

Wolf Print

The UK Wolf Conservation Trust

Issue 51 Spring 2014

INTO THE WHITE: Life as an Arctic explorer

Jim McNeill interviewed by Julia Bohanna

The Red Wolf

'Endangered' means
there's still hope

Wolfblood

This season's cast and crew
visit the Trust

■ NEWS ■ EVENTS ■ MEDIA AND ARTS ■ REVIEWS



Editor's Letter

During the gathering of material for this issue, I was thinking a lot about wide open spaces and in particular,

how precious it is to still have areas in the world that are relatively unspoilt. It was a true privilege therefore to chat to Alaskan-born Seth Kantner (on pages 24–25), author of *Ordinary Wolves*. We communicated by email – in-between his trips out on a trawler. Seth is someone who lives a good, simple life. Similarly, if you want to know how the adventurous (and humble) Arctic explorer Jim McNeill manages his adventurous existence, his interview (on pages 28–29) addresses those niggling questions you may have considered about polar exploration such as how do you go to the toilet in those freezing wide open spaces? Jim's encounters with wild wolves will stir envy – what a joy it must have been to sit with Arctics in that beautifully blank landscape. Both Seth and Jim have found a way to make their lives ethical and very rewarding – two great sources of inspiration.

In a freakishly wet and windy start to the year, the news also seemed to contain a number of world animal stories – not all of them very pleasing to all us who work in conservation or love creatures of any kind. It seemed that mankind is, as ever, capable of a great deal of cruelty and exploitation. The plight of wolves' future in Idaho in particular has been frustrating to witness, especially when a bill was passed in February to throw \$2 million dollars at killing them. Opposing the bill, Mat Erpelding of the Idaho House of Representatives has called it "fiscally irresponsible." In fact, Erpelding went further by saying: "That's basically two teachers per school district in Idaho that could be paid for, or we can use it to eradicate somewhere between 300 and 400 wolves."

But as spring buds from the soaked earth, it's important that we also concentrate on hope, looking forward and spotlighting the people and creatures who are making a difference in the animal world. Locally, our own wolves have coped in the relentless rain: bad weather has not deterred the public displays of affection from Mai and the shyer Motomo, who is growing in confidence every day. However, our mucky Arctics have been wearing 'Wellingtons' made of mud. Also in this issue, we share some information on Hank and Betty, the two beautiful red wolves who have become ambassadors for their beleaguered species. Should we anthromorphise wild wolves? If it helps; if it makes people care and raises funds, then absolutely yes. We can embrace the science of the lupine world, such as Pete Haswell's update from the International Wolf Symposium, just as comfortably in Wolf Print. It is a means to an end, after all. The awareness and preservation of a species.

So we hope to have produced for you a rich and varied magazine. Here's wishing too for a dry summer, some good wolf news in the world and more science, art and news in the world of *Canis lupus* for the next issue.

Julia Bohanna

Julia Bohanna
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WOLF PRINT Issue 51

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Aims of the UK Wolf Conservation Trust

- To increase public awareness and knowledge of wild wolves and their place in the ecosystem.
- To provide opportunities for ethological and other research that may improve the lives of wolves both in captivity and in the wild.
- To provide wolf-related education programmes for young people and adults.
- To raise money to help fund wolf-related conservation projects around the world.

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Cover picture: The Arctic pack by Rose Ravenscroft



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Trust News

A howling Christmas

THE WOLVES had a howling Christmas, where we planned lots of fun and games for animals and visitors. This year we ran three festive celebrations for junior members alone: a wolf walk, Howling Christmas and our annual Christmas Cracker event. The Howling Christmas afternoon entailed participating children giving the wolves prepared meat cakes iced with Philadelphia cheese, followed by lengthy Christmas carol/howling sessions for everyone! The wolves also enjoyed special mince pies, nuts and satsumas.

Goats Billy and Madge were also joining in the fun with their

special Christmas coats on. Unfortunately, the Christmas Cracker afternoon took place on a torrentially wet and windy day. The Beenham pack were too nervous of the high gusts of wind in the tree tops in front of their enclosure to investigate, or take their presents and crackers off the tree provided for them. The ever-hungry Arctics and the inquisitive Mosi and Torak provided the spectators with ample photo opportunities as they snatched their presents, unwrapping paper which was sealed with peanut

butter to find their goodies: hard boiled eggs, pigs' ears, hot dogs, raw chicken wings, pâté and cheese were but a few of the treats that they were given.

Photo: Mai by Tara Armstrong



Our new Open Wednesdays are proving popular, with a manageable amount of visitors enjoying the opportunity of talking to volunteers about the wolves. There are great photographic opportunities especially at the 2pm feeding time. The local pub The Six Bells is happy to give wolf visitors a 10% discount on lunch which they serve between 12 and 2pm. In better weather we hope that the picnic tables will be used and those who have adopted a wolf and perhaps travelled a long way, will have a leisurely day at the Trust.

Half term week was very busy for wolves and visitors at the Trust. Our annual Valentine's Day walk was luckily held in bright sunshine and was much

enjoyed by 15 couples. Motomo and Mai were in a very romantic mood having been seen mating by volunteers and work experience students several days in a row from 14th to 18th February. This is the first time we have witnessed this in the daytime, which must show that Motomo is sufficiently relaxed to exhibit this behaviour in front of people. Torak and Mosi followed suit a few days later. Mai and Mosi, however, were particularly antagonistic towards each other, running the dividing fence and trying to show who the dominant female is now.

Our Open Wednesday at half term on 19th February attracted over 200 visitors, some of whom picnicked

outside at the tables in the mild weather. Children's activities were available in the barn but the best part of the day was watching the wolves being fed and taking photos while volunteers talked about the individual wolves and wolf behaviour. Our new booklet for visitors offers a lot of information and photos to take away after a visit. Half term finished with a children's walk on the Friday.

Photo by Mike Collins

Events for children

Michelle Paver visited the Trust in early January and gave junior members tips on how to enhance their creative writing skills.

At Easter weekend there will be egg decorating and food trail activities for wolves and children, while May Bank Holiday sees us celebrating all the wolves' spring birthdays with wolfy cakes.

All these events are to provide wolves with enrichment and our junior members a unique experience as they watch and learn about the animals.

For further information on these events and to check availability, please contact us.

A Natural Flair

Wildlife presenter Steve Backshall visited the Trust on 29th November with a small BBC film crew. They had been filming wolves in Yellowstone earlier in the year but needed some close-up shots of Steve with a wolf, so he could talk about wolf characteristics. Usually when a new person goes in with the Beenhams they are either very cautious or try and jump all over them – I needn't have worried about Steve. He is a true natural with animals and when he walked into their enclosure not paying Nuka, Tala or Tundra any attention but just walking quietly over to the nearest platform the wolves were immediately accepting and wanting to quietly go up to him of their own accord.

Nuka was the first to approach Steve and within a couple of minutes was rolling over submissively, allowing Steve to rub his tummy. Some people have a presence with wolves and as with Steve, they immediately respond. Much to my delight Steve admitted that wolves are his favourite animal in the world, due to their intelligence, the co-operation they have with each other and their general social interaction. He told me that it has been one of his greatest filming challenges was to get reasonably close to animals that are so shy and generally nocturnal. So to visit the Trust on a

winter's day and to be able to spend time quietly with Nuka, Tala and Tundra, was clearly a joy.

Steve's presenting career has seen him spend five years as a presenter and producer with Nat Geo, before moving to the BBC's Really Wild Show in 2003. After four years, the show was cut, and he began on the BBC Natural History Unit's expedition team, making series like *Lost Land of the Jaguar*. In 2008 *Deadly 60* was commissioned and then the *Live and Deadly* offshoot, whose aim was to inspire children to get outside and get into wildlife and adventure. In 2010 and 2011 Steve went on the road, travelling to 20 destinations around the UK. As many as 35,000 people applied for tickets to each day to see Steve answer questions on wildlife. The biggest single crowd was 14,000 people.

In the 'Deadly' programmes, Steve's remit was to travel the world in search of predators that are "not just deadly to me, but deadly in their own world". The programmes are transmitted on Nat Geo Wild, Animal Planet and BBC Worldwide.



Nuka and Steve Backshall by Tara Armstrong

The programme filmed here at the Trust should be transmitted on the BBC in late summer and is one of the fourth season of the *Deadly Pole to Pole* series.

In May 2012 Steve wrote the first of a series of novels entitled "The Falcon Chronicles". The first novel is called "Tiger Wars" and is about the adventures of a young boy and a girl on the run, against the background of the war on tiger poaching 'in the spirit of Willard Price for today's youngsters'. *Tiger Wars* has been nominated for the Brandford Boase award. The second in the series is called "Ghosts of the Forest" and was released in 2013, the third is called "The Wilds of the Wolf" and will be released in the summer of 2014. We hope that there is a possibility of Steve coming to the Trust to launch this book with the wolves and we also hope to have a full review in the next issue of *Wolf Print*.

Exciting Stuff! The cast of **Wolfblood** come to visit



WOLFBLOOD is a BAFTA-nominated children's fantasy/supernatural British television series aimed at teens. It was created after series creator Debbie Moon saw the words 'wolf' and 'blood' in a book shop, and blended the two words together in her head. The series focuses on teenage wolfbloods Maddy Smith and Rhydian Morris as they struggle to live their double lives as wolfbloods, and keeping their secret concealed from the outside world. What is a wolfblood? They are humans able to transform into wolves at the full moon and at times when they are stressed. A mysterious race that has lived amongst us for centuries, wolfbloods retain their superhuman speed, strength, agility, and senses when in human form. Their abilities are very useful in helping them negotiate

the turmoil of teenage life. "Being a teenager is hard enough. Being a Wolfblood teenager is ten times more complicated" – 14-year-old Maddy loves her abilities: heightened senses, being faster, stronger and more graceful – but hates the secrets that come with them. This is a secret that must be kept, or they and all wolfbloods could be in deadly danger from humans.

The series premiered on 10th September 2012 and is now into the third series. The BBC have visited the Trust several times to film our wolves. More importantly, cast members have walked with our animals to get a real idea of how wolves move and behave. As the cast of *Wolfblood* come and go, new cast members visit us.



ERISTOFF: JOIN THE PACK

The Trust's Ambassador

Wolves are far from novices to the art of filming and their familiarity stretches to include all of the preparations and preambles that filming brings with it. Occasionally, the Trust is contacted by those who wish to film our wolves for promotional purposes: which can range from simple footage to support an informative programme, to a complex project where they are posing as an emotive, powerful symbol for a brand. The latter was the requirement of one of the biggest projects that we were involved in last year.

Eristoff is the vodka brand "from the land of the wolf". The wolf has been used as the main symbol for their brand for many years. The wolf, they feel, captures the energy of not only their product but their fan base, the younger generation, perfectly. They call them the "Eristoff nightwolves", and it's not hard to see the similarities between the majestic wolf that hunts with its pack and the energetic youngsters that head out with their groups of friends for the night. However, the question that Eristoff wanted to put forward to their fans for this promotion was this: who is a



would in fact be real wolves themselves. Their idea was based on how a wolf pack will rally together during a group howl and a wolf's ability to identify the howls of their pack members from strangers. Eristoff wanted to let their nightwolves howl to our wolves and to let the wolves decide if they thought the person was worthy enough to be accepted into the pack by howling a reply.

The team of people heading the project were based in Belgium, so understandably it required a lot of organisation. People who wished to participate could win access to the exclusive live howling final event by making a practice video beforehand. The most popular videos, based on Facebook likes and votes on the online platform jointhepack.be, got the chance to howl live with the wolves. The wolves chosen to decide the fate of those wishing to be a nightwolf were our charismatic "Beenham Pack", which consists of Nuka, Tundra and Tala. When we were first contacted by Eristoff, and the project explained to us, we were immediately enthusiastic. One of the events we host after all is "Howl Night",

real Eristoff nightwolf and who is not?

It was decided that the most capable judges of this question

so we hoped that our wolves would be well rehearsed in understanding the rather stunted version of a howl we humans can produce.

The production team then set dates to fly out to the Trust and spend a few days here, where they would set up and host the final, live, part of their event. The preparations and technology used meant that the finalists could howl live with the wolves via their webcam and an internet connection while still sitting at home in Belgium (see Laura Paradis having a go, below). They each got one minute to try to get the wolves howl with them and around 19 finalists were successful in getting the wolves to howl and thus were accepted in the pack. The real Eristoff nightwolves were rewarded with four tickets for the Belgian dance festival "I Love Techno", a dance-event that Eristoff have sponsored for the last few years.

While everything went smoothly during the final event, the production was one of the most difficult ones that the team said they had encountered. However, the hard work paid off as all the contestants had a perfect audiovisual connection and the livestream for the public was up and running. We heard some very good howls and, admittedly, at least as many bad ones, but it was the wolves who had the final say over who was worthy to be called an Eristoff nightwolf.

Tara Armstrong

◀ Wolfblood comes to visit

A positive light

Wolfblood is unusual in that it presents wolves in a good light – there is no werewolf-type scary stuff and at the end of each programme, they even present lupine facts.

The second series was accompanied by a ten-part wildlife spin-off series exploring wolves, hosted by Bobby Lockwood. Produced by the BBC Natural History Unit, Wolfblood Uncovered aired on 9th September 2013. The series compares scenes in Wolfblood with facts about real wolves and points out how wolf behaviour is reflected in the actions of the characters in the story, such as living in packs, defending territory

against rivals, fear of fire and enclosed spaces, reliance on sense of smell and a carnivorous diet.

The series was filmed in the north-east of England by the same crew who filmed Tracy Beaker Returns. Filming locations included Charles Thorp Comprehensive School and the woods of the surrounding Rowlands Gill countryside.

The average viewing figure for the series is around 400,000.

The Trust has benefited from Wolfblood, as we have increased our junior membership from 80 to 180 as a result of the interest in wolves. We also get a great many families visiting on visit Wednesday as well.



Left: Tala meets Aimee Kelly, who plays Maddie Smith

DIRECTOR'S LETTER

CHRISTMAS AND A NEW YEAR

Christmas was busy for wolves and staff at the Trust. Adoptions were our most popular choice of gift: a special Christmas adoption offer included a "wolf in a can" and the chance to visit the Trust on any of our 52 visiting Wednesdays during 2014. Previously, we had four large open days but this became increasingly busy. Open Wednesdays now offers visitors a great chance to take photos and talk to volunteers about lupine character and behaviour. Anyone who adopts one of our wolves can really get to know their particular wolf and picnic on site in good weather!

Torak, (below) named after the hero in Trust patron Michelle Paver's Wolf Brother books, remains our most popular wolf. In second place is Nuka and third, Motomo. Many people are captivated by the exceptionally striking male wolves, particularly Nuka who has now reached maturity. They also prefer the brindle-coloured wolves, with Tundra being the most popular female and the Arctics possibly not being perceived as "typical" wolves. However,

Torak by Danny Kidby-Hunter



Nuka watching the visitors, by Mike Collins

all our all animals are beautiful ambassadors for their wild wolf cousins.

Despite winter's torrential rain, the seven brown and black wolves look superb in their mud-free winter coats, as their enclosures are grassy and drain well. Unfortunately, the Arctics' white coats are in need of a "Fairy Snow" wash: their underbellies and legs are mud-caked brown. They spend time at the left-hand corner of their enclosure, the closest point to the feed shed and visitors arriving! Their feet churn up this area and the grass has long gone. In the summer we will take measures to prevent this happening again by concreting the corner and front edge of the enclosure.

YOUNGER VISITORS

Junior membership was also a popular gift, with an increase of 30%. This is possibly due to the Wolf Blood series on the BBC, which has attracted many lupine-mad followers. We regularly have the cast members visiting us to learn about wolves. Junior members are entitled to one free walk and can bring a parent. They also receive a magazine and can access our website's Kids Den area.

The Beenham Pack have been participating in children's walks for the last three years. They are our youngest wolves but in 2015 they will become a little bit more difficult to manage, as they will be four years

old. Due to health and safety reasons, it is recommended that the wolves should only walk with adults. Junior members will still be able to come to children's events held at the Trust in holidays, half terms and Easter but a wolf walk will not be included in their membership. Instead, junior membership will automatically give the junior member the adoption of a wolf, and also a free visit to the Trust any Wednesday during the year. We consider that this is still good value at £30.

Children's events such as the popular pumpkin parties, Easter egg hunts, art days, Christmas cracker events and photography days will be held for children to join in the wolf fun throughout the year; details of these will be available on the website.

We look forward to you welcoming you in 2014.

Tsa Palmer
Director

Donations

The projects we have so far donated to in 2014 are:

- £2,000 to Balkani Wildlife Society
- £2,000 to Ethiopia Wolf Project
- £2,000 to Red Wolf Coalition

Update on the Trust Wolves



Torak and Mosi, by Tristan Findlay

MOSI and TORAK

MOSI AND TORAK will be eight years old in the spring and continue to live happily as a bonded pair. Although they are retired from public duties, they still enjoy regular enrichment walks with their favoured handlers. They only have to see the handlers entering the kennels with their leads, for them to rush onto the hard-standing and literally push their heads into their collars! It's always amusing to hear Mosi grumble excitedly and rush past Torak in her eagerness to go on the walk. She tends to charge off in a frenzy of sniffing, marking and rolling while Torak follows in a leisurely manner. He takes his time and enjoys his walk, occasionally reprimanding Mosi when she tries to push him off any particularly interesting smells. At the time of writing, we are in the height of the breeding season and it's interesting to see the change in the wolves' behaviour. Torak has taken to long bouts of howling from the mound and can be seen patrolling the perimeter of the enclosure, marking his territory. Mosi has become very flirtatious with Torak, which he tolerates for longer than usual, and they have been seen mating. They

can't have cubs as Torak is vasectomised but it's important that they can go through the breeding cycle and reinforce their bond with each other.

MOSI continues to be her usual boisterous self and is a great favourite with public and volunteers alike. She has such character and is very vocal. She is unusual in that she will bark continuously if something annoys or upsets her, which is uncommon in wolves, although Sikko has been heard to do it too on occasion. Perhaps she's taken her cue from Mosi! The feud with the next door pack, particularly with Mai, keeps Mosi busy – she can often be seen fence-running and taunting her sister, particularly after coming back from a walk. Although the intent is deadly serious, both wolves seem to get a sense of enjoyment and entitlement from the dispute, which is good enrichment for them. Motomo and Torak sometimes join in, but don't appear to have quite the same level of hostility as the girls. Mosi is curious and will always come down to the front of the enclosure to see what is going on. She particularly enjoys enrichment, such

as the cracker-laden Christmas trees the wolves are given in December, and will take apart anything she is offered with great gusto to get at the treats inside.

TORAK is a stately, aloof wolf and extremely handsome, particularly at this time of year when he sports his winter coat. He has enormous patience which he needs living with the volatile Mosi! Now that he is retired from public walks, he has become more confident and will often come down to see the public when they pass the enclosure and, more often than not, will happily feed in full sight of them. He is picky about which handlers he will tolerate but with those he is relaxed with, he is a wonderful animal to watch as he goes about his enrichment walks. He thoroughly investigates new scents and likes nothing more than a good roll in something pungent. If Mosi gets too annoying, he tells her off in a firm but dignified manner. They are a well-matched pair and continue to delight visitors with their contrasting behaviour.

Nikki Davies

MAI and MOTOMO

MOTOMO (below) has grown a really impressive winter coat this year and looks most handsome! As our only non-socialised wolf, he continues to gain confidence around people, and will now come right up to the enclosure fence to carry out rush-and-pounce threats against any of the handlers' dogs that are around, and to take food from those handlers he likes. He is still adept at catching items of food thrown over the fence and swallowing them without chewing. He remains very attentive towards his mate Mai and they both often indulge in extended howl-duets.

MAI (right) remains very friendly with the small group of long-term handlers she grew up with, and loves to come out on enrichment walks when she gets the chance. On her walks she will vigorously scent-mark over any places where the other wolves have marked as a way of advertising her status, but she will make it clear when she's had enough and wants to return to the enclosure with Motomo.

She still spends a lot of time running the fence against her sister Mosi who lives in the adjoining enclosure: the two wolves growling and snarling "wolf obscenities" through the mesh. Running at full speed with her tail held high and her hackles raised, Mai presents a most impressive spectacle!

Report and photograph by
Pete Morgan-Lucas



THE BEENHAM PACK: NUKA, TUNDRA AND TALA



Tala by Darren Prescott

The Beenham Pack have been enjoying their time in the top enclosure, which unlike the other enclosures has remained relatively dry throughout the rainy winter months.

NUKA continues to enjoy going out on walks with his sisters and interacting with visitors – he is particularly adept at sniffing out those visitors who are wearing rubber boots or who have pets at home and will often rub himself enthusiastically against their legs. He also enjoys sniffing round molehills in the hope of finding one which has a mole in residence – at which point he can easily dig down six inches in a matter of seconds, though he never seems to catch the mole! In the enclosure he sometimes takes on a rather more mischievous and bouncy nature: when it's dusk the handlers can easily find Nuka running at full speed towards them across the enclosure with his two sisters following behind – an awesome if somewhat unnerving experience!

Though she is the “alpha” female, **TUNDRA** still generally remains aloof and lags behind the visitors when on walks, preferring to watch events from what she considers a safe distance in the quiet company of a couple of her favourite handlers, from whom she is adept at soliciting plenty of ear-tickles and bellyrubs. In the enclosure she is an entirely different wolf – confident, assertive and entirely able to keep her brother and sister under control, especially when food is involved. Though the smallest and most lightly-built of the three Beenham wolves her lack of physical stature is compensated for by her speed, agility, strength of character and persistence.

TALA (left) is enthusiastic about meeting new people on walks sniffing and rubbing in the same fashion as her brother – though her lifelong love of vigorous rolling in unpleasant stinky things like badger or fox dung means that both visitors and handlers are not always too happy to reciprocate! She will occasionally initiate a howling-session with the other wolves

when out on walks, but has to be careful not to overdo it or she risks being disciplined by Tundra. She particularly enjoys climbing up on the big log in the field where we walk, then spending five minutes posing for the photographers. In the enclosure she is playful and affectionate but given her rank in the pack she always needs to take care not to direct too much attention towards Nuka because that can easily trigger Tundra's jealousy.



Nuka and Tundra by Darren Prescott

Pete Morgan-Lucas

THE ARCTICS: MASSAK, PUKAK and SIKKO



The Arctics thrive in the cold and even wet weather with their wonderful thick coats. Even on the wettest days the rain cannot penetrate the outer guard hairs of their coats. They remain warm to the touch when being fussed by their handlers, who dig deep through their coats to give them a good rub and tickle, something the wolves adore!

MASSAK remains in his dominant role and with Spring bringing us into breeding season, hormones have been on the rise. Massak rules over his brother Pukak with an iron fist and won't tolerate any unwelcome behaviour from his male sibling. Even though Massak and Pukak have been neutered, hormones in the brain still cause the wolves to change behaviour during breeding season. With his winter coat in full bloom, Massak is a very imposing figure and uses his overall body size to its full potential and advantage when exerting his authority. He has always been very easy-going around people he knows and trusts and likes nothing better than to try and engage his handlers in a game of chase. The handlers of course know better than to do so and Massak will quickly turn his attention to his siblings to get what he wants, which results in lots of fun and some hilarious moments.

PUKAK continually 'chances his arm' with Massak in the full knowledge that he won't win but like any brother thinks it's fun to try! He is the most loveable wolf with people he likes but will let

others know in no uncertain terms that he doesn't accept them. This is natural wolf behaviour; as the less dominant wolf, Pukak is always looking for a weakness he can exploit. Understanding this behaviour allows handlers to spot the changes in his behaviour and redirect it. He LOVES his food and continues to be the wolf that "eats all the pies"! He will challenge both of his siblings for food and sometimes even wins. If wolves aren't particularly hungry even dominant wolves will allow subordinate wolves to eat their food, so Pukak takes full advantage of this fact. He's the joker of the pack and keeps visitors and handlers highly amused with his antics. At times, many have likened him to a cuddly teddy bear. However, this is a misconception and like any wolf, Pukak is intelligent, formidable and very much aware of what he is doing!

SIKKO, being the only female in the pack and significantly smaller than both her brothers, has adopted a rather "diva"-like attitude in managing her brothers' behaviour towards her. If this doesn't work, she is the wolf most likely to be pushed away by her overbearing

brothers, so handlers always ensure they respect the hierarchy of the pack when interacting with them. Sikko has very fine and delicate features and is an extremely pretty wolf. If a wolf could bat its eyelashes to get attention then Sikko would! When left to her own devices, Sikko is incredibly loving towards her human friends but can get carried away when she realises she has a handler's attention with no interference from her brothers. All the sloppy licks become little nibbles around your face as her excitement grows! Although Sikko is the smallest of the pack she can really hold her own in play and thinks it's great fun to team up with Massak to dominate Pukak. After all, with a brother of Massak's size she only has to hide behind him if things start to get too rough.

The Arctic pack have matured into extremely charismatic wolves and at the age of three have reached full maturity.

Linda Malliff

Picture by Pat Melton

Life and Behaviour of Wolve

Professor Josip Kusak presented jointly collated research – entitled “Spatio-temporal distribution of activity and space-use among wolves, ungulates and humans in Croatia” – at the 2013 International Wolf Symposium in Duluth, Minnesota, USA. His research collaborator, Pete Haswell, summarises their ten years’ work.

Wolf distribution

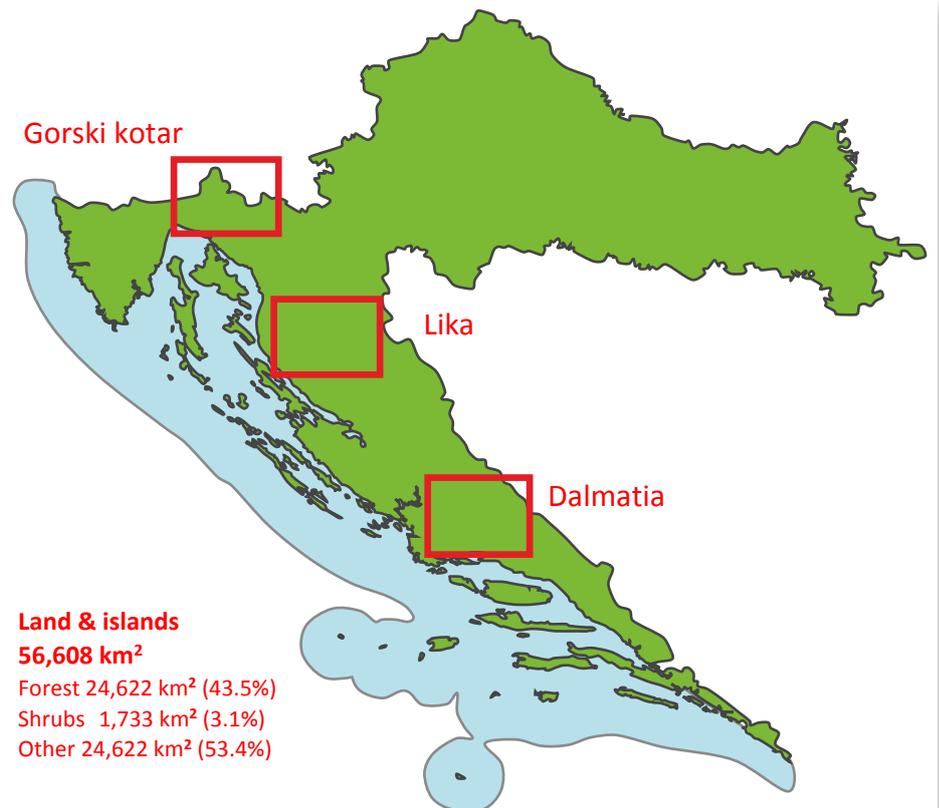
In Croatia wolves generally inhabit three connected yet distinct geographic regions. Gorski kotar is the most mountainous zone and is highly forested (60-70%) with wild ungulates being the predominant wolf prey. The Lika region with the Velebit mountains is less forested, with higher sheep numbers than Gorski kotar. Sheep predation is relatively low, with wild prey making up the bulk of wolf diet. Dalmatia, with its poor Mediterranean vegetation and rocky countryside, contains the highest human population of the three areas. Only hare and wild boar are present as wild prey, sheep density is high and wolf diet consists of 86% livestock. General attitudes towards wolves become less positive as you move north-west to south-east.

Tracking collars

We examined motion-sensor activity data from 15 wolves fitted with Vectronic GPS Plus collars in the three different regions of Croatia, collecting 1,048,272 activity readings during 3,743 days of tracking between 2003 and 2013. Twelve wolves were tracked in Gorski Kotar, six of each gender. Two female wolves were tracked in Northern Velebit and one in Dalmatia.

In all areas, wolves were generally most active (more than 50% of the time) during one prolonged period centred about the nighttime with a spike of activity in the very early hours of the morning. Wolves were less active during the afternoon, possibly when it is hottest and humans are most active. However, the cause of this pattern needs further investigation.

We observed some regional variation in activity patterns. Wolves in Gorski kotar used dawn and daytime more than wolves from other regions. Wolves in



Dalmatia and Lika were more active at night. We need to track more wolves in Dalmatia and Lika to ascertain how significant the regional variances are, but results suggest that wolves may adapt their use of time dependent on the influences of local environment.

For management purposes it is useful to understand general or dominant patterns of how wolves in a given area use the time niche. However, one thing that became increasingly clear from our analysis is that wolf activity patterns are highly variable. Even when looking at wolves tracked within a similar locality, some wolves are more active than others, some more active during the day (diurnal) and others more nocturnal. Levels of activity also fluctuated

throughout the year. Wolves in all areas showed an increase in activity during June, suggesting some common denominator may cause this phenomenon. Varying levels of activity during different months of the year were accompanied by a variation in the predominant temporal patterns during the course of the day. If we take for example the June activity peak exhibited by wolves from Gorski kotar, we found that these wolves became significantly more active during the day than in any other month of the year and more active at dawn than in comparison to all months except April. Whether this change in behaviour is caused by an increase in food availability because of deer fawn birth, a need to feed wolf

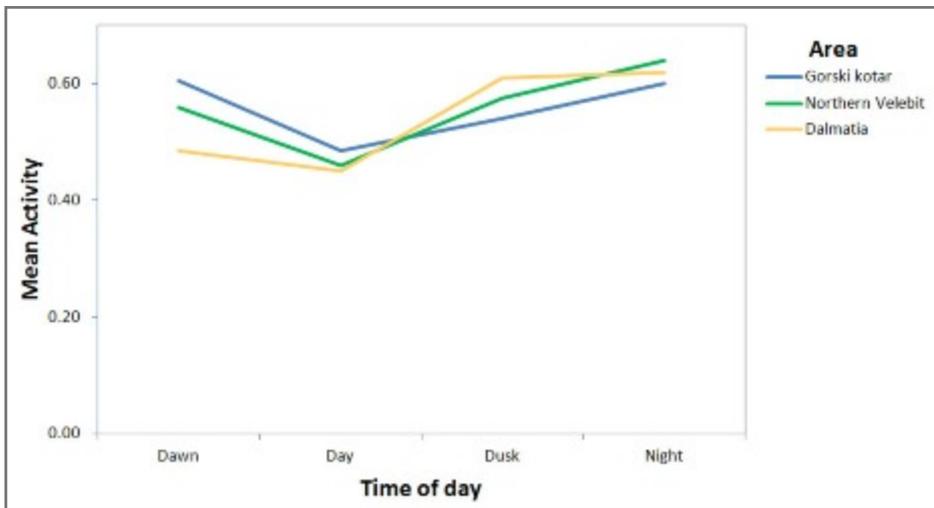
s: Croatia research update

cubs born in late May or whether it is caused by human disturbance in the summer months, is an interesting question.

We found gender differences in how wolves use time. We found males in Gorski kotar to be less active than females. Females and males showed a similar spike in activity during June and a decrease in activity over the summer. Patterns during the rest of the year were, however, different, particularly in

March. Female activity remained high but male activity was significantly lower than in any other month. It could be that males need to recuperate in March after the high energy demands of the breeding season.

Activity patterns are not easily classified as strictly nocturnal, crepuscular or diurnal. It is clear that wolves exhibit a great deal of flexibility and adaptability in their use of the time niche.



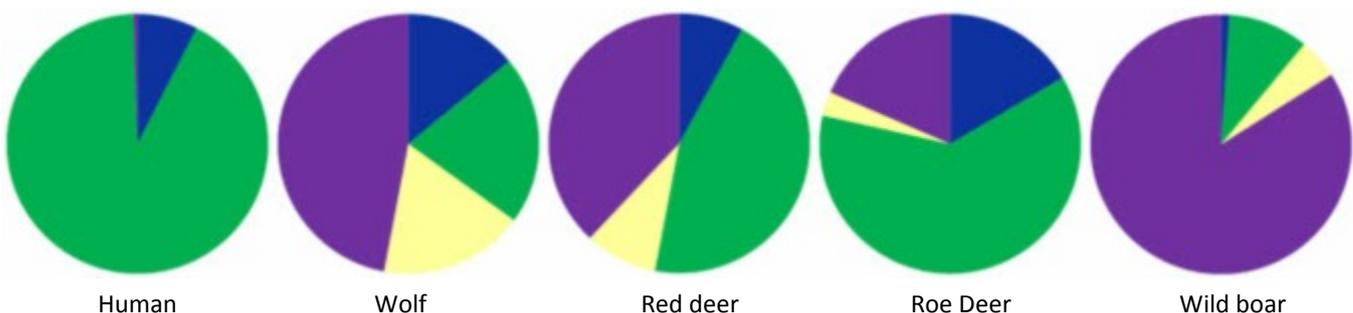
Camera Traps

In Gorski kotar, over a period of 3,310.2 camera trap days in 2011 and 2012, motion-activated cameras recorded 2,021 observations that were used to examine spatio-temporal activity patterns of wolves (4% of observations used), their prey species, red deer, roe deer, wild boar (64.9%) and humans (31.1%). Camera traps were positioned at 50 sites over an area covering 400sq km in Gorski kotar. Eight site-types were studied: main forest roads, secondary forest roads, tertiary forest roads (with differences in surface material and vegetation cover defining road type), logging roads, mountaineering trails, animal trails, forest and forest house.

The number of observations at a site-type was divided by the number of camera trap days at that site-type. This way data between site-types (forest road main, forest road secondary, animal trail etc...) that had been studied for different lengths of time could be compared fairly.

Time of day:

■ Dawn ■ Day ■ Dusk ■ Night



◀ Life and Behaviour of Wolves: Croatia research update

An interesting question from our analysis is whether roe deer are so active during the day to maximise foraging success from feeding stations operated by humans or, alternatively, to avoid lynx. Some interesting questions arise when looking at wild boar too. Does similar time use in wild boar suggest a lack of predation pressure and avoidance of wolves? And, do wild boar avoid persecution from people during the daytime and dawn?

Wolves were observed most during the night but least at dawn. Which is interesting, considering that motion sensor data from wolves in the area suggests they are second most active during dawn. It could be that dawn activity may not involve great locational movement. Dawn activity could occur in locations not covered by cameras such as resting sites and gets missed by

camera traps, which are more likely to capture animals on the move. It might appear that wolves compromise their temporal behaviour in order to avoid humans while also maximising opportunities for hunting success. Ungulates do not necessarily avoid their predators in time, possibly due to the foraging requirements of an herbivorous diet.

The use of space and time in combination however, becomes important for predator avoidance.

Wolves were observed most during the night at places where humans were absent and prey species were observed frequently. Nine out of the 11 space-times where wolves were observed had fewer human observations. Four of these also had high prey observations. During the day in two places (main and secondary forest roads) where humans

are most active, wolves are still sometimes seen, as are prey species; red deer were mostly observed on animal trails where humans were rarely observed and wolves were not seen at all, this space-time saw more observations of red deer than any other. Observations were also high on logging roads during the day where humans were observed less. When humans were the dominant daytime land user on main and secondary forest roads as well as mountaineering trails, deer were observed less. More data collection and statistical tests are required. Initial observations suggest the possibility of a spatio-temporal predator-prey dynamic where wolves' pursuit of prey is offset against avoidance of humans. Large herbivores use what space-times they can, while attempting to avoid both wolves and humans.

The Future

As well as continued studies on how animals use space and time, I plan to examine how the ecology of fear between wolves and other species is affected by local conditions, with one of the key conditions being intensity of human presence. I plan to examine how large herbivores, as well as smaller carnivores, perceive risk of predation or harassment from wolves. How these species forage in risky and safe environments as well as how they alter their behaviour in relation to predation risk. Hopefully this will provide a better understanding of the behaviourally mediated ecosystem services wolves provide and how these services are affected by local conditions.

Pete Haswell, BSc Hons Environmental Science (Biodiversity and Conservation), works at Bangor University <http://conservation.bangor.ac.uk/PeteHaswell.php.en> and is collaborating with Professor Josip Kusak on a project the UKWCT supports in Croatia.

You can read more about his work on his website: <http://petehaswellwolfresearch.wordpress.com/>



Wolves of a Feather: painter Kym Anderson and her unusual canvases

Kym Anderson has a remarkable talent: she paints beautifully detailed wolves onto feathers. Not simply wolves but any animal or object your heart may desire. On many mediums, including fabric. But the feathers are the most remarkable: the brushstrokes are fine and minutely observed. I have held one in my hand and marvelled at the patience it must have taken to work on such a medium. In a world where we buy so many mass-produced goods, this is an incredibly affordable way to own a real work of art, as

well as to wear your dog/cat or horse on your sleeve! Feathers are obtained from suppliers in the UK and these are the stages that Kym goes through to produce her pieces, where she:

- Selects a good quality strong feather, preferably turkey or sometimes pheasant.
- Makes sure the feather and feather shaft is clean
- Uses a very fine paintbrush – one with as few brush hairs as possible
- Paints directly onto the feather, working with the feather fibres, not against

- 'Stays' with an acrylic fixative so the painting will never come off.
- Turns the work into a writing pen or a framed and mounted display

Kym Anderson (also known as Kym Easterbrook) has for more than 20 years focused on canvas, ceramics, textile based painting and hand-painted t-shirt creations.

You can buy Kym's wolf-painted feathers and t-shirts from our shop. See pages 30 and 31.

www.kymspaintedshirts.com

BIRDLIFE AT THE TRUST

This year we will also be encouraging native wildlife. We have Mike Collins, who has a degree in Animal Behaviour from the University of Aberystwyth, as our newly appointed site manager and Pat Melton, a bird expert. The Trust is already home to many different species of birds and bat. In January, we undertook the RSPB Big Birdwatch Weekend and recorded 14 different species during an hour. The following birds have been seen at the Trust in the last year:



Black Owl
Blackbird
Black Cap
Black Headed gull
Blue Tit
Bullfinch
Buzzard
Carrion Crow
Chaffinch
Coal Tit
Collared Dove
Crow
Cuckoo
Dove
Dunlin
Dunnock (juvenile below)
Fieldfare (top right)
Goldfinch (far right)
Greater Spotted Woodpecker

Great Tit
Greenfinch
Green Woodpecker
Grey Heron
Grey Wagtail
Herring Gull
House Martin
House Sparrow
Jackdaw
Jay
Kestrel
Lapwing
Linnet
Little Owl
Long Tailed Tit
Magpie
Mallard
Marsh Tit
Merlin (right)
Mistle Thrush

Moorhen
Nuthatch
Partridge
Pheasant
Raven
Red Kite
Redwing
Reed Bunting
Robin
Siskin
Skylark
Snipe
Song Thrush



Starling
Stonechat
Swallow
Tawny Owl
Tree Creeper
Tree Sparrow
Turtle Dove
Willow Warbler
Wood Pigeon
Wood Warbler
Wren
Yellowhammer

We have a book in the Observation Room to record any new sightings. Please let us know if we have missed any! We are also home to many different species of bat. Most of our resident bats live in nesting boxes on trees that were placed to provide additional roosting sites. Since Autumn 2011 we have been working with the Berks and South Bucks Bat Group (BSBBG) to identify on-site species of bat which includes Brown Long Eared and Pipistrelle. Bats are special: they can be detected by echolocation using a bat detector, which records frequencies inaudible to the human ear. Bats use echolocation to help them hunt for insects but also listen to the returning echoes to build up a sonic map of their surroundings. A bat can tell an object's distance by how long it takes the sounds to return to them. In summer, we are staging four bat and wolf howling evenings for you and are also considering having beehives on site.

Tsa Palmer, Director

The Red Wolf 'Endangered' m

by **Cornelia N Hutt**

Since the world's only wild population of red wolves lives in the U.S. (northeastern North Carolina), a quick refresher about these critically endangered canids is a good way to begin an update on their current status.

What exactly is a red wolf?

Some wolf opponents have gone to great lengths to make a case for what the red wolf isn't. "There is no such species as the red wolf," they insist. Their reasons for denying these rare predators recognition and legal protection usually include an attempt to invoke serious science.

"Studies," they insist, "show the red wolf is not a wolf at all. It's a hybrid, a coyote mixed with gray wolf and domestic dog."

Pressed to produce the "studies" they

reference, they might cite a blog written by an obscure, self-described expert with a negative bias and no credible data to back up his or her taxonomic conclusions.

However, after decades of healthy debate and disagreement, most scientists and geneticists now agree that the red wolf is a distinct and legitimate canid species. Like the eastern wolf (sometimes called the eastern timber wolf), the red wolf is thought to have evolved in North America along with its smaller relative the coyote. The gray wolf, on the other hand, is believed to have evolved in Eurasia and is not related to the coyote or to the red wolf.

Although its origins remain an enigma, most taxonomists agree that this shy wolf was the top canid predator of the Southeast and Mid-Atlantic regions of the U.S. for thousands of years until ferocious human persecution and habitat loss drove the final survivors to eke out a marginal existence in the marshlands of the Texas/Louisiana Gulf Coast. There, the last red wolves were captured for a pioneer captive breeding program just in the nick of time as hybridization with resident coyotes in the region threatened to swamp the remnant red wolf population.



Federal protection

Protected under federal law (the Endangered Species Act), red wolves were returned to the wild in 1987 on northeastern North Carolina's Albemarle Peninsula, a rural region that was coyote-free at the time. There the wolves established a small but robust population, hunting and raising their wild-born pups in the coastal forests and croplands.

But the hard-won success of the recovery years is now threatened by hybridization with encroaching coyotes that have migrated eastward and filled the niches left by the extirpated wolves. Like the larger gray wolves, red wolves have little tolerance for other canids in their pack territories, but a red wolf will sometimes mate with an eastern coyote if it can't find another red wolf for a partner, and the two will produce hybrid offspring. This threat looms especially large with the loss of nine wild red wolves (all of breeding age) to illegal gunshot in the past year. Seven wolves were killed in late October and early November of 2013, and a radio-collared red

wolf was found shot on January 7 this year. The wild red wolf population is now estimated to number fewer than 100.

Why the sudden alarming rise in gunshot mortality in the five-county red wolf recovery region? There is disagreement among the stakeholders, including both wolf advocates and wolf haters. Justified or not, hunters get a big share of the blame, but the counterpoint to that accusation is that ethical hunters, who abide by established regulations and who value wildlife and habitat conservation, are among the first to condemn the deliberate killing of an endangered species.

A significant number of people have a more ominous theory regarding the spike in illegal gunshot mortality. They maintain the fatal shootings of red wolves are no accident and not cases of careless misidentification with their smaller cousin, the coyote. The wolves, they say, are being targeted.

This conclusion forces yet again an examination of humankind's bias against predators, specifically canid predators. A particularly ugly hatred for wolves and coyotes runs deep in the United States. It doesn't take an exhaustive search to discover Facebook pages devoted to the conviction that humans are justified in exterminating these so-called varmints, "pests" and nuisance species, often by the most savage methods imaginable.

Other proponents of systematically eliminating wolves and coyotes from the landscape cling to the belief that indiscriminate killing of canid predators (particularly coyotes) will "control" and reduce their numbers to an acceptable level, whatever that is. There is data that demonstrate otherwise, but open season on predators with no limits and no reporting required is staunchly supported in many places including North Carolina.

means there is still hope



Despite the US Fish and Wildlife Service Red Wolf Recovery Program's 26 years of management innovation, some vocal critics have seized upon the recent illegal gunshot deaths as evidence of the program's failure and what they deem is now a waste of taxpayer money. That argument ignores the fact that 26 years ago, the number of wild red wolves was zero. Today, there are still perhaps 90 known wolves thriving in the coastal habitat of the Albemarle Peninsula, going about the business of finding food (nutria, deer, raccoons, marsh rabbits) and raising their families on the three national wildlife refuges and on private lands in a region laced with waterways and stitched together by a labyrinth of back roads. These resilient and tenacious animals have hung on in spite of the campaigns to exterminate them, functional extinction in the wild and relatively limited public interest or engagement in their long-term survival.

Red wolves need help

Endangered means it's not too late to save imperiled species – unless people are apathetic about the illegal killing of these animals and unless our own species denies the great predators like wolves living space among us in an increasingly crowded world. Is it worth the time, expense, energy and will it takes to maintain a species our ancestors hunted and trapped and poisoned until they were all but gone? We can't restore the ecosystems that once nurtured them in the wild, but perhaps we can give them a chance in a small portion of their

historical range. To do that, organizations like the Red Wolf Coalition with its partners, including the UK Wolf Conservation Trust, must continue to raise their collective voices and increase the efforts

to stop the illegal killing of red wolves.

The Red Wolf Coalition (RWC), the Red Wolf Recovery Team and the coalition's partner wolf organizations are working to bring national and international attention to the plight of the red wolf. Betty and Hank, the lively red wolf ambassador couple at the Red Wolf Education Center in Columbia, North Carolina, are frequently showcased on the RWC Facebook page. Since Betty and Hank are participants in the Red Wolf Species Survival Captive Breeding Program, everyone has paws crossed for pups in the spring in spite of the fact that this couple, parents of a beautiful litter of pups 4 years ago, is getting along in years.

New pups each spring, both captive and wild-born, renew our belief that we can save the red wolf from slipping into extinction. If we allow that to happen, if we give up on an animal our ancestors despised and exterminated, what does that say about our own view of wild nature? And what does it say about us and about our values? The Cherokee, who once lived throughout most of red wolf country, ascribed these words to the great predator of the Southeast: "I am a hunter's hunter, my track a sign of hope, its absence a warning." We can't allow the track of the red wolf to disappear from the landscape.

Cornelia Hutt is the chair of the Red Wolf Coalition Board of Directors. She is a patron and member of the UKWCT.

Photos: Becky Bartell, USFWS





LOBO

Where do we go from here?

Photo: Tony Shelfo, California Wolf Center

THE MEXICAN WOLF (Canis lupus baileyi or Lobo) is the southern-most occurring, rarest and most genetically distinct sub-species of gray wolf in North America. It once roamed from the mountainous regions of central Mexico through to New Mexico, Texas and Arizona. Like so many other wolves, Lobo came into conflict with farming and other human activities after the west was settled by Europeans. They were trapped, poisoned and shot in an aggressive predator control programme that nearly eliminated them altogether. Cammie Kavanagh continues:

Canis lupus baileyi is roughly the same size as a German Shepherd dog and can be variations of buff, rust, grey and black. Their prey includes elk, mule deer and white-tailed deer.

IN 1976 THE Mexican wolf was placed on the endangered list. In 1979 a plan was drawn up for their recovery which was eventually approved by the US Fish and Wildlife Service in 1982. It is the primary purpose of the Wilderness Act to maintain and restore as many natural processes and influences as possible in wilderness areas, to serve as a baseline for evaluating healthy ecosystems. Wolves were taken into 45 different zoos and wildlife sanctuaries throughout the USA and Mexico with the aim of releasing them into their former range at a later date.

In March 1998 a combined venture between the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Arizona Game and Fish

Department, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, USDA-APHIS Wildlife Service and USDA-Forest Service, released three family groups into what is known as the Primary Recovery Zone. This is public land within the Apache Sitgreaves National Forest in Eastern Arizona. In 2003 a further release was made into the Fort Apache Indian Reservation with the cooperation of the White Mountain Apache Tribe. Wolves were allowed to disperse into a secondary recovery zone in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest and the adjacent Gila National Forest in New Mexico, the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area.

A VISIT TO NEW MEXICO

Last year, being keen wolf watchers, my husband and I visited this area just to see what conditions were like and to have the privilege of being in an area where wolves live. The Blue Range Primitive Area comprises of 222,500 acres of pristine wilderness and is the

last remaining primitive area of national forest land in the USA. Limited access and incredibly rough terrain have kept visitor numbers low.

The wolves and their offspring are designated as a non-essential experimental population which allows for greater flexibility to address potential problems and controversy with local people, i.e. livestock depredation. Wolves that are released into the primary zone have been raised in captivity under the Mexican Grey Wolf Species Survival Plan by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums to save the wolves from absolute extinction. Animals are raised under the following conditions:

- There is no keeper interaction and wolves only socialise with each other
- Only native prey species are received
- There is space for them to dig dens
- Buildings are constructed in natural surroundings so animals do not associate man with food and shelter

LOBO BOOT CAMP

When they are due to be released, the captive wolves enter a boot camp at the Sevilleta Wolf Management Facility in New Mexico to learn essential survival skills: they are acclimatised to eating every couple of days and are also subjected to taste aversion to deter them from eating beef. However, the project has not been as successful as the Rocky Mountain Recovery Plan. In 2010 the US Fish and Wildlife Service declared the Mexican Wolf Project at risk of failure. The captive wolves have not always displayed the same level of fear to man that a totally wild wolf would and often use forest roads, making them easy targets for illegal poaching.

Released wolves are also hindered by the original rules of the reintroduction. They can only be freed into a small patch of Arizona and New Mexico and if they venture out of the recovery area they will be trapped or killed. However, a wolf naturally disperses to find food or a mate. Those caught preying on cattle can be legally removed or shot even though they are surrounded by cattle ranges. Other threats to their small numbers include inbreeding, disease and forest fires. There is hatred in some quarters: despite no recorded attack by a Mexican wolf, in New Mexico cages have been built around some of the bus stops to protect children. Wolves are only responsible for less than 1% of livestock deaths each year but illegal wolf killings continue to be the leading cause of death for the wolf.

MEXICAN WOLF FUND

The California Wolf Centre, aided by UK Wolf Conservation Trust funds, has formed the Mexican Wolf Fund which works in cooperation with state and federal agencies. Not as advocates but to provide help, support and funds. A number of proactive activities have been introduced including a range rider programme that monitors wolf and cattle on open ranges, supplemental feeding of wolves, and provides fladry,

The US Fish and Wildlife Service, in cooperation with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, established the Mexican Wolf/Livestock Interdiction Trust Fund. Their objectives are to provide long term funding to livestock operators within the framework of

cooperative conservation and recovery of the wolf population in the south west. Funding is applied to initiatives that address management, monitoring, alternative livestock husbandry practices, grazing management practices, livestock protection, measures to avoid and minimize depredation, habitat protection and compensation for damage or death of livestock.

Defenders of Wildlife have also taken steps to help the Mexican wolf. As well as serving on the Interdiction 2 Stakeholder council they have also worked with the White Mountain Apache tribe on ecotourism which helps create economic opportunities tied to healthy wolf populations. People interested in seeing a Mexican wolf in the wild can book escorted wolf watching tours.

We did not see a Mexican wolf in the wild. There are now officially 75 left and the land is very inaccessible with no access to motorized vehicles – we really did not expect to. We saw one in nearby Phoenix Zoo and were slightly disappointed that despite being part of the Mexican wolf programme, no relevant information was readily available.

AT THE RECENT International Wolf Conference in Duluth, Minnesota, three speakers were asked about the Fish and Wildlife Service's science based recovery plan for Mexican wolves:

Mike Philips, state senator in Montana, has backed other wolf recovery programmes including the Red Wolf. He thinks Mexican wolves face a very difficult future. There is no workable recovery plan and even when one is drawn up it will be problematic to implement. He described the current plan as 'stuck' for political reasons.

Ed Bangs, previously the US Fish and Wildlife Services Grey Wolf recovery



coordinator for the North-western United States (and a previous Trust seminar speaker). He informed everyone that the US Park Service is trying to come up with a new plan but it will be difficult to implement. Most problematic is the fact that the Mexican wolf's traditional range area is surrounded by public lands with grazing practices and international borders.

Larry Voyles, Director of the Arizona Game and Fish Department felt the recovery programme was the most important recovery plan of all time, but with many very difficult components such as managing within working landscapes. The recovery area borders four US States and five states in Mexico. If amalgamated, those landscapes would become the third largest economy in the world. It would however need huge political persuasion. Achievable, but not simple.

THE FUTURE

No doubt the future looks bleak for the few Lobos left in the wild. Hopefully the new recovery plan in discussion will address some of the issues. The supporters will still continue to work with people on the ground to try and change perceptions. After all, the wolf is a critical and vital part of the landscape and needs to be allowed to recover in full.

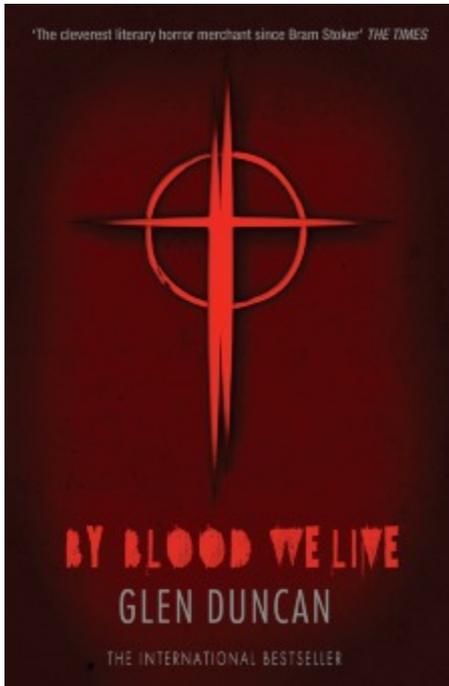
Cammie Kavanagh is an Assistant Senior Handler at the UKWCT and has been a supporter of the Trust's projects since 1997, both as a member and volunteer.

Making Tracks

wolves in the media and the arts, brought to you by Julia Bohanna

BY BLOOD WE LIVE

Glen Duncan, PB, 480pp, Canongate Books, RRP £7.99, ISBN-13: 978-1-84767-951-2



'It's better to kill people at the end of their psychology. They have nothing left to offer themselves or the world.'

IN A PREVIOUS issue of Wolf Print, we reviewed the other books in Glen Duncan's werewolf/vampire trilogy: *The Last Werewolf* and *Talulla Rising*. *By Blood We Live* is the last big hoorah: lachrymose and weary bibliophile vampire Remshi and werewolf mother-of-two Talulla have never met, but dream erotically of one another. Remshi is so old that he has lived in the time of Machiavelli and is convinced that Talulla is the reincarnation of a long lost love – just as Dracula believed that his beloved Elisabeta was once again alive under a different skin. Will werewolf and vampire find one another and live bloodily ever after?

The novel is a quest but also a multi-stranded and sexually-charged love story – managing to masterfully convey a search for inner meaning with Tarantino-style action and a number of *feels so real you have to look away* sex scenes. There are many references to Browning's

poem *Childe Roland To The Dark Tower Came* – a poem which itself was inspired by an old fairy tale. Every one of the multiple narrators is indeed that “untested knight” and is a seeker of truth, meaning and love. Even loyal Justine, who calls her vampire lover “Fluff” and is very much the loyal companion. Those who are different also have to deal with being pursued by a fanatical religious organisation capable of great cruelty and exploitation. We also have more than one back story, including the origin of the werewolf which involves climbing into a dead wolf's skin.

By Blood is also strong on clever humour and kicks away cliché, taking subtle digs at the werewolf/vampire genre as it does so. There are plenty of wry music and film references, with many morally repugnant humans victims, like a grotesque pornographer and someone who listens to Rhianna – both are held in equal contempt. Talulla, when talking about her ringtone wryly observes that ‘Our days of thinking it is a hoot to have ‘bad moon rising’ and ‘werewolves of London’ are over.’ There is also a mischievous element in showing a little werewolf boy called Lorcan ‘aggressively colouring a picture of the three little pigs (god being dead, irony still rollickingly alive).’

It has the gristle and bone of good horror

The novel has a strong visceral plot, with several subplots that involve revenge and the origin of werewolves. Devoured nuns, a human foot bouncing down the stairs – it has the gristle and bone of good horror. But it is also hugely intelligent, knowing and tender, particularly when the werewolf cubs are in the spotlight and Talulla and the other members of the extended family fight hard to protect them. There is also, under the surface, an agenda for us as lupine lovers. The ‘wulf’ is the monster,

the creature that changes monthly into a thing that has to feed, has little in the way of conscience when the hunger takes hold. Yet it is distinctly not wolf and as with the two previous novels, it is the human element of the monster that has the most potential for evil. Things that I learnt from this book:

- Werewolves not only make fantastic parents, they form family units (packs) with other non-family members that support and protect their young
- Human beings are the real monsters here – they often exploit and destroy anything that is different. To this end, they create other monsters to justify their actions: ‘genocide has always depended on getting people to see the enemy is not human’
- The beast, largely created in the heart of a fearful mankind will always be considered evil and persecuted as such

So in conclusion, is it possible to love a werewolf book and love *canis lupus*? Like many of us in the lupine world, anything that portrays the wolf as an ugly ravaging creature is usually a turnoff. We work in conservation trying to show the true nature of the animal and stamp out misconceptions. But *By Blood* does not ramp up the horrific nature of the beast to entertain. The beast is what it is, a creature trying to survive under the persecution of mankind. When Glen Duncan came up to visit us at the Trust and walk with our wolf Tala, he had never met a wolf before. I think I can see the mark of the wolf in this third instalment, which is why I consider it the best of the trilogy. With a subtle hand that is never didactic, Duncan has given a philosophy that applies so beautifully to a persecuted species:

'Wulf did what it does; simply insisted. Simply burned through. Simply defied. The same shrugging, grinning continuance. The nature of life. The nature of the beast.'

ORDINARY WOLVES

Seth Kantner, PB, 324pp, Milkweed Editions (2005),
RRP £11.99, ISBN-10: 1571310479

'The young wolf swims wide rivers, climbs mountain passes, crosses green valleys asimmer with cotton grass.'

SETH KANTNER HAS never heard the term 'rewilding'. He told me so in our recent interview (page 24). Why would he? His whole life has already been close to nature, working with the rhythms and realities of life in Alaska. Ordinary Wolves follows the story of Cutuk, a young boy whose white family settled in the Arctic just as Kantner's did. Cutuk is attracted to the big city in the way of most

Kantner paints a world that does not value luxury

energetic youth; the novel follows his progress away from his family, setting up wonderful contrasts between the natural flow of tradition, vast white spaces and the crowded cacophony of that very modern city.

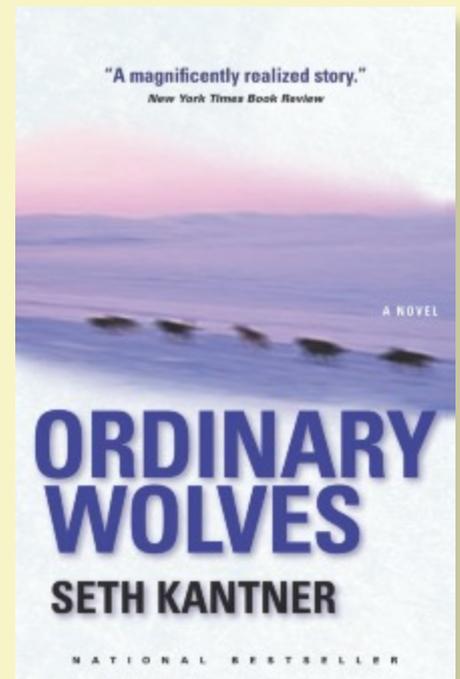
If you are sentimental about animals, there may be times when the casual brutality of Alaskan life may hurt your sensibilities. Sled dogs have a harsh existence, for example. There are wolves, but they are hunted, they live and die. Here, they are not supernatural

beings – simply another species surviving with mankind – the 'ordinary wolves' of the title. There are small chapters where we see the world through their eyes, although never with any level of anthromorphism or sentimentality: 'the wolf glows black as a hole in the day'.

Kantner paints a world that does not value luxury or laziness, which is described with great eloquence: 'She whisked hair and Abe's plane shavings and sawdust into dirt corners with a goose wing.' The prose may be poetic but it is never elegiac or fey. It shows us a

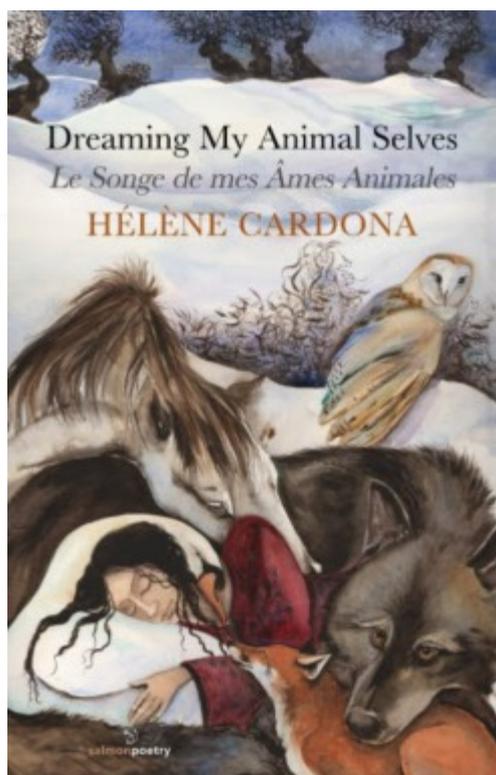
world of practical reality, where being fit and strong equates to survival: 'He was muscled in the forearms in the way of a skinned wolverine.'

Ordinary Wolves definitely deconstructs some of the more glossy and misinformed portraits of the region that have gone before, both in film and literature. You can sense that this is real, that it has been lived. Even the humour is uniquely Alaskan, where people may lead slower lives and be connected more to the land and the seasons but they are



also more observant and see small joys in much that city dwellers might find repellent: 'He examined a wolf turd, long and gray with twisted caribou hair. In his hand the shit looked as capable of magic as a tube of Van Gogh basic white.'

In Ordinary Wolves, do not expect travel writers' romanticism, or adventure for adventure's sake. Wrap up warm and enjoy being in the company of someone who knows Alaska, who truly understands what it is to be wild. I have no idea why this novel hasn't had more worldwide recognition. It should be on everyone's bookshelves.



DREAMING MY ANIMAL SELVES / LE SONGE DE MES ÂMES ANIMALES

Hélène Cardona, PB, 80pp, Salmon Poetry, Bilingual (English/French) edition (2013),
RRP £11.99, ISBN-13: 978-1571310479

THIS GORGEOUS BILINGUAL poetry collection has a number of ethereally realised poems inspired by animals, landscape and dreams. Surreal, gently strange – each poem is an evocation but also an appreciation of the powerful and mercurial magic of nature in all its guises.

In 'The Magician' we are urged to 'remember who you are, step outside of time, choose to feed the white wolf.' Later in the same poem the home-coming is evoked as 'at the bottom of the dry slope cobra, wolf and coyote greet me'.

In each tiny but intense world, we feel the power of dreams. All is possible, there are many enigmas but the unifying thread is animal life and the possibilities of being anything other than human, if only for a short time.

Hélène Cardona is an actress, poet, teacher and dream analyst who has studied all over the world, including at Cambridge, the Sorbonne and the Goethe Institut. Her film credits include Chocolat (2000) and Mumford (1999).

Interview with artist and designer Lisa Parker

Lisa Parker and her husband Andrew came up to the Trust recently, where they adopted Tundra and Nuka.



You work in a very diverse number of mediums – jewellery and artwork for example – so which do you find the most challenging and which do you enjoy the most?

“Everything has its own challenges but the initial idea and composition is definitely the hardest part, however, being the most difficult makes it also the most rewarding. My artwork is licensed to many companies, they add the artworks to their own products so the image has to appeal to a wide market and be able to fit a variety of sizes. Just recently my artwork has been added to super king size duvets and room dividers so I’ve had to work to a much larger size. Although I’m traditionally an oil and watercolourist, to get the artwork to the size required, and to be able to get the it to all the various companies I need to work digitally. I use the same technique digitally as I do with watercolour. Its all hand drawn, layer upon, upon layer.”

How did your contact with the Trust occur?

“I first heard of the UKWCT on Facebook. I was friends with and supported Wolf Angels, a group dedicated to stopping wolf culls in America.”

Clearly wildlife and animals in general attract you and you have talked about sketching since you were very young – do you work from photographs, models or sketch the animals direct?

“It depends on the project. I still regularly draw from life for practice. Customers are preferring highly detailed animals on the various products that I license so the compositions are usually worked out via sketchbooks first and then detail added via my own reference photographs. I never work direct from one photograph.”

What particular challenges does the wolf present?

“Every subject has its own challenges, I’ve been drawing wolves for a very long time now. It’s not specifically the wolf itself that provides the most challenge but in fact the composition. There are so many wolf images on the market so trying to come up with a totally unique picture is the hard part. It makes it easier to paint a subject you love because you enjoy doing it, I suppose just to do the subject justice is a challenge.”

You clearly have an interest in the folklore, fairies and witchcraft but generally it’s not something we encourage to be connected with the wolves as they are separate entities and it can be a controversial area. But wolves and all things gothic are often connected.

What’s your take on that?

“We shouldn’t believe all we see in the movies. Witchcraft is misrepresented in the movies in exactly the same way wolves are. This is too large a subject for us to really to justice to here, for instance, gothic has nothing to do with



witchcraft? Both wolves and pagans are persecuted through lack of knowledge so perhaps they are not so different after all?”

Where do you hope to go with your designs and do you have pieces that you are most proud of?

“I feel very fortunate to be able to earn a living doing what I love, I get to draw exactly what I want to draw and spend time with animals that I love! I am totally freelance now so I no longer design anything bespoke. I’ve recently started working with the Mountain t-

shirts which is very exciting!”

Lisa Parker studied Natural History Illustration at Bournemouth and Poole Institute of Art and Design. She then worked successfully for many years as a freelance artist and has staged many one-man and two-man shows, as well as

exhibiting work in prestigious locations such as The Mall galleries in London and Madison Avenue, New York.

www.lisaparker.co.uk

Julia Bohanna and Tsa Palmer

INTERVIEW WITH TAM SIN ABBOTT, GLASS ARTIST

You have an interesting background, in that you specialised in medieval literature. Looking at your work, it clearly had a strong influence. Can you tell me a little more about what in particular inspired you?

“I love the way that medieval romances and paintings portray worlds where unicorns are just as real as people or domestic animals. Forests and woodlands are magical lands where quests are undertaken by the pure of heart and many wonders will befall travellers. The garden too is of great relevance: a miniature, tamed landscape where loves, friendships, and enchantments may take place.”

You have mentioned on your website the Brotherhood of Ruralists – who sound fascinating. Can you tell our readers a little bit more about them?

“In 1975 seven artists, Sir Peter Blake, Graham and Annie Ovenden, Graham and Ann Arnold, together with David Inshaw and Jann Haworth, left London for the West Country in order to make paintings which were a spiritual celebration of nature as opposed to the more urban, socio-aware art scene of the time. Their work continued the pastoral and visionary tradition as previously exemplified by such artists as Samuel Palmer, JMW Turner, and the Pre-Raphaelites, to name but a few. When I discovered their work it was like an epiphany.”

When, where and why did you turn to stained glass art?

“I had recently given birth to my second child and a friend suggested that I might join her in an evening class at

Hereford College of Art. I wasn't sure at first; glass is a very cold, brittle material, not at all tactile, but once I realised the potential for painting on glass I began to fall more in love with the colours and the life of it.”

I love the way you talk about glass – the alchemy and ancient nature of it – can you talk a little more about that?

“Glass is an incredible material – neither solid nor liquid. It is rigid but you can see through it. Without it we would live in dark caves like our ancestors unable to see the light that keeps us sane. Made from the basest of elements it can be turned into something magical: jewel-like colours lit by the sun's own light to cast spells across the floor.”

What in particular inspires you now?

“The things that have always inspired me: animals, woodlands, mountains, water, folklore, fairytale and shamanism. Our desire to transcend the “everyday” but also the magic of the “everyday” that makes our hearts sing: Light through the trees, a sleeping cat, an embrace, watching your child walking down a country lane or living in the moment.”

You have some powerful wolf images in your work. What does the wolf and wolves mean to you? Have you ever met or seen one?

“Wolf has many meanings to me. On the one hand Wolf is about family, the pack, resilience, intelligence, loyalty, strength, perseverance, survival. But I am also drawn to the lone wolf who must make their own way through many hardships. Finally there is the human to wolf relationship fraught with complications, misunderstanding and fear. In the fairytale context we embrace the fear as thrilling, the danger is a



necessary part of what we love about the wolf over and above what we love about dogs. In all three cases wildness is the key.

“I have only seen a wild wolf once when I was driving through Yosemite with my sister many years ago. It was twilight and the wolf was alone just coming out of some trees on the edge of the road. The image is very strong but I'm not even sure if it is true any more – I'd have to check with my sister! I intend to try and meet more wolves in the near future.”

What response do you have to the wolf images? Some people of course will always see them as a 'bad' animal, a predator – what have you found with people who see your work?

“I find that most people respond to my work in the same way that I respond to the wolf. They are drawn to the danger of the wolf and its wildness, but they respect the wolf and would not have it any other way.”

What are your current plans for your art?

“I am presently involved in an exhibition called *Beast and Beauty* (March 22-May 11) that will, hopefully, feature wolves amongst its beauty! I continue to make work for galleries and exhibitions within the UK and am increasingly busy with private commissions. I also hope to increase the fairytale element in my work.”

Tamsin Abbott studied English Literature at Stirling University, where she developed a passion for medieval woodcuts and painting. Her degree greatly influenced the types of images she now uses in her own art.
www.tamsinglass.co.uk

Julia Bohanna



COLD CUTS

Julia Bohanna talks hunting, with Seth Kantner, author of

'Packs (of wolves) patrolled the nearby mountains and tundra, they strolled down the river ice in front of our sod home, they hunted the caribou and moose, rabbits and birds, same as my family.'

Q *From that very first chapter in Ordinary Wolves, it never feels like a novel with clumsy/intense research. It is not didactic and facts are not squeezed in. It has an acute sense of place and a flow, as if the writer has lived that life. Can you tell us a little of your beginnings?*

A *"Ordinary Wolves, to a certain extent, follows the arc of my life – I was born in a sod igloo in the Arctic, and grew up in the wilderness with very few people around, most of them Eskimo hunters and travellers. As far as flow and sense of place, all I can say is I spent twelve years writing and rewriting this novel, polishing it like ivory, working the best I knew how to make the world I described as alive as the one I feel."*

I had an acute sense that life in the Alaskan wild for Cutuk (the main character) is clean, natural, as it should be. But in the city sections, life felt dirtier, more chaotic and stressful. Do you feel like this yourself?

Have we moved so far away from our roots that we are not as happy, not as connected with the wild? Have you heard of the rewilding movement and what do you feel about it?

"I have not heard of rewilding. I do feel modern technology to be incredibly addictive; the trade off is stress, potential malcontent, and definitely a lack of connection to the land. In my life – from wearing skins and gathering food from the land, to the modern Arctic now of iPhones and Ebay – the huge transformation and loss of indigenous culture has been overwhelming. Confounding."

I loved your recent article about tinnik berries – the alchemy of those bitter berries that transform in oil –but also how they trigger memories. There are many foods described in your book that

'softer' people might shy away from. How important do you feel it is to eat the whole of the animal, but should we also be aware that food comes from real living creatures, not shrink-wrapped from supermarkets?

"To me, two of the scariest things in our immediate future are widespread polluting of our food and water, and disconnection from food itself. I like fishing and hunting and gathering a large portion of what I eat, and I enjoy all the work that is necessary to care for the meat, fish and berries. That feels right to me."

Opening a plastic carton to eat some food, I believe, can lead to only caring about that meal for a moment. That's not a lot of care."

You are a hunter and don't shy away from the visceral reality, the need to eat, earn money, put clothes on your back. But I was struck and very moved by Abe's comment – remembered by Cutuk: 'Don't kill animals for glory, that makes you the worst kind of bully.' There is never a sense of macho gung-ho in the killings in Ordinary Wolves. It feels like survival, nothing more. Have you read naturalist Aldo Leopold's writing and the way he talks about the 'fierce green light' that leaves the wolf's eyes after he shoots her? What do you feel as a hunter when you kill?

"There's a lot more to killing and eating than humans have figured out

about what we call hunting. It's a mystery. It's inside of us. I know people who love to kill things – nearly everything that moves and breathes – and brag about each kill. And I know people like my father who hesitates to kill even a mosquito but will joyfully eat every part of a caribou. I don't LIKE to kill anything; but at the same time nothing feels as real to me as hunting for food."

It was a very interesting device, to intersperse the narrative with the wolves's story – they simply feel like a species surviving, looking after their families. But it is done without sentimentality, without massive amounts of anthropomorphism or Disneyesque happy endings. How easy did you find it to look at the world from their perspective?

wolves and Hollywood of *Ordinary Wolves*.



"It was hard, and easy. I don't pretend to know how a wolf feels about anything, and won't ever pretend that knowledge. At the same time, I do wander the tundra and ice constantly speculating on the daily dilemmas of migrating caribou, playful ravens, wolves, porcupine—even wind-twisted spruce, and limping gnats. In my latest essay about climate change I wrote: 'I believe, tonight in the wet darkness, across this vast land and ocean, that all of us creatures are working to survive, in some form of glass home.'

I've never questioned that the wolves I've seen were working to survive. That's all I wanted to portray in those chapters—not good or bad".

Ordinary Wolves is a reference made by Cutuk when he is talking about the absence of magical, mythical Kipling beasts. But of course, to me, the beauty of the book is that wolves are just wolves, as people are just people – but they are both species that can be extraordinary as well. In the world you created, both animal and human nature have some parallels. What is your personal perception of wolves as a species? Have you had many encounters with them in the wild?

"I can't quite say I grew up with wolves more common than people, but it was close; they certainly were much

more common than house pets. We used to wake up to hear our sled dogs howling, and wolves would be there on the ice watching them. Packs patrolled the nearby mountains and tundra, they strolled down the river ice in front of our sod home, they hunted the caribou and moose, rabbits and birds, same as my family. Of all the animals in our daily lives, they stole the least from us — virtually nothing in the last fifty years — they chewed no holes in our walls, crapped on none of our food, gnawed no nets, broke no windows, killed none of our dogs. In my limited experience, few creatures in nature had more respect for humans. I can't begin to say that vice versa."

Animals like the ravens are often wise in Ordinary Wolves – there is one description: 'Its black eyes watched like an elder.' There is a strong sense of respect woven throughout the narrative – respect for all life. How important do you think this is for humans to retain?

"Thanks for asking. I believe respect is of highest importance. (And sadly underrated in our modern world.) Lack of respect is exactly what might kill us all. Everywhere, everything, needs more respect."

Ordinary Wolves seems very filmic. Have you had any approaches about filming the story?

"Not really. No. I'm not sure who reads my books — and Hollywood is far away. In that world, I don't think real wolves can compete with "reality" wolves. I sometimes think a perfect film of *Ordinary Wolves* would be splendid; but of course the thought of a disrespectful film makes me turn back to the land and other things closer in my days."

What are you working on at present – literary-wise and other projects?

"I have an illustrated children's book coming out in the fall, titled *Pup and Pokey*. My second novel is seeking a publisher, and I'm presently working on a non-fiction book about my life-long companions on the tundra — caribou. I fish for salmon to support my family and also making a living from wildlife photography, and am building a cabin on a river somewhat north of here."

Seth Kantner is the author of *Ordinary Wolves*, *Shopping for Porcupine* and a children's book (to be published in the autumn) *Pup and Pokey*. He lives in Northwest Alaska and writes regularly for Anchorage News' Daily News' Arts and Life section.

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Julia Bohanna

Photos: Seth Kantner

wolves of the world



DOUG SMITH TAKES ON WOLF CRITICS

"If we can get an established group of facts about wolves correctly understood, I do think we can make progress in treating wolves just like any other animal, like a cougar, like a bear, like an elk." Doug Smith (pictured left speaking at the 2013 UKWCT Seminar.

RECENTLY, MONTANA Pioneer magazine interviewed Doug Smith, Yellowstone National Park Wolf Project Leader and Senior Biologist at the Yellowstone Center for Resources, about wolves introduced to the park in 1995. Included in this interview was the "non-native subspecies" charge advanced by critics and details of ongoing research on wolves in the park.

Doug explained: "Forty one wolves were introduced to YNP in 1995. There were 14 in 1995 from Alberta, and 17 in 1996 from British Columbia, and ten in 1997 from near Choteau, Montana. We have genetic evidence that some of those wolves went on to breed. So, ten of the wolves that were introduced were from Montana, and 31 were from Canada."

A popular argument from wolf critics is that these predators are not native subspecies because they had to be introduced from other sources, and therefore they should not be protected. Taxonomically (classifying in categories such as genus, species, and subspecies), you get differences between species

when there are limitations on their ability to mix genetically. Nothing stops a wolf. They will cross mountain ranges, rivers, even pack ice. Ultimately, this constant intermixing of genes prevents them from becoming really different subspecies. On the differences between Canadian subspecies Doug Smith explained that "what we know from studying the skulls is that the wolves are essentially the same. The Canadian wolves were about seven to eight percent larger than the pre-existing wolves of Yellowstone. Seven to eight percent is within the variation of size difference found in wolf skulls all over North America, so the difference is statistically insignificant."

In conclusion, Doug Smith said: "Wolves are troublesome and controversial. I understand that...what I am really after is to get as good a quality of information out there as possible, to help the debate to be a little bit better. The extreme anti-wolf person and the extreme pro-wolf person are always going to be problematic; they are never going to be happy. But this big group of people in the middle can come together on more than they think. Sometimes and in some places their numbers need to be cut back, and just like any other form of wildlife, they need to be scientifically managed."

www.mtpioneer.com/2014-January-Top-Yellowstone-Expert.html

Italian farmers take matters into their own hands against wolves

Farmers in Italy have reacted violently to a boom in the number of wolves roaming the country, by illegally shooting the predators and dumping them in towns and villages as a public reprisal for the death of livestock. The wolf was pushed to the verge of extinction in Italy by the 1970s, when the population dipped to just 100 individuals. A ban on shooting, trapping and poisoning subsequently achieved spectacular success, with numbers now estimated at around 1,000. The population is concentrated in the Alps and along the Apennines. The barbaric backlash against the revival of the species has been particularly pronounced in Tuscany, where at least eight wolves have been illegally shot in the last two months.

"Wolves attacked my animals three times just in December," said Franco

Mattei, a sheep farmer. "The first time, I came across a sheep which had been disembowelled. Another two had just disappeared. On the third occasion I killed the wolf," he said. "When sheep are attacked they are blinded with fear and run off, sometimes falling into ravines or ditches."

Farmers can apply for government funds to erect electric fences around their flocks, but these have only limited success against a predator as determined and intelligent as the wolf. Conservationists believe that many of the sheep and other livestock being killed are the victims of feral dogs or wolf half-breeds, rather than full-blood wolves. Those who lose livestock to wolves can apply for compensation from the government, with the price of a sheep set at between 150 and 180 euros, depending on its age. But

landowners complain that it often takes five or six months for the payments to be made. Wolves in Italy are now spreading across the border into France, where they have caused a similar outcry among farmers.

Across Europe, the wolf population quadrupled between 1970 and 2005, according to a study released in September by Rewilding Europe, a conservation organisation which wants to return a million hectares of land to its natural state and bring back some of the continent's most emblematic species.

www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/italy/10572271/Italian-farmers-fight-back-against-wolves.html
(or tiny.cc/3juacx)

A WORLD WITHOUT WOLVES AND OTHER CARNIVORES? UNTHINKABLE

A FASCINATING paper, “Status and Ecological Effects of the World’s Largest Carnivores”, has been published in the January 10, 2014 issue of the journal *Science*. A team of leading scientists, including Dr Joel Berger of the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and University of Montana, have reported on the current status of large carnivores and the ecological roles they play in regulating ecosystems worldwide. From sea otters that keep sea urchins in check and enable the rise of kelp beds thus increasing the productivity in inland coastal areas, to pumas that mediate the browsing of mule deer and thus enhance the growth and reproduction of woody plants, the scientists profiled seven of the 31 largest species of the order *Carnivora*, including the grey wolf, and their well-studied ecological effects. More than 100 published studies were reviewed to offer a comprehensive look at the state of carnivores and their impacts on the world today.

WCS’ Executive Vice President of Conservation and Science John Robinson said: “This important paper explores how carnivores regulate the structure

and functioning of ecosystems and what happens when they are lost. For many people, it will be an eye-opener and hopefully bring about a change in attitudes and a deeper appreciation of these key species.”

Among their many impacts, carnivores are a benefit to ecotourism. Yellowstone National Park’s restored wolf population brings in tens of millions of dollars in tourist revenue each year. And when wolves are absent, the effect on natural selection is dramatic. “In Badlands National Park, we have observed bison born with deformed hooves or portions of their legs missing,” said WCS Conservation Scientist and author of *The Better to Eat You With*, Joel Berger. “Historically, these bison would have been selected out for predation by wolves, contributing to the overall health of the herd. Today, without wolves, these bison survive and reproduce. This is not the way healthy ecosystems are maintained.”

The ecological services provided by carnivores are multifarious. Carnivores control herbivores to the relief of plants, mitigate global warming, enhance



Nuka by Tristan Findlay

biodiversity, restore rivers and streams, and regulate wildlife disease and livestock disease spill over.

However, many of the largest carnivores are listed as threatened on the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List, and most are still declining in number. These “top or apex predators” have one great competitor: humans.

www.sciencemag.org/content/343/6167/1241484

Over 2,500 wolves killed in United States’ lower 48 states since 2011

RECENT STATISTICS show that hunters and trappers have killed 2,567 grey wolves in the US’s lower 48 states since 2011. Grey wolves were protected by the Endangered Species Act (ESA) for nearly 40 years before being stripped of their protection status by a legislative rider in 2011. Last year total wolf populations were estimated at over 6,000 in the region.

“If this senseless slaughter doesn’t convince the Obama administration we need to reverse course on plans to drop wolf protections, the bloodbath will go on,” said Amaroq Weiss, a member of the Center for Biological Diversity.

When they were targeted as pests and competitors, grey wolves were almost entirely exterminated from the lower 48 states during the 19th

Century. They clung on in northern Minnesota and their comeback began in 1978 when the US Federal Government listed wolves as a protected species under the ESA. Since then Minnesota’s wolf populations have expanded across to nearby Wisconsin and Michigan. In the late 1990s, wolves returned to the US Rocky Mountains via migrating populations out of Canada and reintroduction efforts in Yellowstone National Park. Wolves have then spread to Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming – all of which currently allow hunting. In more recent years, wolves have also expanded into Washington, Oregon, and California, though none of these states currently allow hunting.

912 wolves have been killed over the past two years in Idaho, 566 in

Montana, 562 in Minnesota, 374 in Wisconsin, 130 in Wyoming, and 23 in Michigan, which recently closed its first wolf-hunting season. Minnesota has the most wolves of any state in the lower 48, but has seen the population drop dramatically in the past couple years.

Last year, the US Department of Interior proposed delisting wolves entirely from the ESA across the lower 48, except for a small population of Mexican wolves (*Canis lupus baileyi*). Worldwide, grey wolves are currently listed as Least Concern by the IUCN Red List and their population is considered stable.

<http://news.mongabay.com/2014/01/28-hance-wolf-hunt-2500.html>

Into the White

Life as an Arctic Explorer

Julia Bohanna interviews Jim McNeill, polar explorer and guide

JIM McNEILL has been a polar explorer for 28 years, clocking up a huge wealth of experience in extreme conditions. In 2001 he began the Ice Warrior Project. He worked previously in the environmental science sector, trained army personnel to use mountains safely and has 12 years of blue-chip marketing communications experience at consultancy level. In 2006 he resigned his 15 years of fire and rescue operations for the Royal Household, to engage in “professional exploring”.

His CV also includes work on Frozen Planet, Human Planet, Natural World and Last Explorers. Next year Jim plans to be the first person to walk to the Arctic Pole – the furthest point from land on the Arctic Ocean.

www.ice-warrior.com

Jim, the title of ‘polar explorer,’ like astronaut or nuclear physicist, always seems like a dream, one you might have under a warm duvet one starry evening. But it’s an unattainable one to most, for many reasons. How does a life adventure like that begin? What was your path? Who were your heroes/heroines as a boy?

“Although my life is adventurous I really don’t consider myself an adventurer but a modern-day explorer and it all started when I couldn’t apply myself to academic study at school and they sent me on an Outward Bound course for three weeks in the middle of winter to help. Of course it didn’t! But achieved the opposite affect and reading some the wonderful books in their library of exploration sparked a fervent desire in me to explore and spend my

life outdoors. As far as people I admired and who inspired me there are too many to mention and most of them are relatively unknown save for perhaps Sir Ernest Shackleton and Tom Crean.”

Tell us about your project Ice Warrior. What does it mean to you?

“Ice Warrior means absolutely everything to me and although it sounds corny, it really fulfils my reason for living and being. It calls for volunteers from all walks and echelons of life to become explorers and engage in incredibly worthwhile expeditions which allow us to understand more of the changing world we live in – my definition of modern exploration.”

How much fitness is required for travelling in polar regions? Do you need to put on weight (blubber) before you leave? What high calorie foods do you take with you?

“I always say that it is 70 percent brain power and 30 percent brawn and that brawn can be worked on and developed. Preparation depends on what kind of metabolism you start with. Personally I have to get fat and fit before and

... wet wipes – a huge revolution of the 80s before which a slice of ice was the only method of keeping hygienic.

expedition and shed around a pound a day which I try and replace by eating extremely high calorific value foodstuffs such as nuts and salamis.”

Decades ago, polar exploration was dangerous and unpredictable like trying to make batteries work in low temperatures etc. Technology must now be a boon. What are the gadgets you trust and rely on most?

“Just like the golden era of exploration which Ice Warrior emulates we use and

indeed develop the very latest technology in order to travel in such extreme environments. These include GPS, tracking and location systems, satellite phones, computers, aerial reconnaissance devices and new technology to cross ever disintegrating sea ice.”

You have worked with the BBC and spoken with great admiration about cameramen like Mark Smith. Can you explain why their job is so very difficult?

“In order to get the incredible footage they do, they sacrifice everything in the way of comfort and sometimes even safety (making my job very difficult!). Their powers of endurance and determination are an inspiration to us all and without which our understanding and knowledge of the wonders of nature and wildlife would be sadly lacking.”

When people talk about other people on expeditions, there seems to be a universal obsession with bodily functions. There appears to be a lot of myth surrounding what you can and cannot do. Is it true for example that you have to take your “doings” home in a bag? Or is

that only in pristine parts of Antarctica? How do you go to the loo in freezing conditions? Also how do you keep clean generally?

“All expeditions should tread as lightly as possible and given that we are in pristine environments, that frequently means taking everything out that we bring in. As far as ablutions are concerned the trick is rapidity and wet wipes – a huge revolution of the 80s before which a slice of ice was the only method of keeping hygienic.”

Thank you for getting that one out of the way! It just seems to obsess so many people. When you talked at the last UKWCT seminar, I was struck by how you felt about the beauty of silence in those vast, white spaces and how noise seemed so intrusive when you returned. Can you tell me a little bit more about that? I got a strong sense that you feel the whole experience is life-affirming and possibly, very spiritual? What changes have you seen in people who have travelled with you?

"I label this the walk tall syndrome. The training and the experiences people go through and what they achieve make them very self assured and confident in dealing with anything they might come across in their own communities but this confidence is quiet and not boastful and they end up as much better members of society, usually contributing much more to making our lives better. I love it!"

At our 2012 seminar at the Trust, where you came to talk about your adventures, you showed some gorgeous pictures of some of the creatures you encountered in the Arctic, particularly the wolves you named Lucy and Mac. Of course it is a unique environment and wolves respond differently to man there, but can you talk about the apparent playfulness of those wolves and

their curiosity about your

arrival. Can you tell us a little more about Lucy and Mac?

"I find all wildlife encounters in such extreme environments just magical but I am particularly fond of the wolves. They are true survivors in conditions which are barely tolerable for us and yet they look after each other in the most amazing and caring ways and to witness this and sometimes almost be a part of it is the most incredible feeling on Earth. Lucy was the first wolf to befriend me and we shared so many special moments together, just as I do with my own sheepdog, Flash. Mac on the other hand was the alpha male and incredibly clever and we spent many hours of many days during the filming of Frozen Planet trying to outwit each other. Magical moments."

How did you feel the first time you saw a wolf in the Arctic? In their natural landscape, they must look magnificent.

"I was gob-smacked by their ability to communicate with the smallest of movements and gestures and by their gentleness. I was once surrounded entirely by a pack of eight mostly fully grown wolves and yet felt no danger to my life at all and sat down amongst them."

Are you noticing changes each time you go on your Arctic expeditions, in animal behaviour and landscape? Some for example of noticing that polar bears, unable to find enough food, are travelling more and being found in more human-populated areas. What are your experiences?

"Unfortunately I could write whole books on this subject and am indeed trying to do so at the moment but suffice it to say that I witness huge changes in everything: climate, flora, fauna, biodiversity and geography in general. It is this that I consider our exploration and our discoveries are all about, in this age."

You met our Arctics the last time you were at the Trust. I remember standing in the enclosure while

Pukak had a good old sniff of people's bottoms. Obviously out in the wild, you would not want such close contact with a wild creature – but have there been some hairy moments with wolves at any point? How did you deal with them?

"I can honestly say that I have never felt personally threatened by wolves although I have witnessed a close encounter when their quarry (muskox) was more difficult to catch than one of our filming field assistants. Luckily I reminded him that he had on him a fire-cracker firework for just such rare occasions but it was close. Mostly I have witnessed cheekiness, cunning, cleverness and what can only be described as spiritual comradeship."

Wolves in places like Alaska are shot from the air. There's a huge feeling that they are nuisance or a food competitor, rather than a beautiful part of the



... I was once surrounded entirely by a pack of eight mostly fully grown wolves and yet felt no danger

natural landscape. Have you seen any projects in those regions spring up – such as education programmes or anti-hunting lobbies?

"I haven't but would very much like to be a part of educating people about their real nature."

Where next for you, Jim? What is left on your list of ambitions?

"There is one significant place on the planet which has yet to be reached and it's known as the Northern Pole of Inaccessibility. It stands as the last true world first in the polar regions and I am training ordinary people to take part in what is also (and to me more importantly) a crucial scientific transect of the Arctic Ocean from its edge to the very centre. This has been my goal since 2002 and quite apart from the vital scientific value of the expedition, to convey to people the journey from the start of training to eventually reaching the pole in a no-spin, warts-and-all basis is my preoccupation. Having achieved this the Warrior Project will then go on to other extreme environments, engaging and inspiring people to get involved in better understanding these so that ultimately we can be better guardians of the wonderful planet we live on."

Julia Bohanna

Photo of Jim Neill:

Carla Delaney Communications

Wolfy gifts and souvenirs



HAND-PAINTED WOLF T-SHIRT **£30**

This beautiful 'one of a kind' hand-painted wolf has been painted onto a quality Gildan t-shirt using special fabric acrylic paints which will last for many years on the shirt. The image has been hot-ironed to fix the paints and can be machine-washed warm (inside out) and hung to dry. Sizes: S-97cm, M-102cm, L-112cm, XL-122cm
Colours: Indigo (shown left), light blue and white.

Also available as an individual commission with your favourite wolf hand-painted on a t-shirt of the colour and size of your choice. For further details ring 0118 971 3330.

TWO-WOLF CRYSTAL KEYRING **£3.00**



Double-sided keyring featuring delightful artwork by David Penfound. It is displayed between two crystal glass domes and the keyring has a high quality metal key chain and edging. The artwork features a wolf sitting in the foreground with another howling on top of a rock in the background, silhouetted by a full moon. Overall length: 10cm.



WOLF HEAD SILVER EAR STUDS **£8.50**

Silver howling-wolf ear studs on posts with flower-shaped backs. Maximum size 1cm.

WOLF GLITTER DREAMCATCHER HOODIES AND T-SHIRTS

Howling Wolf Dreamcatcher and Blue Wolf Dreamcatcher design black t-shirts and fleece hoodies from the popular Wild Collection. 100% cotton.

WOLF DREAMCATCHER HOODIE **£26.50**

The hoodie has a full front zip, two pockets and is screen-printed on the front, back and sleeves with glitter highlighting the feathers and dreamcatcher. Hoodie sizes: M-107cm, L-117cm, XL-127cm

WOLF DREAMCATCHER T-SHIRT

£16.00

The t-shirt is screen-printed on both the front and back with glitter highlighting the feathers and dreamcatcher. Sizes: M-102cm, L-112cm, XL-122cm.



Visit ukwolf.org for details of all our wolfy souvenirs, gifts and books

**WOLF AND MOON
PENDANT £8.50**

Bronze pendant designed by Lisa Parker for use with your own chain or cord. Size:



**WOLVES PAINT-BY-NUMBERS
£6.49**

Large Reeves paint-by-numbers set featuring two wolves and suitable for all ages and abilities. Contains:

- Quality Textured Artboard
- 1 Brush
- 10 Quality Acrylic Paints
- Full step-by-step instructions

Actual size of board is 400 x 300mm.

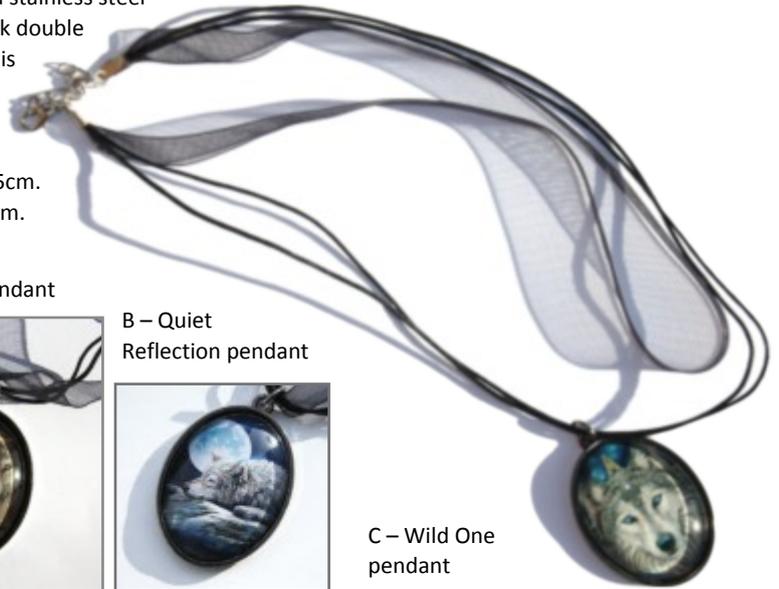
PAINTED FEATHER PEN

£28.00

This wolf has been meticulously hand-painted by Kym Anderson onto a turkey feather using acrylics and the finest paint brushes. The shaft of the feather is bound in soft leather and decorated with traditional wooden beads. This is then created into a non-refill writing pen. Presented in an ivory gift box with lid, the pen makes a lovely and unusual gift. Designs vary. Length approx: 30cm.

WOLF NECKLACE AND PENDANTS £14.50 each

Three pendants designed and made by Lisa Parker. Each pendant is set beneath a clear dome encased within a stainless steel surround. A black double cord and ribbon is attached with an adjustable fastening. Pendant size: 4.5cm. Cord length: 44cm.



A – Two-wolf pendant



B – Quiet Reflection pendant



C – Wild One pendant

**BRONZE UKWCT
WOLF KEYRING**

£3.00

Specially designed and made for the Trust in bronze with inset paw print. Wolf measures 5cm. Overall length: 8cm.



EXCLUSIVE: UKWCT HOODED SWEATSHIRTS

A Gildan Heavy Blend sweatshirt with double-lined hood, set-in sleeves and pouch pocket. Air jet spun yarn equals softer feel and no pill. Printed exclusively for the Trust with velvet transfer of wolf paw, our website address "UK Wolf Conservation Trust". A small version of the motif is printed on the left front and larger on the back. Motif colour varies depending on garment colour. Fabric 50% cotton & 50% polyester.

JUNIOR SWEATSHIRT HOODIE £23.50

The Junior version is shown below and is available in sport grey and heliconia.

Sizes: Size S–age 5/6, M–age 7/8, L–9/11, XL–12/13

ADULT SWEATSHIRT HOODIE £29.99

The Adult version shown below is available in sport grey, black and light blue.

Sizes: S–34"/36", M–38"/40", L–42"/44", XL–46"/48"



ORDERING & DELIVERY

To view and order any of these items and our other stationery, clothing, books, gifts and souvenirs, visit our online shop at www.ukwolf.org or call 0118 971 3330.

Please note: all UK orders are subject to a minimum P&P charge of £4.50. For overseas orders, please contact us.



UKWCT WOLF CENTRE 'VISIT WEDNESDAYS'

Open from 11am to 4pm

Visit Wednesdays give you the opportunity to come and see the Trust without pre-booking, unlike our other events.

You will be able to observe our ten very charismatic wolves – from our three Arctics with their amazing white coats, to our enigmatic black Canadian wolves – and have a guided tour with one of our knowledgeable volunteers. There will be fantastic photographic views of the wolves in their large, natural-looking enclosures and you'll have access to the raised photographic platform on site. If you're lucky you may even hear them howl!

We also have a gift shop for you to browse for books and souvenirs, picnic areas for warmer days and free parking.



ADMISSION: Adults—£8; Members, children (age 3-12) & OAPs—£5; Children under 3—FREE.

Tickets on the gate only.

Sorry: no dogs on site.



WOLF VIEWING & BAT WALK

Saturdays 17th May, 19th July at 7.30pm & 20th September at 6.00pm • £15 • Booking essential

- Tour the Trust and see our wolves up close
- Wolf photography opportunities and howling session
- Presentation by an expert on the life of bats in the UK
- Walk round the Trust at dusk to see long-eared bats flying

The Trust is home to many bats, many of which live in nesting boxes on trees



Arctic Ambles



25th May and 29th June
9am to 11am

Enjoy a walk with our magnificent Arctic Wolves and the wonderful photographic opportunities they provide.

View all of the Trust's wolves and spend time getting to know the handlers who work with these amazing animals.

Afterwards, there will be time to shop for a wolfy souvenir!

Maximum 12 people.
Booking essential.
£60 per person, age 18+

PREDATOR DAY

21st June, 10am to 4pm

The ultimate experience for animal and wildlife enthusiasts: Spend a whole day with the world's most powerful and enthralling predators... wolves and raptors.



The morning includes a two-hour walk with wolves around the Trust in beautiful Berkshire countryside. There will be ample opportunities for photography on the walk as well as handling and flying the birds of prey in the afternoon. There will also be time to see and photograph all the wolves at the Trust including the UK's first Arctic wolves.

Our **Predator Day** is the only way in the UK to walk with wolves in the morning and fly a hawk in the afternoon.



£120 per person. Minimum age 16
Booking essential Please bring a packed lunch

Wolf Keeper Experience Days

10am–4pm, maximum 8 people per day.
Thursdays 1st May, 15th May and 12th June

See behind the scenes at the Trust and shadow the keeper in tasks including cleaning out the wolf enclosures, preparing food and feeding the wolves. Get involved in our wolf enrichment programme, walk with wolves, snap up great photo opportunities and receive a souvenir event certificate of your day. £150pp

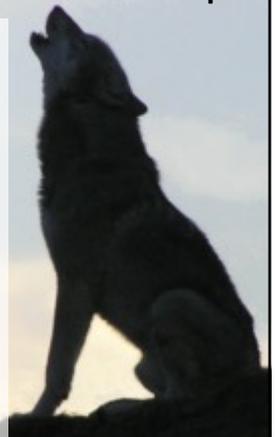
Check our website for full details and to book

11th April, 16th May, 13th June, 12th September – at 7.00pm

Friday Night is Howl Night!

Feel your backbone tingle and your ears vibrate with the sound. The evening starts with a presentation on wolf communication; you will then go on a tour of the centre and have the opportunity to let out a howl and see if the wolves respond!

£10 per person. Booking essential. (Don't forget to dress up warmly for an evening under the stars).



Full details of all events at www.ukwolf.org
or to book call 0118 971 3330