a quarter of the state's population — is met. The federal delisting rule and state plans should be improved before wolf hunts continue.

The hunts are taking place in the absence of balanced wolf management plans that include commitments to ensure wolf recovery will be sustained and continue. Hunts can therefore be used to reduce wolves to unsustainably low numbers — around 150 wolves per state under the current federal delisting rule. That is not a recovered population of wolves for the vast Northern Rockies — it is a token population. Idaho has been clear its intention is to reduce its wolf population over time through hunting and aggressive management. Defenders of Wildlife does not like the hunting of wolves, but we accept wolves will be managed including through hunting. However, as with other wildlife, wolf hunts and license fees should be used to recover and expand and then maintain populations, not diminish them. These fundamental concerns should be addressed before further wolf hunts take place.

**Bob Ream, Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Commission:** I think the hunting season went incredibly well in Montana. No pack was eliminated, and all will be producing litters in the spring, barring non-hunting losses. There was a very broad geographic distribution of animals taken. The fears raised on both sides of the issue proved overblown. Perhaps one of the biggest benefits of holding a wolf hunt is that it has helped to pacify those who are angry that there are too many wolves and quelled the fears of the alarmists who were preaching that we would decimate the population.



## Idaho Wolf Harvest Information

Last Updated: December 4, 2009

Wolf Zone	Harvest Limit	Number Harvested	Limit Remaining	Status	Season Dates
Panhandle	30	13	17	Open	Oct 1–Mar 31
Palouse-Hells Canyon	5	5	0	Open	Oct 1–Mar 31
Lolo	27	6	21	Open	Sept 1–Mar 31
Dworshak-Elk City	18	18	0	CLOSED	
Selway	17	6	11	Open	Sept 15–Mar 31
Middle Fork	17	14	3	Open	Sept 15–Mar 31
Salmon	16	3	13	Open	Oct 1–Mar 31
McCall-Weiser	15	15*	0	CLOSED	
Sawtooth	55	26	29	Open	Sept 1–Mar 31
Southern Mountains	10	9	1	Open	Oct 1–Mar 31
Upper Snake	5	5	0	CLOSED	
Southern Idaho	5	--	5	Open	Oct 1–Mar 31

TOTALS

220

140

80

\* One killed illegally before season opened.  
Wolf zones close when harvest limits are met.



### What are your family, friends and neighbors saying about the wolf hunts?

**Gayle J., Montana native:** In general my friends and family support a well-managed wolf hunt that will emulate bear and (mountain) lion management hunts. It is possible to over-harvest predators, so careful management is needed.

**Trav B., Idaho outfitter and fifth-generation Idahoan:** Most hunters in Idaho were very upset with the wolf reintroduction. I think now that wolves are here, most folks can live with them, but the people of Idaho need to be able to manage them. Defenders of Wildlife and other similar organizations are using the court system to promote their anti-hunting agenda.

**Steve P., Montana hunter:** Feelings are all over the map on wolves in Montana. I have friends who oppose

the hunt, would never think of shooting a wolf and would be appalled to find out that I had bought a wolf license. There are many others who are convinced that wolves will eat all the game animals, and hunting as we know it in Montana will soon be over. I know several people who had no problem with the idea of wolves in Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks but were not so thrilled to find them in their favorite hunting spots. Clearly wolves are well spread out across western Montana and are reproducing and increasing in numbers. In some places wolves have indisputably knocked back the numbers of elk.

**Wolf hunting is such a polarizing issue. What do you think is the best way to bring people together on this issue?**

### Mike Leahy, Defenders of Wildlife:

Broader acceptance within the Northern Rockies of wolves as native wildlife would be a good first step. Too many want to see wolves treated differently than other wildlife — suppressed at ridiculously low numbers, killed to try to artificially boost ungulates for hunting, or removed at the slightest hint of conflict. Wolves are native wildlife, and states have a duty to manage them in sustainable numbers in trust for all Americans. States need to embrace this responsibility, not shirk from it.

Conservationists need to continue to try harder to accommodate the legitimate needs of people potentially affected by wolves, such as livestock producers. But this is true of all wildlife — elk place an enormous burden on farmers and ranchers, for example — and this burden should not fall more heavily on wolves than other wildlife.

## Montana Wolf Hunting Season Status

Status updated: November 17, 2009.



Wolf Management Unit	Quota	Number Harvested	Number Remaining	Status
1	41	38	3	Closed.
North Fork Unit	2	2	0	Closed.
2	22	21	1	Closed.
3	12	13	0	Closed.

### Facts about harvested wolves in Montana:

- Average shooting distance was 150 yards; shortest 10 yards; longest 430 yards
- Most were harvested before 12 p.m.
- Most were harvested on public land
- 69 out of 72 successful hunters were Montana residents
- 41 males and 30 females were harvested
- 44 were yearlings or pups, 27 were adults
- Pups weighed 62 lbs. on average, yearlings 80 lbs., and adults 98 lbs. (largest 117 lbs.)

#### Bob Ream, Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Commission:

Hunters bought over 15,000 wolf tags in Montana at \$19 each, and many were purchased by people who simply want to support wolf management, with no intent of hunting them. I think when wolves become accepted as just another predator and just another game animal, like all the other major predators in our rich diversity of wildlife in Montana, the issue will not be so polarized, at least not in Montana. We will only get there by proving that the states are fully capable of sound wolf management. The safeguard that conservationists have is that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will monitor the states for five years from delisting to assure that the states are not harming full wolf recovery. The state has had a long history of science-based wildlife management with many species including other large predators — mountain lions, black bears, grizzly bears.

#### Ralph Maughan, president, Wolf Recovery Foundation:

I favor relisting the wolf with new wolf management plans created with all parties heard equally. Idaho's was controlled entirely by livestock interests. Wolf advocates had no voice at all.

#### Steve P., Montana hunter:

Not long ago I realized that we have a Monte Dolack poster titled something like "Restoring the wolf to Yellowstone National Park" hanging in our bathroom. As I recall, proceeds of the poster went to Yellowstone wolf restoration. Like many such things, it had been years since I really looked at it or thought about it. When I bought that poster around 1990, wolves in Montana were limited to a few wanderers moving down the Rockies from Canada. Now, my son and I see the big telltale tracks in the snow while hunting on a ridge not 15 miles from our home in Helena. It really is an amazing recovery and wildlife success story.

#### Carolyn Sime, Montana statewide wolf coordinator:

We just had the first fair-chase hunting season in the lower 48 states. I think that is a remarkable achievement for all parties involved, whether you are the hunter conservationist or the wolf advocate who fought hard for the reintroduction itself. We should celebrate that. I think the hazard is that we present wildlife conservation in mutually exclusive terms because then we all lose. ■



Mike Possis





## Tracking the Pack

### The Maturation of Another Litter

by Lori Schmidt, wolf curator,  
International Wolf Center

The International Wolf Center has raised litters of pups since the first temporary exhibit in 1989. During the winter of 2009-10, the Exhibit Pack showed behaviors that coincide with maturing wolves. Denali and Aidan, born April 27, 2008, reached full adult size around eight months of age, but they did not reach behavioral maturity until 18 to 24

months. One word describes behavioral maturity of a wolf—testing.

Wolf-care staff began noticing more intense behavioral interactions in September 2009. Instead of standing by and watching the adult wolves in chase behavior, Aidan and Denali began joining the chase. There was a distinct difference between Aidan's and Denali's responses



Denali doing a scruff grab to Grizzer

and that difference was Maya. Likely due to Aidan's more timid personality, Maya became focused on Aidan, and when he showed excitability, she dominated him with an intensity that made him wary. If the pack began a chase, Aidan anticipated Maya's response and ran the other way, often with a high-pitched shriek before she even touched him.

Life for Denali was quite different. Contrary to Aidan's daily bouts of dominance, Denali had no boundaries. Shadow would occasionally discipline Denali if he was too obnoxious, but he did not follow through with a full pin to the ground as Maya did to Aidan. Grizzer continued his tolerant behavior for the younger pack members and did nothing to discourage Denali's constant scruff bites and wrestling behavior.

Without boundaries, a maturing wolf has the confidence to test for status without consequences. Denali

certainly fit that description and was most often observed in a behavior termed a "fore-leg stab," where a wolf pokes another wolf with a stiff front leg to show status. Other behaviors also emerged showing this confidence, including a chin rest, where a wolf rests a chin on the back of another wolf, and ride up and mounting behaviors, where a wolf climbs on the back of another wolf. Wolves are very efficient at body language. One of the most intense postures of a maturing wolf is the direct stare. A stare shows a wolf is not intimidated and is ready for a challenge. The full description of these behaviors can be found in the Center's ethogram, available through the Wolf Den Store or through the online shopping section of [www.wolf.org](http://www.wolf.org). For updates on the pack, check the wolf logs weekly, or visit our YouTube channel for video footage of pack dynamics. ■



### Malik's Retirement

On November 17, 2009, we retired Malik, an arctic wolf born in May 2000, from the Exhibit Pack. This was in response to intense pack aggression toward Malik, the lowest ranking pack member. While Malik did not sustain serious injuries during the aggression, the tendency for wolves to increase aggression as winter approaches led the Center staff and veterinarians to proactively retire Malik rather than risk significant injury. Mobbing

of lower pack members can occur in the wild, but wolves in the wild have the freedom to disperse. Captive wolves do not have that ability, so wolf managers need to be aware of tension and stress within the pack. There are issues with managing a lone wolf, but this situation may be short term — Malik's littermate, Shadow, will likely be moving into retirement in the upcoming year. To follow the progress of Malik's transition to retirement, check the wolf logs at [www.wolf.org](http://www.wolf.org) and YouTube videos posted weekly. — L.S.



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# Thank You!



## The Center Thanks Donors for Their Generosity on Give to the Max Day!

The International Wolf Center had reason to be extra thankful last November. Through the extraordinary generosity of donors, the Center raised nearly \$30,000 by participating in Give to the Max Day on November 17, 2009, with GiveMN.org.

GiveMN.org, a first-of-its kind Web site, was created to make online giving easier and more convenient. The site helps donors find and support nonprofits that match their charitable giving goals. It also helps nonprofits connect with more potential donors, reduce fundraising costs, and develop new and creative ways to raise money.

"The GiveMN Web site was incredibly easy to navigate," says donor Theresa DeGeest, who gave to the International Wolf Center. "Despite the fact I've never visited the Center, I feel like my community and I are better off for the International Wolf Center and the work it does to educate people and protect wolves and their habitat. Lastly, I like the idea of minimizing the need (and expense) that comes with nonprofits having to mail donation requests."

The Give to the Max Day's goal was to raise as much money as possible for Minnesota nonprofits during a 24-hour period. By all accounts, it exceeded its goal. The day raised more than

\$14 million for more than 3,000 Minnesota nonprofits. Perhaps even more impressive, Give to the Max Day inspired nearly 40,000 people to donate to Minnesota nonprofits on GiveMN.org!

"I chose to donate through Give to the Max Day to help the Center raise more money through the prospect of matching funds," says Leslie Brown. "I viewed it as an opportunity to make my donation go further for an organization doing work that I believe in and support. I will definitely use the GiveMN Web site in the future. Along with the ability to track all my donations, it is great to be able to set up monthly donations to organizations I support in Minnesota."

The International Wolf Center raised \$29,844 through donations made by nearly 200 people and saved more than \$1,000 in credit

card processing fees on Give to the Max Day. "I love wolves and it was an easy way to donate," said Ron Yorgey, who is using GiveMN to make weekly donations to the Center.

"We are so thankful for the generosity shown on Give to the Max Day," says Francie Nelson, director of development and communications for the International Wolf Center. "We are even more excited by the number of members and first-time donors who made generous contributions that day."

As a philanthropic experiment, Nelson used the unique functionality of the GiveMN Web site to raise money with a new tool on Give to the Max Day. Creating her own fundraising page, "Wolves and Wildlands—Preserving Nature's Balance," within the GiveMN site, she raised nearly \$1,400 through her network of family and friends. "It was a blast and very easy," says Nelson. "I just followed the instructions, created this page, told my friends about it, and watched it throughout the day. I can see many opportunities for friends of the Center to create their own fundraising pages." ■



*International Wolf Center Minneapolis staff on Give to the Max Day—left to right: Kristine Oberg, Carissa Winter, Bruce Erickson, Sharon Reed, Rebecca Mesa and Francie Nelson*

# Wolves of the World

## Studying Ellesmere Wolves: High Tech in the High Arctic

by Dean Cluff

“Wolves are very intriguing animals but difficult to get to know,” says Dave Mech. (Mech 1997:19). This fact has lured Mech to the High Arctic region of Canada’s north, with the promise that more could be learned about the behavior and ecology of wolves. Wolves are not afraid of humans here because they are not hunted this far north. In fact, wolves here are curious about people and may approach closely. Such is the case at Eureka, on Ellesmere Island in Nunavut, Canada, the site of a weather station and small military base run by the Canadian government on the north shore of Slidre Fiord. Wolves often visit the weather station and show a remarkable casualness to

people. This behavior and the 24-hour daylight in summer make it possible for researchers to directly observe and monitor wolves, tasks that are much more difficult for those who observe elusive wolves found farther south. Consequently, since 1986 Mech has spent part of his summers traveling to Eureka to observe and interact with wolves.

Wolves have denned in this area, often close to the weather station for many years, and likely for centuries (Mech & Packard 1990). These dens have been accessible by all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), and given the wolves’ tolerance for people, have allowed

unprecedented opportunities over the past 23 years to observe and interact with a wolf pack. Not only can researchers watch wolves near the den, but they can also track wolves on the hunt. It was amusing for me during my first visit to Eureka in 2004 to follow wolves traveling along a trail — with them occasionally looking back at us, as if to see that we were keeping up.

For many years and for 11 times since 1986, wolves here have occupied a spectacular rock den about five miles from the weather station. This traditional rock den and other nearby sites have made it possible for us to conduct

*In 2006, Brutus peers at the researchers observing the pack near the famous rock den.*



Nancy Gibson



# Brutus

by Cornelia Hutt

Like most charismatic figures, he is something of an enigma. Where he came from is a mystery. It's possible he is a direct descendent of the wolves Dave Mech encountered at the rock den almost a quarter of a century ago. Or perhaps he traveled eastward from Axel Heiberg Island, making his way across miles of ice to reach the vast expanses of neighboring Ellesmere Island.

One certainty, however, is that for a wild wolf, he has lived a very long time. Tough, resilient, superbly adapted to one of Earth's most unforgiving environments, he has defied the odds — survival of the fittest.

Back in 2003, Eureka Weather Station personnel had no difficulty distinguishing the big male from his pack mates during the wolf family's frequent forays in the vicinity. He was a standout, a photogenic favorite of the staff, a celebrity worthy of a power name. His regal stature and self assurance earned him the name "Brutus" and made him the living legend he still is.

A 2006 blog on the Center's Web site is filled with anecdotes about Brutus and his family, including five rambunctious pups. When he was home at the rock den, Brutus would saunter casually over to the researchers as they observed the pack from their ATVs. After several minutes of staring with mild disdain at his human guests, he would amble away and flop down for a snooze in the shade of a large boulder. The humans obviously found him interesting, but the fascination wasn't mutual. To Brutus, humans likely seemed boring.

Photos on the blog show Brutus gleefully ripping open an observer's backpack, spilling the contents onto the grassy meadow, and marking the shredded canvas with a long stream of urine. And one night, fulfilling his parental duty of feeding the fast-growing youngsters, he carried the remains of a musk-ox calf's head back to the den. After a brief display of resistance, he relinquished the gory trophy to his no-nonsense mate. Arguing was pointless. He knew.

It seems fitting that Brutus now wears a high-tech tracking collar. He is a research tool of immense value, plus he has the star power to excite and educate his fans who are following his travels on the blog.

In the final scenes of the 1986 film documentary *White Wolf*, the narrator closes by saying that no one knows what the High Arctic wolves do in winter when the frozen landscape is shrouded in perpetual darkness and fierce winds sweep the tundra. Brutus' legacy may be that he is the key to unlocking that mystery.

*Cornelia Hutt is an educator and a writer. She is an International Wolf Center board member and chair of the Red Wolf Coalition board of directors. Visit the Ellesmere blog at <http://internationalwolfcenter.blogspot.com>. Or go to [www.wolf.org](http://www.wolf.org) and click on the link on the home page.*



*In 2006, Brutus walked up and stole a day pack as observers sat on all-terrain vehicles watching other pack members.*

behavioral observations and experiments. In various experimental manipulations throughout the years, we have examined caching behavior, food sharing and dominance relationships. These observations have contributed greatly to our understanding of wolf biology. Indeed, three books and approximately 20 technical and popular articles have been written exclusively about these remarkable wolves.

Since 2007, however, wolves have denned on the south side of the fiord, which is generally impassible in summer by ATV because of extensive mudflats at the mouth of the Slidre River that empties into the fiord. This new reality of distant wolf denning has frustrated our efforts to get good data from these wolves and has prompted us to take another approach to studying them, one that involves sophisticated radio collars. Because observational tracking and monitoring worked well in the past, High Arctic wolves have been naive to radio collars, up until now, that is. Nevertheless, radio-collar functionality has progressed significantly in the 40-plus years since the



Nancy Gibson

*Having stolen a day pack from one of the observers in 2006, Brutus scent marks it before tearing it open.*

technology has been in use. Researchers have benefited from miniaturization of electronic components, battery power enhancements, and orbiting satellites. Such technological advancements lend themselves well to applying this technique to wolves in an effort to answer the many questions that remain for this wide-ranging denizen of the remote arctic environment.

Our summer observations and studies have focused on a very small snapshot in time. We see these wolves raising pups. Pup-rearing curtails movements of parent wolves because they must return repeatedly to the den to feed their offspring. From studies elsewhere and from our own

serendipitous tracking (e.g., Mech & Cluff in press), we know these wolves can move many miles in a day. Still, nothing is known about wolf movements this far north once pups travel with the adults. How far and wide do these wolves venture on the landscape? How often do they visit familiar places? These and other questions can be addressed through radio collaring.

To meet our new objectives, we chose to deploy a GPS, or Global Positioning System, radio collar that offers location accuracy of about 5 to 10 meters (6-11 yards). The collar "listens" to signals from orbiting GPS satellites and twice daily transmits

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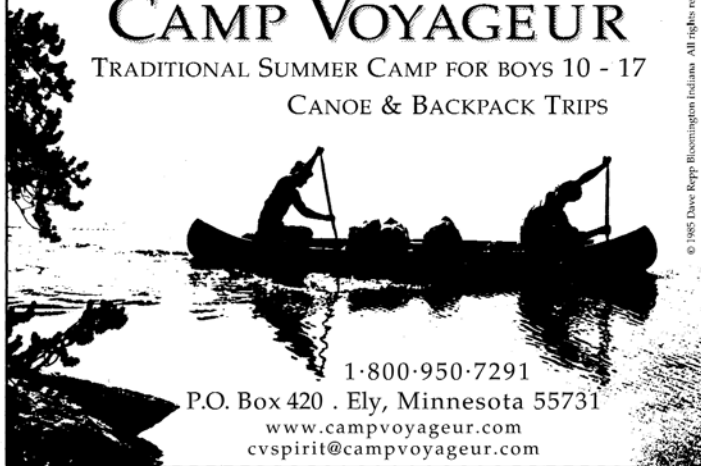
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Dean Cluff

*Within hours of being collared, Brutus howls to packmates to urge them along on his trip back to the den.*



**Dean Cluff**

the location data to an Argos satellite, which emails the locations to us every four days. The battery is estimated to last two years, and the collar is programmed to drop off on June 15, 2011.

Our preparation and planning for collaring came to fruition the afternoon of July 8, 2009. As we approached our observation point, we could see two wolves curled up sleeping, and soon discovered three more nearby. Some wolves approached us, and one appeared to be the dominant male. To collar this breeding male, we first anesthetized him using a blowpipe and a dart. It was a good hit, right in the shoulder muscle, and the wolf probably thought it was a big mosquito. In five minutes, the wolf was safely anesthetized and oblivious to our weighing him (90 lbs.). We examined his teeth for wear, which indicates age, and estimated the wolf to be 8 to 10 years old. Having collared a breeding male was ideal because he would be a resident wolf, and we were certain we would now find the den. His movement patterns would be linked to provisioning pups and working his territory throughout the year.

This collared wolf had a certain familiarity about him. In 2004, I was introduced to Brutus, a relatively bold wolf who struck a chord with the staff at the weather station who also named him. Brutus continued to touch the hearts and minds of several other people in subsequent years (see sidebar), but we did not see or recognize him in 2008. Perhaps our two-week visit was too short. Regardless, here was a male wolf that approached us in the same confident manner as Brutus routinely did before. Our age estimate was also consistent with how old

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Photo: Dan & Cindy Hartman

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Brutus would be now. And this wolf was a howler, a characteristic we noted in Brutus years earlier.

Brutus has been a pleasure to follow. We have observed him assert his dominance over packmates, be active at kill sites, and taking on the role of a doting parent. Now sporting a high-tech collar, he can teach us more about his travels throughout the year on this harsh landscape. So far we have mapped the den and several rendezvous sites. Although we receive just two GPS locations a day (12 hours apart), we see some suggestion of potential kill sites, likely adult musk-oxen. Compiling a list of these sites to check for clues to better know the wolf makes the wait to get back to Eureka next summer all that much more unbearable. ■

*Dean Cluff is the regional biologist for the North Slave Region, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Government of the Northwest Territories based in Yellowknife. He has accompanied Dave Mech to Ellesmere Island in the High Arctic on several occasions to observe and study wolves there. Although Dean studies wolves as part of his duties with the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT), his collaboration with Mech on Ellesmere Island and the International Wolf Center is done on his own time outside his normal GNWT responsibilities. He would like to thank Mech for the opportunity to go to Ellesmere Island, to learn from him, and to share his experiences with wolves.*

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*Brutus' mate and litter of 5 pups in 2006.*



Nancy Gibson



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

# Personal Encounter

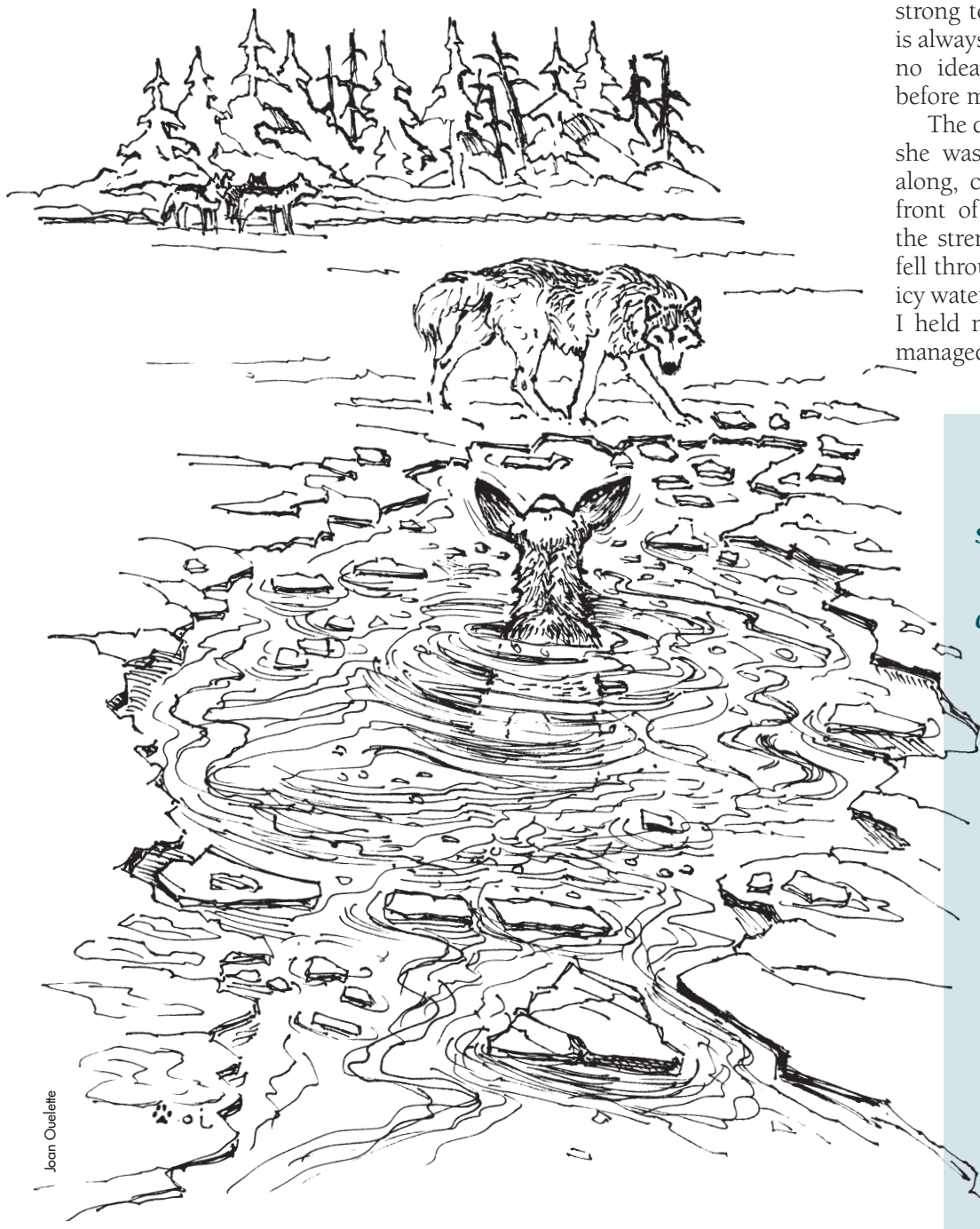
## The Deer and the Wolf Pack

By Delma Clace, Sioux Lookout, Ont.

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She was to be the sixth deer we saw making her way precariously across the ice on Abram Lake that day. It was Boxing Day 2007, and I stood at my kitchen window watching her through binoculars, wondering if she, too, would make it safely across. Because the current is too strong to freeze the lake solidly, there is always open water in that area. I had no idea what was about to unfold before my eyes.

The doe seemed to sense the danger she was in as she hesitantly tiptoed along, carefully placing each hoof in front of the other, cautiously testing the strength of the ice. Suddenly, she fell through and thrashed about in the icy water, trying to regain solid footing. I held my breath and waited — she managed to climb back out. The deer



*“Three of the  
wolves hung back,  
staying close to the  
shoreline, but the  
others approached.*

*One by one,  
they moved  
ever closer to  
the deer until  
they were only a  
few feet away  
from her.”*

***“The deer struggled to her feet and stood in the frigid dusk air, exhausted from her fight for survival, while the hungry wolves paced and circled in anticipation.”***

stood there, chest heaving, trying to catch her breath and regain her strength. Not sure of which way to go, she stood frozen in place.

I noticed a shadow growing larger as it approached from the west. It was a large raven; he must have spotted his opportunity from above. He landed nearby and began hopping about and pecking at the blood droplets on the ice from her torn flesh. The doe just stood there, watching him.

Out of the corner of my eye, I caught a glimpse of another shadow approaching from the mainland, followed quickly by another and yet another. A pack of six wolves had gathered. This was something I had only ever seen on TV. Although sensing the outcome would not be in her favor, I felt compelled to see this through, holding on to a glimmer of hope that somehow she would escape.

Three of the wolves hung back, staying close to the shoreline, but the others approached. One by one, they moved ever closer to the deer until they were only a few feet away from her. One wolf lay down on the ice while the other two paced back and forth.

I could sense the deer's fear as she pawed the ice and turned to face her foe. The bigger of the two pacing wolves moved in to attack. With teeth gnashing, he nipped at her and forced her back into the icy water. But the big fellow had gone too far, and the wolf plunged into the lake as well. They were now both flailing about, but eventually managed to claw their way back to safety.

The deer struggled to her feet and stood in the frigid dusk air, exhausted from her fight for survival, while the

hungry wolves paced and circled in anticipation.

As if sensing that she was weakening, the wolves moved in even closer, forcing her back into the water once more. Did she have enough energy to make it back out this time?

She swam back and forth in the open water, looking for a safe place to emerge.

Once again, the doe managed to pull herself out of the water, but by this

time she was spent. Her body heaving with the struggle, she lay briefly on the ice before dragging herself to her feet. All the while, the wolves continued to circle.

After what seemed an eternity, the doe appeared to have come to a decision, and very slowly and deliberately she stepped from the ice and into the cold blackness of a watery grave.

Shadows lengthened and mist began to rise from the lake. Both the wolves and I scanned the open water for a glimpse of her, but she never reappeared.

The wolves retreated to the shoreline. For them, the hunt was over. ■





# Book Review

## Book Review of *Recovery of Gray Wolves in the Great Lakes Region of the United States*

By Steve Grooms

The cradle of wolf restoration is an irregular mass of land wrapped around the western tip of Lake Superior, including portions of northern Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan. This is where wolf restoration in the contiguous United States first happened and where wolf restoration continues to be uniquely successful.

Nowhere else on Earth do so many wolves and so many humans coexist with limited conflict.

The same region is central to our understanding of wolves because so many distinguished wolf researchers grew up in or chose to work in this region. That list includes Adolph Murie, Sigurd Olsen, Durward Allen, Dave Mech, Rolf Peterson and many others. The same region produced Aldo Leopold, a central figure in wolf restoration because he totally altered his thinking about wolves and then created the first university curriculum in the new field of game management. Leopold's ecological wisdom shaped university programs that continue to produce new managers and researchers who appreciate the role of large predators in an ecosystem.

Moreover, the western Great Lakes region has been home to two long-term studies whose value cannot be overstated. One is the famous Isle Royale wolf/moose study. The other is the extensive body of research conducted by Mech and his many associates in the Superior National Forest.

Obviously, there can hardly be a more important topic in wolf restoration than the story of how wolves have been restored in the western Great Lakes.

*Recovery of Gray Wolves in the Great Lakes Region of the United States*, edited by Adrian P. Wydeven, Timothy R. Van Deelen and Edward J. Heske tells that

story. Each chapter reads like a scientific paper that addresses its topic with scholarly thoroughness.

And that is one clue, perhaps, that this book was not written for casual readers. The chapters are essentially research papers written by scientists for other scientists. Anyone who can read a newspaper can understand most of this material, but I will admit that there were passages whose statistical concepts befuddled me.

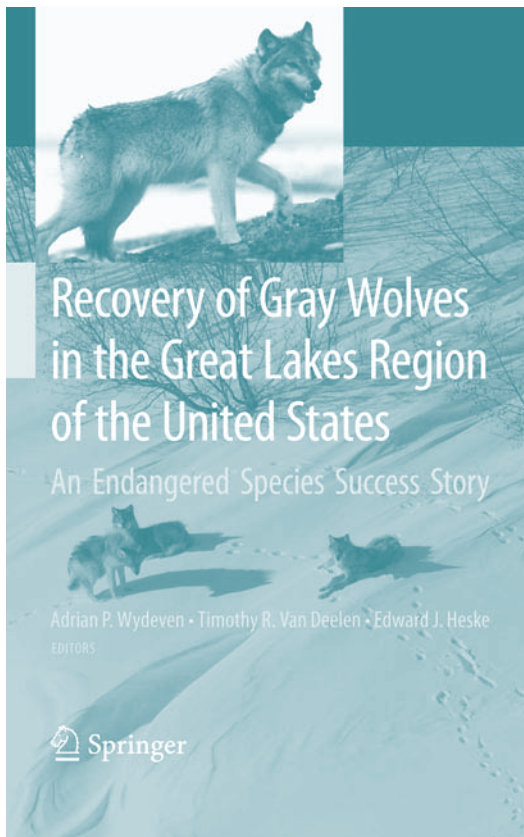
*"To track the history of the wolf in the Great Lakes is to follow a trail through the heart of American conservation history."*

— Curt Meine, *Recovery of Gray Wolves in the Great Lakes Region of the United States*

The title might imply that the book will primarily be historical. It is not. About half of the chapters discuss the past. Several chapters deal with aspects of an already recovered population of wolves today as those animals interact with humans and their environment. A short final section discusses prospects for the future of wolves in the western Great Lakes region. The book isn't *all* technical. One fascinating chapter describes the special place wolves occupy in the folklore of Ojibway Native Americans.

In short, this book is a serious attempt to understand a major topic in wolf restoration. This compilation of scholarship is likely to be the most authoritative and carefully researched book on the topic for a long time to come. ■

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



# A Look Beyond

## Professionalism

by Steve Grooms

When Captain Chesley “Sully” Sullenberger guided his A320 Airbus down on the Hudson River last January, the maneuver struck some observers as suicidal. Attempts at ditching airliners in water almost always end in mayhem and death. Yet Sully hit the water at exactly the right angle for a controlled crash landing.

Predictably, the media wanted to celebrate Sully as a hero and to cele-

brate his courage. Sully would have none of it. During Congressional testimony, he insisted that heroism was irrelevant. What mattered was knowing how to fly an airplane. What mattered was a lifetime of intensive training.

Ultimately, what saved Flight 1549 was professionalism. Captain Sullenberger acknowledged that few pilots might have been able to do what he did, not because of lack of courage but because of lack of preparation. And he warned Congress that the current




Doug Kautz



George Andrejko, Arizona Game and Fish Department

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trend to replace veteran pilots with rookies (who are less expensive to hire) is dangerous. Few pilots have the skills to smash into an icy river like a comet and not lose a single passenger, and those pilots are being rewarded these days with pink slips.

There is much to be said for professionalism in wildlife management as well as in flying. Wildlife managers and researchers make countless decisions in their work. Those with strong professional backgrounds make better decisions because professionalism helps them bring science and proven analytical procedures to bear on complex situations. Professionalism reduces the novelty of management issues and allows them to be viewed calmly in the context of proven “good practice.” At times professionalism can speak to the conscience of managers, reminding them that the most popular response to a management dispute is rarely the best policy.

If professionalism leads to better management, how can we promote strong, professional wildlife management?

It starts in the classrooms of our universities, where students are taught the principles of biology, ecology and wildlife management. Almost all of these schools have been starved for funds in recent years, a worrisome trend.

Good research and management also depend on adequate funding of the federal and state agencies that do the actual work. Too often, chronic budget limitations force managers and researchers to limp along with outmoded equipment — like ancient

*“There is much  
to be said for  
professionalism in  
wildlife management  
as well as in flying.”*

trucks that are unsafe at any speed. This affects morale as well as efficiency and safety.

The clearest threat to professional management, however, is political pressure. Wise managers take public

opinion into account when crafting plans, but the best plans come from managers who are insulated from the noisy voices and sharp elbows constantly thrown by interest groups.

The more controversial an animal is, the more critical it is to allow managers to follow their training and use objective science when making decisions. And no animal is more controversial than the wolf. ■

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



Ann Raspberry