

'The last cry of the wolf': Response and follow-up

The recent SCIENCE NEWS article "The last cry of the wolf" (SN: 2/17/73, p. 109), about plans to protect the eastern timber wolf, triggered a wide range of mail response, ranging from volunteers to live with the wolves in the wild to the statement that "if it were not for the hunter there would be no wildlife." A sampling of these letters follows, with sources of additional information.

Reason for hunting

In the course of Louise Purrett's wolf article, she went on to knock the State of Minnesota's proposed wolf hunting season. Well, I've been up there enough to see that there is a need to put a season on. Those wolves are not dying because of over-hunting. They're dying because of a lack of enough food. The wolves are too populated in some areas and not enough in others. They must be thinned out in the right areas, and they then should be closely watched and have a regular season posted.

My good friend lives on a farm in the northwest section of our state, and he says that there are many wolves in his area because they are fortunate enough to have a good deer population in the area. But he went on to say that because the other parts of the state have a low deer population, wolves in those parts have trouble finding enough food, which they usually don't, and that's where mass starvation comes.

William T. Gillet
St. Paul, Minn.

Offset balance of nature

I read your article on the extinction of the wolf. I do agree that the wolf needs to be protected, but as a suggestion to whom it may concern, if the bill that was introduced to help protect the wolf passes, keep in mind that you may offset the balance of nature by putting strict rules on the hunting, trapping and poisoning of the wolf. As an example:

Over here in South Dakota, the red fox was becoming more or less extinct. In return, there were bills passed to help keep the fox from being hunted. Bounty was dropped, and the hide price was not good enough to even hunt them, until this year. The red fox was more or less protected.

Now we have run into a problem of too many foxes and not enough jackrabbits and pheasants. The red fox has become so numerous that it is killing off the jackrabbits and pheasants and rodents and so on. Now the bounty should probably be put back on the fox, as they are trying to do, and the price of fur of fox has gone sky high.

Thomas R. Seaman
Newell, S. Dak.

Succumbed to propaganda

I am most dismayed that you did not attempt to check out the material in the wolf article before dignifying it with publication in your ordinarily fine magazine. It appears that you and your writer succumbed totally to the very biased, inaccurate and misleading propaganda issued by the Fund for Animals.

We are certain that if you review the materials about the Minnesota plan you will see that our proposal would provide

the wolf with far more protection than the animal has ever had in this state, and that the plan is based on the very latest scientific findings of three research biologists who have spent a total of 12 man-years studying the wolf in Minnesota. It was designed to restrict the taking of wolves in the state, rather than to promote a larger kill.

L. David Mech
Wildlife Research Biologist
Division of Ecological Services
Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife
U.S. Department of the Interior
Twin Cities, Minn.

For additional information, or to express your own views, on the Minnesota wolf management plan, write: Commissioner Robert Herbst, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Centennial Office Building, St. Paul, Minn. 55155. Lewis Regenstein, the "wolfman" of the Fund for Animals, is Washington director of that organization at 1765 P St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. The Fund replies to Mech's letter that its opposition to the Minnesota plan is based on the fact that the plan would allow the annual killing of between 150 and 200 eastern timber wolves from among the last viable population of these animals remaining in the United States. Any plan to legitimize and perpetuate the continued "sport" killing of an endangered species, the Fund maintains, cannot be condoned.

Tired of doing nothing

I have recently read Ms. Purrett's article about wolves. For quite a while now, I have been interested in these animals, and am tired of sitting around and doing nothing about the dangers of extinction. I was wondering if you could tell me who to get in touch with about working actively in some way to help promote legislation and other concrete activities (if legislation can be considered such). Being in Illinois poses a problem, as I don't know if there are any national agencies in the area, but I would appreciate it if you could help me in some way.

Diane Margolis
Evanston, Ill.

I love the wolf

I read your issue on the last cry of the wolf. I love the wolf and I want to do everything in my power to save them. I would like to know what address I would have to send to in order to get some information on the wolf and on how to help save them.

I'll tell you how much I like the wolf. If they needed someone to go out and live with the wolf in the wilderness for a length of time, I would pack tomorrow, and that's not a lie. I love the wilderness and everything that's in it. I have dreamed that someday I could go and study the

wolves as people have done in the past. I'm only 17 but I would go anyway.

Mark Hubley
Ontario, Canada

The status of wolves in Canada varies a great deal from province to province, just as it does from state to state in the United States, depending upon the attitudes of wildlife officials, pressure from sportsmen and other factors. An organization that is extremely active in both countries, following wolf matters even from individual episode to episode, is the Canadian and American Wolf Defenders, whose headquarters is at 68 Panetta Rd., Carmel Valley, Calif. 93924.

Wolves on tour

I was delighted to read your timely article "The last cry of the wolf" (SN: 2/17/73, p. 109). I think you would be doing a great service to the public and to the wolves, if you would publish the address of the Jethro Lecture Service which is 1201 Avenue "K," Brooklyn, N.Y. 11230. This organization sponsors a program which constantly tours the states, consisting of the excellent Canadian documentary called "Death of a Legend" and two live wolves, Jethro and Clem, who bring home to all that see the program the full force of man's continuing folly. For a modest donation a school or college can have a rich experience. As a biology teacher I can safely say that students gain more from this 50-minute program than they often learn from three months of sitting in the classroom.

Joy Lee
Ecology Institute
University of Georgia
Athens, Ga.

Anxious to act

Louise Purrett's article on wolves has this family anxious to act. Please help us by publishing the two committees and their heads and the bill number of the Endangered Species proposal.

A. Stone
Winnetka, Ill.

The Interior Department's bill, the Endangered Species Act of 1973, is H.R. 4758. Correspondence should go to The Honorable John Dingell, Chairman, House Subcommittee on Fisheries and Wildlife Conservation, House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515. In the Senate, the key figure will be The Honorable Warren Magnuson, Chairman, Senate Commerce Committee, United States Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510. Besides the Interior Department's bill, however, there are almost a dozen alternative bills, which the House conservation subcommittee's counsel labels either "similar" or "substantially similar." A controversial area in which variations could occur is the matter of Federal authority that could override the wishes of individual states, such as, for example, in the case of Minnesota's wolf management plan. This is an area in which a strong Federal domestic endangered species bill would have some teeth.