

Dear Mr. Purdy:

I wish to comment on the problem of the wolf. I see and hear so many false statements. I have read Farley Mowat's book 'Never Cry Wolf'. I read it as comic fiction, never for a moment believing anyone would take it as truth. If there is any truth in his book he is not describing our northern wolf! Perhaps Barren's ground wolves are different. I doubt it. There is great admiration for tame wolves. What is so wonderful about them? Many animals are tamed. Why shouldn't they be friendly, they know no other life. Raised from puppies and perhaps second generation tame wolves. As for them being loving and devoted in their own family lives, I expect this is normal and is so for many animals. It also has nothing what so ever to do with the final issue. The mother moose, caribou, deer, elk, sheep and goat etc. is loving to her young too in her way. We lived in the Peace River district north and west of Fort St. John for a number of years and had plenty of opportunity to see the dear wolf at work. I can tell you now that there is no more horrible, brutal killer than a wolf! It literally eats its prey on their feet. Mowat says they kill quickly and cleanly. He is not describing the wolf of northern B.C.. They kill from behind, tearing out pieces of flank or crippling the hind legs. Then slowly hacking away at the animal until mercifully it dies. My husband and I came upon large moose tracks one day. Quite deep snow. It was obviously running and keeping to such a direct course that we decided to follow the tracks. Soon we came to where the poor beast met its end. It must have had a terrible struggle as the small poplar trees over a very large area were covered with blood, literally painted with it, as much as ten feet high. I suppose it had been thrashing about in the scrub trying to escape their teeth. Several wolves mill around in front of the animal to attract its attention while others dart in from behind to grab out pieces of living meat. There was nothing left. Whether they carried the bones etc. off or ate them I don't know. The snow was packed solid with all the activity. We figured there must be about thirty wolves by the tracks and all the howling we could hear. With very careful sneaking my husband was able to shoot only one wolf! It was so full of meat it was difficult to skin. It was almost dark when we left for home and they were still howling all around us. That they only kill what they need is a false statement. They kill for fun also, just as dogs do. I've seen so many dead deer lying about with only a little bit eaten. Sometimes two deer in one spot. I've seen foxes torn to pieces - so ripped up that one couldn't tell if they had eaten any of them or not. Scattered all over as if they had had a game of pull the rag. I've seen dead coyotes lying untouched except that they were full of teeth holes. Even dead weasels untouched. They killed a choice two year old heifer (or caused her death) right beside our house in broad daylight. My husband heard the bells and saw the cattle running down the hill towards the house and saw the wolf leap up and grab a piece out of her flank. They unfortunately saw him too and before he could get his rifle they were gone. The heifer died. She wandered off in the commotion and we could not find her! We had several others come in with torn flanks. Some died, some survived. We lost two horses to wolves also. One man on the radio says he doesn't believe wolves killed the horse at Ft. Nelson. That people turn their horses out to starve anyway. Paul Watson thinks the kill was rigged for sensation! I can assure you that it was quite likely killed by wolves. People do keep a horse to ride and it may well be outside in a corral so that it can walk around. Horses run free in that country, perhaps with no fences. They pay or dig snow for the grass underneath. They have quite large herds of horses sometimes, and not possible or good to keep them in barns. Ours always ran free, and if they needed feed they came to the barn and corral area to get hay and oat sheaves, then they would voluntarily go off to dig

again. This way they keep warm and exercise. During a bad winter, very deep snow or ice crust on the snow, they have to be fed more. It is at this time that some people have trouble. Perhaps not having enough hay to last to spring or enough money to buy any. The only horses kept in barns are those that are working. Teams to pull sleighs or the odd saddle horse to use checking over the herd etc.. One time my husband was away for a day or so. I was left at home with our two small children (under three years) and to milk the cows. I heard wolves howling down at the end of our field in the evening. I could not do anything about them, so I shut the cows in the corral that night. In the morning I looked out the window and saw our dog (a good sized collie/airdale cross) half way between the house and the barn with his head down. I thought he looked odd. Later he was still there so I went down to him. He did not wag his tail or more or show any interest. He felt like crisp paper all over his back and sides. He was riddled with tooth marks just as the coyotes were. I could have forgiven them if they killed and eaten him, but they left him dead on his feet! We lived two miles from the nearest neighbor across a very deep creek valley. Nearest other neighbors were eight miles away. There was no car road at all. No chance for a veterinarian and no money. I could not do anything for him. I carried him into a shed for protection. He would not lie down, but stood there until he finally died that afternoon. I hated to do away with him not knowing if he could recover. He was afraid of wolves and usually stayed in his kennel when they were around. Somehow they got hold of him. I will never forget him standing there so sad and hopeless. I know this is natural for a wolf. Death is not kind, whether from teeth, starvation, disease, old age or guns, but don't try to tell me that wolves are gentle and merciful animals. Wolves are very difficult to trap. It takes a very skilled trapper to catch one. We never did. They are also seldom if ever seen. When they do appear they seem to vanish very quickly, usually before the hunter has time to react. They can be poisoned. It is the best and cheapest method I think and since they do kill the other animals likely to eat the bait I expect it probably balances out. We shot two and poisoned eight. No other animals came near our bait. There was a bounty on them at that time, but they had still been able to become very plentiful. Perhaps because they move in from other areas where no controls were used. I think it would be impossible to cause the timber wolf to become extinct. I don't think the environmentalists have to worry about them. I don't think they should ever have been allowed to increase as they have. I certainly hope there is no further delay for unnecessary 'study of the wolf' that allow them to increase even more! This is one thing, thinning out wolves, that I can agree with the government, and I surely hope that they stand fast! I recommend reading of "The Silence of the North" by Olive A. Fredrickson with Ben East. It is much more true of our northern wolf. The government has been working with wolves for many years and should know a great deal more about them. It is forty years since we lived up there. A wonderful ranching country. It doesn't matter to me what happens now, but I just hate to see people being conned into something that is not true. Giving their money to such a misguided project! People are filled with false information by those like Paul Watson. With a person such as Paul Watson Canada does not need an enemy. He could be called a traitor to his country. Trying to raise a gathering of people in other countries, especially U.S.A., against his own government and people. To try and boycott our tourist industry or anything else they can do to harm us. Enlisting the help of people who know nothing about so ever about wolves or the north. He knows nothing about them himself. No one does until they have lived near them for a number of years. Even people who accompanied him admitted they knew nothing about wolves. Most of his supporters seem to be young people whom he has plied with distorted figures and incorrect stories. He has not attempted to study our wolves. Instead of going to Ft. Nelson and looking into the damage being done by wolves they chose to overlook the people there. To belittle them because they are hunters and trappers. They believe ranchers have no right to be in 'wilderness areas'. Unfortunately Canada was at one time all in that category and people such

as they would never have been living in this country at all but for the hunters trappers and ranchers. People don't seem to realize the vast expanse of trees and extremely rough country that is empty of humans most of the time. Who is to say where the border line is now? Humans are rapidly increasing still. He is so prejudiced against hunters however that he refuses to believe anything he is told. As for hunting, people don't mind fishing eh? Fish die a very hard death. They don't mind eating beef, veal, pork, lamb, rabbit, chicken, all raised in dumb trust of human beings to be betrayed by a not so gentle death eventually. Veal and lamb being your nice brown eyed little creatures much like seals. I believe big game are a resource just as fish are, the trees, the minerals. Many people live on the meat of these animals. Many others make a living supplying services for hunters. These people thus have work to do and money to put back into the economy instead of being on welfare or competing for the jobs of others. In the state of our economy we cannot frown on any employment. Perhaps trophy hunters are not to be admired, but if the meat is not taken or given to local Indian tribes at least it is eaten by the beloved predators and they will not have to kill so many. Large license fees are also charged. As for wolves only killing weak and sick and being necessary to keep the ungulates strong. The weak include thousands of little brown moose calves and little spotted fawns, probably their mothers too while they try to defend them. The north has no mercy on the weak and sick. They will die in the winter if they are sick if not from the mosquitoes, flies and ticks. If a group of dogs got together in a town or farming area and formed a hunting pack, killing sheep or other domestic animals we think nothing of disposing of them. We take excess pups and kittens or unwanted animals to the S.P.C.A. for them to do away with. We are too cowardly to do it ourselves. Would you let them all live? Despite spaying and neutering there still would surely be a large population of dogs and cats. The Fish & Game organizations and B.C. Wildlife Federation do more for the care and protection of wildlife than anyone. They are interested in the well being of all animals. If we are utilizing a resource we must also protect it. We need better controls and management to try and protect the animals from illegal hunting. At present with such a shortage of funds we have less protection officers than every. We cannot afford to let wolves freely cut down the ungulate population. This winter has been mild and snow has been light. The wolves will probably survive and the toll on young ungulates in the spring will be terrible. If there happens to be a good rabbit, mouse or other rodent population they will likely raise pups again. The big game animals can never become plentiful under these odds even without hunting. They breed much slower; alot of their young will be eaten. Bears, cougars and lynx also take their toll. We must thin out the wolves and give the ungulates a chance to increase. One woman says the hunters will just have to 'wait a year'! It takes alot of years and the wolf is still there. The only possible way things can level out 'naturally' is by hundreds of wolves dieing of disease and starvation! This being a much harder more prolonged death than being shot. They will certainly become diseased, some are now. However they can rely on the rodents and other creatures to keep their population fairly high. I expect they eat their own dead also, one never seems to find a dead wolf. So the whole tragic patten is repeated again and again. Is it not better to try and control it? Perhaps we can't but we can even it a bit. We are only thinning wolves out in a few small areas where they are extremely overpopulated. Even if they were all killed in these places, others would move in from farther out. One woman in Ft. Nelson is against the killing of wolves, because she raised some. However they turned them back into the wild. If they survived their fellow animals, they are bad news. They will have no fear of humans or settlements and will come boldly up to settlements with their wild cousins along. The wild relatives see no reason why they shouldn't dine on horse, cow or dog. Many people living right in the area never see the nasty side of wilderness. They stay in the towns or their homes; go only to civilized areas and pay no attention to that side of things. Hunting is still going on in Europe despite the age of their civiliza-

tion and the population. The animals are looked after and even fed if necessary. I can see them letting wolves eat them! Wolves are also killed in Alaska or any other country where people have sense. Hadn't the movie stars and other Americans such as the ones who intend to boycott our tourist business better take care of their own first? Our game is a great tourist attraction, not only to hunters, but to people who like to view animals near the roads. Since they are unlikely to see wolves, perhaps we can have more ungulates walking about. Wolves don't recognize park boundaries you know. Hunters are restricted to hunting for one quarter mile from most highways. The tourist that is so narrow minded that they cannot see both sides of the matter are welcome to stay home.

I could only wish that Paul Watson and his followers would direct their energies to trying to help curtail atomic proliferation. To strive to have atomic weapons destroyed! In all likelihood there will be no need to worry about wolves or ungulates. They will be gone with us all! There are also matters of acid rain and pollution ... much more vital a task.

Sincerely,

Janet Pepper
Bowser, B.C.
VOR 1GO

This letter was forwarded to me with a covering note and a cheque for \$20 to be placed toward predator management in northern British Columbia.

cc: EK newspapers
B.C.W.F. circ. to CP
BCWF - executive regional presidents
directors
clubs