

# Radical biology student on warpath

*With the current emphasis on conservation and protection of the environment it sometimes seems unfeasible that there is still resistance to be found to protective measures now in effect. Such an attempt to save the wolf from extinction has aroused a sizeable reaction from many, whose opinion of the wolf is biased by fable and legend. Even those who as Mr. Clem states should 'know better'. If constructive measures are to be taken the realities of ecological balance must be expressed even impatiently, as in Mr. Clem's reply to recent weekend magazine article.*

A Weekend Magazine story last April about the relentless killing of wolves from airplanes around Kenora, Ont., provoked a public outcry in defense of the animals. Here, Clifford Olmstead, of Bryson, Que., who has been hunting and fishing for 46 years, argues that wolves don't necessarily deserve our sympathy.

"The timber wolf always kills aged, crippled, or sick deer." How many times in the past years have I read this statement, always the same song about the noble wolf selecting his kill.

To start with, the timber wolf is anything but noble — a coward that avoids man at all times. The few times that he is sighted by man at close range, he always slinks off with his tail between his legs. A noble sight indeed!

Eater of carrion, a wolf will return to a summer kill until nothing remains, no matter how putrid or rotten it becomes. One mature timber wolf can kill the biggest buck deer in the forest, and frequently does.

L. David Mech, in an issue of Sports Afield, speaks of the wolf as being a strong, sensitive, intelligent animal. This is indeed true, especially of the wolf's strength which is phenomenal. A few years ago, a trapper in the Danford Lake area of Pontiac County, Que., caught a wolf in a No. 4 trap. The wolf somehow managed to break the chain and escape with the trap attached to one leg. Enlisting the help of one of his neighbors, the trapper set out to run the wolf down. At the end of six days, the men quit and the wolf, which had not eaten in that time, was still going strong.

Mech, in his article Witness To Outrage, states that he considers Farley Mowat's book, Never Cry Wolf, good reading. He also says that almost anyone whom he considers well read has seen this work. This is pure drivel. Mowat's book did make interesting reading, but anybody who would believe that he crawled down into the den to fondle and measure the wolf cubs while the mother wolf looked on with a smile of approval is more to be pitied than laughed at.

Having spent the summer of 1953 and the winter of 1954 at Rankin Inlet on Hudson Bay, I have had the opportunity of hunt-

ing with the Eskimos and know that they never passed up a chance to kill a wolf summer or winter, and held the wolf in utter contempt.

The old-time trapper of the 1920s and 1930s did not consider his outfit complete unless he had at least 10 bottles of strychnine and a dog team of two to eight dogs. Shooting game at random, he then saved the best parts for himself and the dogs, and the rest of the carcass was very liberally dosed with poison. The result, of course, was that while a good many wolves were killed, also poisoned were foxes, ravens, blue jays, Canada jays, chickadees, and often his own dogs. This continued pretty much the same until the late in the 1940s when, all of a sudden, fur styles changed and long-haired fur was no longer in demand.

Trappers quit the bush by the hundreds, and several species of animals were granted a reprieve. The moose no longer needed to feed sleigh dogs; the wolves were left alone; the beaver made a miraculous comeback. The beaver built dams on every stream and became very plentiful, and the result was the wolves had a new source of food — the beaver.

At my hunting camp on the Schyan River, I always try to arrive a couple of days before the son for moose opens and I am this time getting the camp in shape and travelling the trails to see what game might be available. In my travels I have examined hundreds of wolf droppings and have found 95 percent of them to contain beaver fur at this time of year. My contention is that the wolf was never better fed than at the present time. In summer there is an abundance of beaver, and after the moose hunt there are tons of waste consisting of moose heads, legs, hides, and intestines. Also there are many wounded moose that have wandered off to die. This leaves the timber wolf sleek and fat to start the winter and live off the white-tailed deer.

This brings us to the idea of the wolf killing more than he needs and, although some of the self-styled experts claim that the wolf does not do this, in April, 1962 while cruising timber, I counted 27 deer killed in two days, all in the same part of the country and apparently by the same wolf pack.

In the fall of 1970, my hunting partner and I decided to do something about the wolves in my area. Setting out a line of snares, we succeeded in taking eight wolves, most of them caught around fresh deer kills. Although other hunters also took several, there were still far too many left to breed in the spring.

As for the wolf becoming extinct, this is a lot of hogwash. They are definitely on the increase in this part of Canada and are quite able to take care of themselves. What bothers me more than the writers who have never seen a wolf in the wild, nevertheless write as experts on the subject. My partner and I both have the same opinion of timber wolves, and that is that two pairs of breeding wolves in each province would be quite enough.

Most of these deer had been dis-emboweled, and a small amount of each was eaten. Some of them had been fed on while they were still alive. In one case, a doe crawled a distance of 100 feet after the wolves left before she died.

Their method of killing is one reason why people who are familiar with wolves hate them so intensely. In the early 1950s when the lumbermen built truck roads into the bush to take out logs, the good hunters followed them in and the result has been that the whole forest for as far back as 100 miles is now being hunted by an army of hunters, especially in the moose season.

Therefore, it is my opinion that if any deer are to survive, we must take either man, the greatest of all predators, or the wolf out of the forest.

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Bill Mason, producer of a National Film Board program which attempted to dispel myths about the wolf, romps with one of his friends.

In response to Mr. Olmstead, Mr. Clem attempts to counter the arguments put forth against Wolves by exposing the many failings in Mr. Olmstead's article.

The timber wolf always kills young, aged, crippled, or sick prey, and Mr. Olmstead you had better start believing that because it is true. If you counted 27 deer killed in two days then the deer habitat is declining in that area, or there are a lot of deer there or Mr. Olmstead you should not fly under

the effects because you can not differentiate between a pile of deer fecal material and a dead deer. A healthy adult deer can outrun a wolf and a healthy adult moose can stand off a pack of 10 wolves. Mr. Olmstead, if ever a little bit of knowledge was dangerous it was when you decided to put an article in the Weekend Magazine. You talk of the self-styled experts that make claims about the wolf. You should

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