

Wolf's Eye



ISLE ROYALE NATURAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

2001 No. 2

2001 Isle Royale Wolf/Moose Numbers In

This year's wolf/moose research team has left their winter home at Windigo and returned to civilization with the results of their annual survey. According to IRNHA life member Dr. Rolf Peterson, who directs the study, this year's report is a good news/bad news one for wolves.

The total number of Isle Royale wolves has dropped significantly to 19 from 29 a year ago, but those that remain are experiencing the best of times. Peterson attributes the declining numbers to inter-pack warfare and a decreased crop of moose calves born in 1999, following the hot, dry summer of 1998.

"Mild winters like we had in 2000 may be welcomed by humans, but they can be tough on wolves that rely on moose for their main source of food," said Peterson. "When snow cover is light, moose can move around easily and are much more difficult for wolves to catch and kill." During the easy winter of 2000, wolves on Isle Royale weren't able to kill as many moose as they needed to maintain robust health. With heavy snow cover on Isle Royale this winter, wolves in the Park are having a much easier time. "The 2000 moose calf crop produced between 200-300 animals," said

Peterson. Heavy snow makes traveling tough for calves, so this winter wolves have the advantage and two-thirds of all the moose kills we examined were calves. According to Peterson, "This is about as

the northeast side of the park and the other packs have respected its territory," said Peterson. "There is also another mated pair and two single wolves wandering about the island and making do as best they can."

He said all the wolves seen in the park this winter seemed in good health. However, biologists plan to trap some of them later this spring to check for diseases. No parvovirus, a deadly canine disease, has been found in Isle Royale wolves during the past 10 years.

Peterson said the park's moose herd has increased slowly since the summer of 1996 and now numbers about 900 animals. He said a major challenge for moose on Isle Royale lies in the poor winter food supply, especially on the west end of the island, where the animals often have to try to survive on lichens. Moose on the east end fare better because of the large balsam fir stands growing there.

The annual wolf-moose study is funded by the National Park Service, the National Science Foundation, and Earthwatch, Inc.

Copies of the Ecological Studies of Wolves on Isle Royale 2000-2001 will be available soon from IRNHA for \$3.95.



good as it gets for a wolf."

Peterson said the island's West Pack has been eliminated and their territory taken over by the Middle Pack, which numbers six animals. The East Pack, also numbering six wolves, has maintained its territory on the moose-rich east end of the island. "And there is a third pack of just a reproducing pair and one surviving pup that has carved out a territory for itself on

MEMORIES OF ISLE ROYALE

We continue our series of reminiscences of Isle Royale collected this past summer for our Millennium Celebration with this letter from Nancy Bain, Dallas Texas.

It seems like only yesterday when I first visited Isle Royale. Mom and Dad had been going to the island for several years usually arriving in May and staying until September. Some of you may remember my parents...the Colonel and his lady, Betsy (the Cawthornes), aboard the Spindrift out of Detroit. After Dad retired they spent their summers at Isle Royale, Dad helping with some of the mapping of the shoals and reefs around the island, his play toy was his boat, and Mom was either fishing or tracking down one of the many orchids found on the island. (Mom's book of orchid photographs taken on Isle Royale can be seen at the park library on Mott Island.)

My first visit to Isle Royale was in the mid 1960s along with my husband and two children. Our first camp site was in a shelter at Daisy Farm and what

a wonderful time we had. My dad would take us to various spots on the island to see old mine equipment and prehistoric mine sites. He would instruct us in how to read a compass and plot out our course. Through bush and brush, exploring many a nook and cranny, we were introduced to plants of every type including tasty blueberries and the wonderful thimbleberries of Isle Royale. We were very lucky in that we had a boat and could visit different spots quite easily by water. On one occasion we came nose to nose with a moose cow and we quickly ducked behind a tree. We found a beaver dam and watched a beaver swim back and forth, then sounding the alarm smacking his tail on the water when he discovered us watching him. Then one night deep from the pristine wilderness we heard the forlorn howl of a wolf...

Over the next few years my children and I made several visits to Isle Royale. I marveled at my mom's ability to make thimbleberry jam, bake wonderful cakes and present us with gourmet meals all cooked over an open campfire. Mom loved to fish, so we had many wonderful fish suppers often accompanied by freshly picked berries.

My dad was quite a tease and there was one Park Ranger in particular that he loved to play jokes on. We all know that it is a big NO NO to pick flowers on the island, and that lovely daisies grow at Daisy Farm. Well, my dad asked me to bring some silk daisies with me when I came to visit and they did look real. We placed them in a tin can on a roughly constructed table in the back of our shelter. Needless to say, the daisies caught the ranger's eye, and he was tricked. Another time I brought up a rubber duck which looked like it had just been plucked, and Dad hung it up by the feet. It brought a bit of attention also.

The years passed by and my children grew up and my dad died. I returned to Isle Royale with my mom and my four year old granddaughter. We didn't camp this time but stayed at the Lodge and took day trips either hiking or by boat. I introduced by granddaughter Malisa to an all day trip to Mt. Franklin and Suzy's Cave. Mom is gone now, Malisa has just turned 21, and I can hardly believe that it has been 17 years since I visited Isle Royale...the heaven on earth my parents loved.

Island Artists

With everything from a drummer to a batik artist, our Artists-in-Residence Program continues this summer with a wonderful variety of artists selected from almost 100 applicants. This summer's artists are:

Nathan Buonviri, percussionist from Dallas, Texas;

Wendy Burk and Eric Magrane, writers from Tuscon, Arizona;

Christina Kionka, colored pencil artist from Iron Mountain, Michigan;

Judy Sanchez, photographer from Rochester, New York;

Vernal Bogren Swift, batik artist from Bovey, Minnesota.

They will be giving weekly evening programs in the Rock Harbor Visitor Center throughout the summer, and will donate a piece of their artwork to the park at the conclusion of their stay. They were chosen by a jury of four including Greg Blust, NPS; writer Laurie Anderson; and Betsy Holster and Joyce Koskenmaki, painters and former artists in residence.

A show of donated works from previous artists is presently touring the upper Midwest thanks to support from IRNHA members and a \$2000 mini-grant from the Michigan Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs. The exhibit, The Island Within Us, can be seen through May at the Great Lakes Aquarium in Duluth. Look for it at the Finnish American Heritage Center in Hancock in June and July, at the Muskegon Museum of Art from mid-August to mid-October, and at the Boniface Fine Arts Center in Escanaba in January and February 2002.

MEMORIALS

The children of Hugh C. ("Skip") and Jean Mehlenbacher have given a donation in memory of their parents. According to their daughter, Kathryn, "They loved the island, took their grandchildren there, and were always talking about 'the next trip to Isle Royale.'" The donation will be used as start-up money for our next publication—a collection of letters and diaries of Isle Royale fisherman Elling Seglum.

A memorial donation for Eppie Jutila has been given by life member Alvild "Mike" Larson, who says that she and her late husband, Ken, "shared many enjoyable times with Eppie on our visits to Isle Royale, both fishing and on our trips back and forth on the Ranger III."

Isle Royale Natural History Association 2001 Board of Directors Election

Please vote for not more than 3 candidates for the IRNHA Board of Directors. Ballots must be postmarked by May 31, 2001.

Sara Basso **Okemos, Michigan**

*Director of Policy, Michigan Office of
Racing Commissioner

*Experience in private law practice,
business owner/manager, and government

*BA in Humanistic Studies

*Juris Doctorate in Law

The Isle Royale Natural History Association needs board members who are competent and dedicated. Both the Keweenaw National Historical Park and the Isle Royale National Park are unique national treasures that benefit from the assistance of the IRNHA. My retail experience could be a benefit to an organization charged with assisting in the publication and sales of educational materials to park visitors.

Additionally, distribution to the public of information regarding various estate planning tools would be helpful to the development of long term endowment funding. I have the experience and skills needed to make these contributions and would be pleased to serve as a board member of the IRNHA.

□

Mark Gleason **Grand Rapids, Michigan**

*Doctoral Student and Teaching Assistant,
Park, Recreation & Tourism Resources

* MA in Public Administration

*BS in Sociology

* Prior experience with National Park
Service

I have been involved with Isle Royale National Park for many years as a visitor and as a NPS Ranger. In both of these roles I have been able to see much of the Park but know that there is much about this island wilderness that I do not know and have not seen. I have been a NPS Ranger on the *Ranger III* for the past 7 years. I feel that if you have ever seen me at work you know of my love for this park and my enjoyment

(Gleason Cont.)

in its visitors. My professional career has included several positions involving working in education, criminal justice, and environmental programs. I am a lifelong Michigan resident and have received degrees from Michigan's universities. During the past few years I have been working on a Ph.D. at Michigan State University. I am specializing in the field of National Parks, Interpretation, Wilderness and Maritime issues. My dissertation will research the impacts of interpretive programs presented by natural resource researchers on the Park visitor's experience. As part of my degree at MSU, I have instructed undergraduate classes on our National Parks, interpretation, communication, and Michigan's natural resources. In the past few years, I have also been involved with many others in a project referred to as the Isle Royale Institute. I believe that this project will benefit the Park greatly in a number of areas, including interpretive programs. In the future, I plan to obtain a teaching position at a university that allows me to continue my positive working relationship with the National Park Service.

Christine Manninen **Livonia, Michigan**

*Current Board Member

*Project Manager, Communications and
Information Management, Great Lakes
Commission

*MA Candidate, Environmental
Journalism

Three years ago I was given the unique opportunity to serve on the IRNHA Board of Directors and represent the hundreds of IRNHA members with a passion and love for Isle Royale National Park. I initially chose to run for the Board because I saw an implicit connection

Mail Ballot on Reverse Side to:
Isle Royale Natural History Association, 800 E. Lakeshore Dr. Houghton, MI 49931
by May 31, 2001

(Manninen, Cont.)

between my education and work background, the goals of IRNHA, and my sincere interest in Isle Royale and the Keweenaw, where I was born and raised. As current chair of IRNHA's Publications Committee, I contributed to the publication of our most ambitious project to date: "The Island Within Us"--a true labor of love for all of us involved. As a member of the Marketing Committee, I am actively pursuing opportunities to publicize this book and our many other products in the downstate Michigan area and elsewhere. In addition to spearheading a web site redesign, I have organized IRNHA public displays in Lansing, Muskegon and Saginaw, in conjunction with outdoor expos and kayak symposiums. I feel these opportunities greatly benefit IRNHA by furthering our sales, membership and overall goals of educating the public about the Isle Royale and Keweenaw parks. My appreciation for the island, its history and people has only grown since I have become involved with IRNHA. I would be honored to serve another three-year term on the Board and continue to apply my time and talents to its fine work.

**Steve Merritt
Appleton, Wisconsin**

*Current Board Member

*Pilot, Midwest Express Airlines

*Attended University of Minnesota

I have vacationed on the island nearly every summer for the past 28 years. My family has owned a cabin in Tobin Harbor since before it was a National Park. We now stay there on a life lease basis.

Isle Royale is like family to me. I couldn't begin to tell you about myself without mentioning it.

It is a majestic and tranquil place to visit, rich in wildlife and natural wonders. But to me it has meant more than that. It is a remote place filled with the memories and stories of all the

(Merritt, cont.)

families that have grown up, lived, worked and died there. I am hoping to do my part to keep that living history alive through IRNHA and our membership.

**Jennifer Thominet
Barrington, Illinois**

* Consultant for Advanced Clinical Resources

*MA in Bio-Psychology

*MBA

I am a relatively new IRNHA member and will be making my first trip to the Island as Venture Crew Leader and Assistant Scoutmaster for Boy Scout Troop 29 in Barrington, IL. I have been working with the Troop for over 4 years and am Environmental Science merit badge counselor, Eagle Coordinator and head of the Adopt-A-Highway Conservation group. I am currently contracted to Abbott Laboratories as a consultant in Clinical Research. I have been a Lab Manager for Children's Memorial Hospital and worked in basic research for many years. I hold an MBA from Lake Forest Graduate School of Management, an MA in Bio-Psychology from Northern Illinois University, and a double-major in both Biology and Psychology from Milliken University in Decatur, IL. I have, in years past, served as Chicago Chapter President of CLAS (the Clinical Ligand Assay Society) and as Director of Communications for the Chicago Association of Life Underwriters (CALU). My father was born and raised in Houghton and graduated from Michigan Tech. Even though my parents live in Florida, we come home to Houghton almost every year for various occasions and I'm sure I could arrange two or three meetings a year to the beautiful UP.

Please be assured that I would do all in my power to promote the public's understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of Isle Royale National Park.

Vote for not more than 3 candidates for IRNHA Board:

_____ Sara Basso

_____ Steve Merritt

_____ Mark Gleason

_____ Jennifer Thominet

_____ Christine Manninen

Handling Wolves

Isle Royale is perhaps best known nationally and internationally as the site of the world's longest running mammal study. Research on the island's wolves and moose has been underway for 43 years. Methods for conducting that research have changed over time. A recent issue of the National Park Service publication "Park Science" addresses one of these changes. The article entitled, "How Long do We Keep Handling Wolves in the Isle Royale Wilderness?" was written by Jack Oelfke, Isle Royale Branch Chief for Natural Resources, and Dr. R. Gerry Wright, scientist with the USGS Idaho Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit. Excerpts from this article are printed below. The complete article can be found on the Park Science Website www.nature.nps.gov/parksci.

From Park Science: Integrating Research and Resource Management, Volume 20, Number 2:

With the wolf population resurgence on Isle Royale has come the need to ask if we need to continue to handle wolves. For 30 years the park obtained the necessary research information it needed without handling wolves; given wilderness concerns and concerns for the health of those wolves that are live-trapped, could the research program return to a hands-off monitoring approach? Or does the research information now being collected as a result of wolf handling, particularly genetics information, outweigh the live-trapping risks and potential conflicts with wilderness values?

To resolve this dilemma, the park and principal investigator agreed to convene an independent scientific panel to assess the issue and recommend a course of action to the National Park Service. . . The panel convened in April 1999, and consisted of three experts (two from the USGS Biological Resources Division, one from the Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute), with participation from NPS employees and the project's principal investigator, Dr. Rolf Peterson. Panel members were selected based on expertise in wolf research and wildlife management and familiarity with wilderness and wildlife management in the national park system.

The expert review panel was asked to review pertinent information on the Isle Royale wolf population and the wilderness values associated with the park and provide a recommendation to park management on the following issues:

"Given the past and current wolf population status in the park, anticipated future research needs, and the wilderness designation of the park, is it necessary to continue to live-trap and handle wolves on the Island? Or can the research and monitoring program return to a nonhandling monitoring approach? Have we answered the important questions through the handling of wolves over the past 10 years?"

. . . Although there are numerous advantages of handling wolves in terms

of the quality and quantity of information that can be obtained, the most important advantage identified was that handling permitted the ongoing assessment of genetic change within a small population. This assessment is considered to have broad regional or global application and significance for isolated populations. The key advantage to not handling wolves, aside from the obvious removal of possible trapping injury or mortality to the wolves, was the value of minimizing human influence on the population. The return to a policy of not handling wolves would maintain the park as a baseline of wilderness wildlife management.

. . . As discussion of the strategies continued a consensus was reached that the value of tracking the loss of genetic diversity of this population warranted the continued handling of the population; it then became a matter of selecting a strategy that best addressed the wilderness concerns and research information needs.

The expert panel recommended:

1. Continue handling wolves for the next five years (2000–2004). Up to four wolves per year should be handled, not to exceed two collared wolves per pack, and no more than 12 wolves total over the five-year period (this is close to the capture rate from 1988–93, but allows more flexibility each year). These numbers reflect the desire to maximize handling opportunities during live-trapping efforts, given the logistical difficulties of trapping operations in the park, while still handling only the minimum number of animals necessary for information purposes.

2. Over the five years, aggressively look for data gathering techniques that would not require handling, by challenging the National Park Service and the scientific community to develop and study these new techniques.

3. If, within the five years, new techniques are found for acquiring genetic data without handling the wolves (e.g., such as scat and hair analyses), convene a panel to evaluate whether disease and population

counting benefits are worth the continued handling of wolves.

4. If no new techniques are found within the five years, convene a panel to reevaluate the handling issue.

5. If a sudden population crash occurs, explore different strategies that may be needed to respond to the situation.

. . . For the near term at least, wolf handling will remain an important element of the wolf research program. Meanwhile, the challenge of balancing the wilderness values of a wild wolf population at Isle Royale with the agency and research needs will continue to provide a fascinating case history for review.

Proposed By-Laws Changes

In order to better meet the needs of our members, the membership committee of IRNHA has recommended changing our membership levels by adding two new categories. The IRNHA Board of Directors recommends the following changes to our Bylaws, Article III:

Current Article III - Membership - Paragraph 3

Annual Memberships:

Single, Household, Supporting, and Sustaining are all allowed one vote each.

Proposed Article III - Membership - Paragraph 3

Annual Memberships:

Single, Household, Supporting, Sustaining, Patron, and Benefactor are all allowed one vote each.

Comments should be sent to the IRNHA Executive Director
800 E. Lakeshore Dr.
Houghton, MI 49931
before July 26, 2001.

Isle Royale Natural History Association
800 E. Lakeshore Drive
Houghton, MI 49931-1895

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Summer Member Meetings

We had a great turnout for last year's annual membership meetings and programs, both in Hancock and in Rock Harbor. These events offer IRNHA members a chance to find out what's happening at Isle Royale and Keweenaw Parks and to meet and socialize with each other, with NPS staff and with IRNHA staff and board. We hope you will join us this year. Annual summer membership meetings will be held the last week of July 2001—on the mainland on Thursday evening, July 26 and in Rock Harbor on Sunday, July 29 at 1:30. Both events will

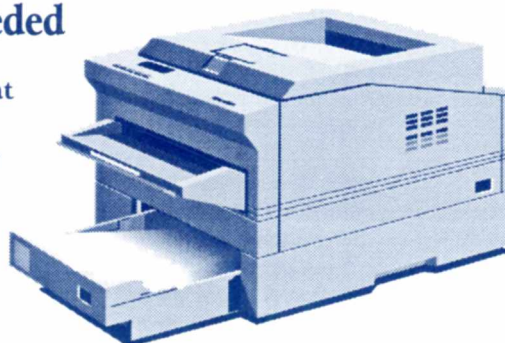
begin with brief business meetings, followed by programs. Refreshments will be served following the mainland meeting. The Rock Harbor meeting will be followed by an afternoon picnic at the Rock Harbor Lodge at 3:30.

Other events related to the Rock Harbor meeting will include a guided walk on Saturday and a program by Isle Royale Artists in Residence Saturday night. Details on program speakers and special events will be announced in your next issue of "Wolf's Eye." Our return to holding meetings the last week of July is a response to our members' requests. We hope to see you there!

Computer Printers Needed

The IRNHA offices are in great need of working computer printers. If you have an older model printer with a MAC serial or SCSI interface that you are not using, we hope you will consider donating it to this needy non-profit!

Laser or ink-jet, black-and-white or color, we can use them. If you have a printer to donate, please give us a call at 800-678-6925, or send an e-mail to irnha@irnha.org.



Thanks!



Isle Royale Natural History Association

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website: www.irnha.org

IRNHA is a non-profit membership organization that assists Isle Royale National Park and Keweenaw National Historic Park by publishing and selling educational materials to park visitors.

Gifts, bequests, memorials and memberships are U.S. tax deductible.

Membership Categories

Individual	 \$15
Household	 \$25
Supporting	 \$50
Sustaining	 \$100
Life Membership	... \$500*
Corporate Sponsor	.. \$1,000
Corporate Patron	.. \$5,000

*Life memberships may be paid in 5 annual installments.

Board of Directors

David Duchamp, President, Charles Boyle, John Dunn, Nancy Leonard, Christine Manninen, Steve Merritt, Gary Pethe, Doug Welker, Charles Zamzow.

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Lauren Rastello, Mail Order.