

ZOOLOGY
NATURE RAMBLINGS



Wolves

► ACCORDING TO ancient legend, a pair of infant twin boys were thrown into the river. A she-wolf rescued the pair, nursed them, and raised them to young manhood. One of the boys founded a city which survives to this day.

The boys were Romulus and Remus. And the city was Rome.

According to another fable, a little girl wearing a red cloak traveled through the woods to see her grandmother. When she arrived, she found not grandma but a wolf dressed in grandma's cap.

The little girl, of course, was Little Red Ridinghood.

Of the two sides of the wolf's nature which are contrasted so sharply in these stories, most people would say the second contained the truth of the matter.

However, the Romulus-Remus story, posterous though it may actually be, has its adherents, even today. Some biologists who have observed wolves closely are of the opinion that the domestic life of a wolf is a shining example of love, kindness and consideration.

Wolf "marriages" are believed to last a lifetime, and the solicitude shown the young by both parents is supposed to be of the tenderest. When the pups are young and sportive, and their horse-play overflows into the vicinity of papa wolf, he does not

send them sprawling with a snarling back-hand blow. Instead, he patiently gets up and moves out of the arena of juvenile rambunctiousness.

This sort of paternal care and thoughtfulness, which extends into the areas of feeding and training the young how to hunt, is a far cry from such philanthropies as rescuing human young from rivers and tending to their every need till the human can fend for himself.

But the two myths, with their contradictory views of this wild relative of the dog, do serve to underscore a controversy about wolves that persists to this day.

Although in great stretches of the United States wolves have been all but exterminated, in the timbered expanses of Canada and Alaska, they survive in considerable numbers. Since they are predators who live by killing wild game, or domestic stock where they can, the northern wolf population exacts a constant toll of mountain-sheep, moose, caribou and other animals.

On one side of the controversy is a group of conservationists who believe that man must go in and kill the wolves with planes, poisons, guns and traps to save the game from extinction. The other group maintains that wolves exercise a weeding-out effect, killing the stragglers, leaving the most fit.

It is the age-old disagreement, with a new bitterness. Romulus and Ridinghood can't both be right.

Science News Letter, February 20, 1954

About one-fourth of the land in the United States is cropland, and more than half is permanent pasture and grazing land.

A black and white watercolor painting of two ringed-necked ducks coming in for a landing has been chosen as the design for the 1954-55 Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp.

Questions

AGRICULTURE—How could present coffee production be nearly doubled? p. 120.
□ □ □

BIOPHYSICS—What acts as biological dosimeter of radiation exposure in mice? p. 121.
□ □ □

MEDICINE—What new drug combination is recommended for TB treatment? p. 116.
□ □ □

PSYCHIATRY—How do slot machines aid schizophrenic patients? p. 120.
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PSYCHOLOGY—How do babies learn to cry? p. 121.
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PUBLIC HEALTH—What points should a rabies control program cover? p. 119.
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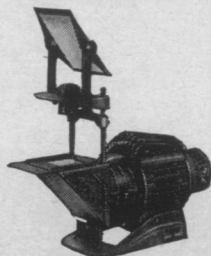
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