

The hunter and the hunted

undance of game, pup mortality, and on the wolves. The wolf pack is hierarchical; the alpha male and female (usually the only ones) are "beta" wolves, "outcast" wolves, and a few are wolves under two years of age.

dominates the other females in estrus, and the alpha male, but usually with no blood-shed. The alpha male, although with not as much vigor as the alpha female usually leads the pack, and the alpha female usually leads the pack, where the pack will have to hunt for next time. The den location is an error in judging where the game will be. The den location is an error in judging where the game will be.

f the wolf pack is not entirely inflexible. The alpha male and female (usually the only ones) are "beta" wolves, "outcast" wolves, and a few are wolves under two years of age. The alpha male, although with not as much vigor as the alpha female usually leads the pack, and the alpha female usually leads the pack, where the pack will have to hunt for next time. The den location is an error in judging where the game will be.

of wolves are maintained through vocalizing, and scent marking.

urdling howls of wolves, despite popular belief, frequently on full moons. An illusion of howling at once occurs because each wolf howls at a different time.

But the reasons for howling are unclear. It is caused by restlessness and anxiety, reaching a peak during courtship and breeding.

howl at 10 to 20 kilometers away. It is a warning or surprise, and growling as a sign of rights in some social context like food. High-pitched social squeaks are associated with pups, play and curiosity.

ally plays a role in asserting rank, and is often stereotyped, often prevents real fights.

a male may stand erect and still with his tail up, while the subordinate animal generates its tail, and flattened its ears back. An alpha male by retracting the corners of the mouth into a "grin" or by laying on its back. The alpha male's muzzle is a sign of active submission to another's muzzle, although ominous.

Similarly, "greeting ceremonies" of tail-wagging occur after the animals rediscover each other after a brief separation. The alpha male will subvert subordinates, which seems to reinforce the alpha's dominance, but rather than being usually very tolerant and friendly. When they

are challenged and replaced by a new alpha, the memory of a violent past between packs.

By restricting the number of wolves that can live in one area, the wolves limit their own populations by territoriality and by their own social structure which control the number of births. Wolves simply cannot become overly plentiful. Their feeding habits and digestive systems are adapted to a "feast-or-famine" existence and to processing massive amounts of food in a short time. They can go without food for 3 to 4 days, then can eat up to 18 pounds of meat in one sitting, then get "meat drunk" until digestion is complete in 2-3 hours. They eat everything except the stomach and its contents. Even if their voracity causes a large number of moose, for example, to be eaten (for whatever reason), the wolves will only have less to eat later. The wolves are in balance with their prey, otherwise they would have long ago eaten their prey and themselves into extinction.

Ironically, our attempt to "extinguish" the wolf from our world also killed millions of other animals like raccoons, black-footed ferrets, red foxes, ravens, red-tailed hawks, eagles, squirrels, and wolverines. When people were poisoning the wolf with strychnine, arsenic and cyanide, all the others which share the wolves' domain also were killed. The wolf hunts for ecological investment, not like we, who hunt for economic and political investment.

By Chris Lohr

