Transplanted Timber Wolves Take Root (Hopefully)

Four timber wolves were recently captured in the wild and then transplanted to a new habitat. So far, the world’s first transplant attempt with timber wolves appears to be successful. The fact that one pair of wolves had mated before they were released is a good indicator the project will be successful. The wolves were released in a wilderness area in Upper Michigan, where only a few timber wolves remain. It is estimated there may only be half a dozen wolves left in that area. And they do not appear to be reproducing.

The transplant program is being funded by Northern Michigan University, The National Audubon Society, and The Huron Mountain Wildlife Foundation. The Departments of Natural Resources of the states of Michigan and Minnesota have approved the project and are cooperating with it. Both states are involved, since the only remaining viable population of timber wolves left in the contiguous 48 states is in Minnesota, where there are estimated to be 500 to 1000 wolves.

Using a live-trap, Robert Himes captured four wolves during late December through January, all in the same general area. This could mean that the wolves are all from the same wolf pack. The future transplants were kept in a pen until all four had been captured. Dr. David Mech, of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of

Endangered Wildlife Research, then directed the anesthetizing and radio tagging operation of the captured wolves. It was important to tranquilize them to treat them and transport them. At the same time, radio collars were placed on each wolf. This will help the scientists learn more about the habits and adaptations of the wolves. Scientists will be able to track their movements and learn if they remain in the area where they have been released. So far they have. The scientists will also be able to follow the movements of the pregnant female, and, when she stays in one place any length of time, they can be fairly sure that her cubs are being born. If the wolves follow traditional wolf social behavior, the others will also remain fairly near the den site, providing food for the mother wolf and helping her to raise the cubs. They will baby sit and help teach the cubs to hunt.

While they had the wolves anesthetized and muzzled, the scientists took blood samples and vaccinated them against rabies, distemper, leptospirosis, and hepatitis. They also gave them penicillin shots as a precaution against infection and massive doses of vitamins to last them several weeks while they adjusted to their new environment.

The wolves were then flown from International Falls Airport on a two hour flight to Marquette Airport. Still tranquilized, they were transported in a small van some 40 miles northwest of Marquette, into the Huron Mountain area, where they were placed in another holding pen. Road-killed deer had already been placed in the pen, and, once the wolves woke up, they ate heartily.

MORE→
Back to the Land: Part 6

Getting a garden to grow in worn out clay soil is a difficult task. But one of the major reasons I wanted a home in the country was to grow my own food. Some day, I hoped to grow enough so that I would become almost totally self-sufficient for food.

That first year tomato plants were grown in pots in the apartment, and transplanted when I started building. A late black frost destroyed them after the fruit had begun to form. Undiscouraged, I bought plants and planted again. The taste of home-grown tomatoes was delightful.

I do not believe in using poisonous insecticides. There were plenty of bugs, but the birds showed their gratitude for the winter feeder, and devoured their share. Tons of manure have been hauled in to build up the soil. Green cover crops were plowed under each year to add humus to the soil. I even used the ashes from the many dogs and cats that had to be destroyed and cremated at the animal shelter because there were no homes to be found for them. It was to me an extension of the responsibility I felt for them — that they should not be permitted to suffer while they lived, and, if they must die, their ashes could be used to help restore a balance in nature in the soil.

The return of that balance was first noticed on tomato plants about five or six years after the garden was first begun. Nature works slowly, even with a lot of help from a plain dirt farmer. But that year I found a tomato worm and that evening found the article. The eggs of the Ichneumon fly larvae attached to tomato hornworm.

The deer wiped out my mung bean patch, but took nothing else. The racoons still eat my corn days before it is ripe enough for table use. Only the rabbits and groundhogs seem to be foiled by the fence. But the land has begun to produce and I hope to fill a new root cellar with many crops for the winter’s use. A garden is my Eden at Tranquility.

Protection Sought for Exotic Pets by USDI

The United States Department of the Interior is concerned about exotic animals sold as pets. The USDI has been given the authority by Congress to regulate traffic in exotic animals. They have proposed new regulations that would greatly restrict the importation of these animals, many of which are endangered in their native lands.

A number of countries have not progressed to the point of recognizing that some of their indigenous animals may be threatened by extinction. There is no ban on the importation of these animals. USDI’s proposed regulations would help preserve endangered animals in those countries where they are not protected by local laws.

The mortality rate of exotic animals is staggering. With some species the mother is often killed during the capture of infant animals. Sometimes only fifty percent of the captured infants reach their destination alive. The lack of proper diet and care as well as stress caused by capture, transporting, and overcrowding in improper cages are the key causes of death.

USDI hopes to prevent this animal mortality rate and attendant cruelty. They are concerned about endangered animals. And they are concerned about our own ecosystem, should imported animals escape and adapt to conditions in North America. No one knows of course, how such animals might affect our native animals and the balance of nature. The story of the starling is a good example of a foreign animal that has affected our ecosystem.

Public hearings have been scheduled in six areas of the country of origin had no laws for their protection, since they would be hunted to extinction, anyway. You may want to write USDI for a copy of the proposed regulations and submit comments of your own.
This simple plan is being built by high school students in woodworking shop class in Alexandria, VA, for their local Animal Welfare League. To encourage students to learn carpentry and possibly enter the trade, the Northern Virginia Carpenters' Association donates all the materials. The dog houses are in turn donated to the League, which provides them for dogs in cases where their owners refuse, or can't afford, to provide adequate shelter for them.

The house is simple to build. You can build it for your own dog, or donate it to the local humane society, or to a family with a dog that has no shelter. Note the hinged roof for easy cleaning. With a small pane of glass, you could add a window in the sleeping section. Be sure to frame it in well so there is no draft. A small piece of roofing paper or roofing shingles should be added to the roof to be sure the house stays snug and dry.

Reviews - Porpoises and Birds

Net Profit

Michael J. Becker, Shelby Sampson – Project Jonah $1.00

The complete story of how porpoises are being killed en masse, in comic book form. Produced by ECOMIX for Project Jonah, this illustrated booklet tells a lot about porpoises. It tells of legends in which they saved the lives of people in the ocean, of porpoises who came up to the beach to play with children, and it tells the story of a tuna fisherman. He didn't realize the slaughter of porpoises that occurs when tuna are caught in the net.

It's true that the new Medina net allows tuna ships to back down, lowering the net so porpoises can escape. But sometimes the captain won't take the time to do this delicate backing down maneuver. Often the porpoises have already drowned, anyway, held under by the tuna caught in the net. And porpoises hesitate to leave their friends, the tuna, when they are in obvious danger.

Now the tuna industry is trying to get a permanent exemption from the Marine Mammals Act, just so they can make more profit. This book tells how you can help the porpoises being killed by tuna fishermen. Order it from Project Jonah, Box 476, Bolinas, Ca 94924.

Just about everything you need to know to appreciate birds in your backyard is included in this comprehensive and authoritative guide. It is offered in paperback at only $2.95 and, for the wealth of information it contains, it's a great value. Collier is the publisher.

Included is a table of economic value of some of our most common birds. This shows that even the crow depends on insects for 20 percent of its diet. That should be considered fair recompense for the seed they eat at the feeder in winter. The table is from Dept. of Interior statistics.

A list of plants that attract birds, with illustrations is included, as is a list of some of the more common birds, with illustrations of them.

The four major North American flyways are illustrated, too, to show the migratory patterns of most birds.

The book is divided into three major requirements of birds that, if provided, will attract birds to your yard. They are food, water, and shelter. The author points out that shelter from the weather and from enemies is more important than the home-made bird house that hangs from the apple tree limb. Although some birds, like the bluebird, need help today, most birds make their own nests and need little help from us.

Recipes are included for your own bird seed mix that is cheaper than the mix at the supermarket, for suet cakes, and peanut butter goodies. A variety of plans for feeders and houses are included. A really best buy in bird books.
We found out some facts about reptiles and amphibians. Did you know that they are among the oldest of all living animals? Reptiles have dry skin and are protected by scales or bony plates. They usually live in water.

We're going to give you credit. Our friend has a turtle named “Frank”, and Frank's a pet company that sells pets by mail order. My brother sent for a chameleon from them. It arrived dead. It was wrapped up in tissue and put in a little box. I don't see how it could have lived and it seems cruel. It got off right away and the instructions say to give it a drink right away. What if you didn't get to the post office right away or the mail was delayed? I wonder how they send their other poor animals. It also had a piece of string for a “leash”. It said not to put it on too tight, but how could a little kid fight a lizard and not get the string too tight?

Anyone who wants an animal like that should consider that they'd have to wait for weeks for it, watching for the box every day, and then could be disappointed by it arriving dead, when they could easily go to the store and get a live one to take right home.

Denise Sweet, Nickerson, NB, age 18

You're right, Denise, although I'd much rather see a chameleon living free than on a string leash, anyway. The post office would probably rather not to ship live animals at all. With huge tractor-trailer dump trucks and other machinery they are using, there is no way they can personally handle mail with animals in it.

I once ordered a hive of bees and was there to see the package was clearly marked ‘This Side Up’; it was packed in the truck upside down. All the honey had been spilled all over the bees and they had died in it. Shippers of bees now send them in boxes shaped like the pyramids, so there is no way they can be stacked upside down, on the point of the pyramid. But they could still be suffocated by a ton of mail on top of them. —Ed.

From You

Letters and Pen Pals

Gentlemen:

I am a new ECOLOKIND member, having just turned 15. I have meant to congratulate you on your choice of a new format. The smaller type is more practical in allowing more information in less space, as well as being more adult reading. I really like the Puzzles and Puns, although it seems a bit easy.

Sincerely yours, Nancy West, Saratoga Springs, NY

You're very perceptive, Nancy, and we're grateful to you for your comments. Several members have written that they thought the new type in narrower columns, plus all the added photographs we're now using, allowed for less room for information. Actually, pictures say a lot, and the smaller type gives us lots more space to give you more information than we could before.

This month's puzzle may be too easy, too, but we'll try to get you some that are more difficult. —Ed.

Editor,

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National Dog Week

An official week proclaimed each year by Congress in recognition of man's best friend, is annually sponsored by the father of a KIND member. Anita Hartke reports that her father, Senator Vance Hartke, regularly sponsors the Senate Joint Resolution to proclaim National Dog Week. 1974 is the 47th year this week has been celebrated.

Last year, in his remarks in Congress, Senator Hartke stated: “National Dog Week . . . . is a tribute worthy of attention. Its purpose is not only to honor the pets in 24 million American Households, but also to educate all dog owners in their responsibilities to their pets and to their communities as dog owners. Dog club members and animal welfare workers will be joining in this effort to help every dog owner ‘deserve to be his dog’s best friend’.”

Following is the text of the Senate Joint Resolution Senator Vance Hartke introduced in last year's Congress:

Joint Resolution

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That it is the sense of the Congress that the single member of the animal kingdom that serves man as an ally, protector, guide, companion, and friend, the dog, be honored by proclaiming a National Dog Week, September 23 through 29, 1973. It is fitting and proper that Congress and the citizens of our country pay their respects to this animal friend that contributes so much to the lives he shares. It is especially fitting because—

(1) The dog began his association with man in the dawn of civilization and has, through the centuries, aided his master;

(2) many of our citizens depend on the dog to guard their lives and property;

(3) the dog continues to serve our country in our Armed Forces and in law enforcement agencies and shares with his human companions the peril of health and life;

(4) the dog is the only animal capable of being trained to guide the sightless and, assumes this responsibility with selfless dedication;

(5) the companionship of a dog teaches children an appreciation and respect for the animal kingdom;

(6) for millions of our senior citizens, the dog fills the void left by departed friends and family;

(7) the unquesting affection of faithful canine friends and companions has enriched our lives and we should be designated as "National Dog Week". 
Progress is being made on behalf of endangered and mistreated animals. The Symposium on endangered Species, held in Washington, D.C. in June, brought many people together who are actively working to help animals. Many of the conferees were young people. There is a dedication among youth today toward animals that is truly encouraging.

The first transplant of wolves is an example of programs that may benefit endangered animals and begin to restore natural balances in those areas where man has wrought destruction and decimated entire species. Of course transplanting endangered animals into new areas is useless, unless adequate provisions have been made for their total protection. The transplanted wolves are now protected by a new state law. Once such progress has been made in other areas and endangered animals can be offered such protection, they can be released there once more.

A recent letter from a KIND member relates how pet animals have been killed by poison set out for coyotes by a nearby sheep rancher. Men have tended flocks of sheep for thousands of years in many lands where predator animals were numerous. A shepherd with his dog could only tend a certain number of sheep properly. At night he herded them into a corral, possibly one he built himself, of brambles and thorn bushes. Today to increase their profits, sheep ranchers are trying to raise thousands of sheep without hiring enough shepherds to tend them. And poison is still being put out for coyotes in some areas, in spite of the President’s Executive Order. They say they’re ‘testing its effectiveness’. Anyone knows poison can kill. We fail to understand how even a President’s Executive Order can be by-passed, under the guise of a research program.

The U.S. failed to get whaling nations to agree on a 10 year moratorium on the killing of whales. We’re proud though, that it was our country that made the proposal. The nations did vote to set a quota to control the number of each species of whales that could be killed, although we feel the quota is far too high. One species is to be totally protected. The two major whaling nations, Japan and Russia, did not vote for the quota and there is really no way of forcing them to abide by the quotas set. The public protests, including KIND’s whale poster/petition, have put these nations on the spot. But it is doubtful they will abandon whaling unless more pressure is exerted on them. But that pressure is growing. Congress has expanded an existing fisheries law to place a ban on trade of fish and fish products with these nations. It is now considering a proposal to ban the importation of all products from any whaling nation. Some organizations are calling for a total boycott of Japanese and Russian goods. Without a doubt more protest is needed if mass killing of whales is to be ended.

The case for the wild horses drags on. Now the ranchers are stating they owned these horses all the time, but never admitted to it, to avoid paying a grazing fee to run their horses on public lands! It sounds like a weak excuse to us. The Bureau of Land Manager that authorized the round-up has retired. Until a decision is made by the court the remaining horses are safe, but not free. BLM maintains there are too many wild horses and the range can’t support them. We’d like to see more public lands opened up to wild animals, and less lands leased to sheep ranchers. Perhaps then the poisoning of predators, once again begun as a research project, could be banned forever.

R. Dale Hylton — Editor