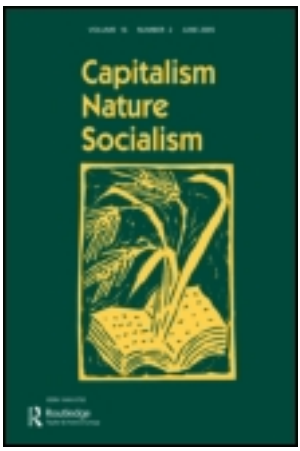

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HUMANS AND ANIMALS

A Historical and Case Study Analysis of the Reasons Why Many Trophy Hunters are Hostile Toward Wolves and Wolf Advocates

*Alexander Simon**

In reaction to wolf reintroduction programs, some trophy hunting organizations have come to refer to the 1930s–1980s, when wolves were virtually absent from their historical ranges in the contiguous western states, as "the good old days" and advocate returning to this era (Miller 2010). In response to opposition to its wolf killing campaign, the State of Alaska, as well as some hunting organizations, contend that wolves present an existential threat to public safety, vaguely defined cultural practices, and the rural poor's access to game meat (Simon 2009). In contrast to trophy hunting organizations, the general public's perceptions of wolves have become increasingly positive over the past several decades (Coleman 2004).

Thus, when a lone wolf appeared near the Mendenhall Glacier in Juneau, Alaska during the winter of 2003, he joined a human community in which there was no clear consensus regarding the value of wolves. Due to his tendency to seek out companionship from domestic dogs, the wolf was named "Romeo" by local residents. Many considered Romeo a valued member of the Juneau community. Others considered him a dangerous varmint or a potential "trophy." In the fall of 2009, Park Myers and Jeffrey Peacock[1] illegally killed Romeo. A review of court documents indicates that Myers and Peacock intentionally targeted Romeo and subsequently gloated over the emotional pain they had inflicted on the individuals who cared for him.

The aim here is to identify the social factors that partially explain why Myers and Peacock, and many other trophy hunters, harbor intense animosity toward wolves and wolf advocates. Hunters who regard wolves as dangerous beasts to be conquered and/or see them as unwanted competition for prey species are likely to be very resentful of people who have positive attitudes regarding wild canines. This hostility is exacerbated by two historical trends: the general public's increasingly positive

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[1]Peacock reportedly boasted to his co-workers that he planned on having Romeo stuffed and mounted in his living room (Affidavit of Michael Lowman, State of Alaska vs. Park Myers).

Routledge
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Map by Annita Lucchesi.

perceptions of wolves (Coleman 2004) and wolf advocates and the increasingly negative perceptions that the public has of hunters (Dizard 2003). In instances where either positive identities or material resources are redistributed, it is common for some members of groups who feel that their privileges and statuses are threatened to engage in aggressive acts against members of groups which they feel have had rewards unjustly conferred upon them.[2] After a summary of the changing perceptions of wolves and hunters during the past several centuries, the focus will turn to examining how contemporary hunters feel about these social changes. Finally, Myers and Peacock's motives for killing Romeo will be explored.

The Rise of the Status of Trophy Hunters and the Decline of the Status of Wolves

The perceptions of hunters and wolves are historical phenomena and have significantly varied during the past 500 years. Although there is a great deal of

[2]For instance, in the late 19th century through the 1930s, many African-Americans were lynched. Some of these murders were committed by poor whites in order to gain access to agricultural lands that African Americans were utilizing. However, economic gain was not always the primary motive for these acts. "In some cases, poor whites reacted out of frustration to the contradiction between their objective status and the expected benefits of white supremacy." (Beck and Tolnay 1990, 528)

diversity among the indigenous hunting cultures of North America, a wide variety of them, e.g., White Knife Shoshone and Copper Eskimo, share common norms regarding the ownership of animals that have been killed by hunters and the equitable distribution of these resources (Dowling 1968). In many hunting societies, being a skilled hunter is a means of obtaining material resources as well as a means of enhancing one's status. Prior to the European invasions of North America, indigenous nations and tribes laid claim to hunting territories, but the concept of individual ownership of land or living wildlife within these groups was non-existent. Individuals could claim ownership of a dead animal if they were primarily responsible for killing it. Hunters who shared their wealth with the community were revered. Hunters who refused to share their resources with the community were ostracized and risked not sharing in the bounty of other hunters' future successes. Thus, unlike contemporary trophy hunters, who gain status by privately appropriating and conspicuously consuming animal parts, in many traditional hunting societies, hunters enhance their statuses by increasing the general social welfare of their communities.

In general, throughout Asia, the Near East, and North America, hunting societies tend to admire wolves for their highly developed fighting, hunting, and wilderness survival skills (Hunt 2008). For instance, in their examination of the folklores of 48 of the Native American tribes residing in the contiguous U.S. states, Preston and Harcourt found that "Tribes' positive attitudes toward carnivores . . . especially wolves, were about three times as common as negative ones . . ." (2009, 64). Lopez observed that, among the indigenous peoples of North America, cultures that heavily rely on game meat for their food tend to have more positive views of wolves than cultures that primarily depend on cultivated crops. He attributes this difference to the fact that wolves do not possess many characteristics that would be useful for people who grow crops to emulate. In contrast, indigenous hunters admire wolves because wolves epitomize the very traits that they seek to develop in themselves, i.e., they are adept hunters and warriors that feed and protect their communities (2004).

Unlike many of the indigenous peoples of North America, Euro-American immigrants believed in individual private property rights, which entitled land owners to deny both people and animals access to the land that they "owned" and to claim exclusive rights to living animals or "livestock." Any animals that competed with their crops or livestock were exterminated. Wolves were considered to be different than most "vermin," e.g., crows or deer, in that they were perceived to be bloodthirsty creatures that allegedly took delight in killing people and livestock. Therefore, it was common practice to torture wolves to death. In one such instance in the early 19th century, the naturalist, John James Audubon, watched approvingly as a farmer severed the tendons of the rear legs of some captured wolves and let his dogs tear the hobbled and helpless animals to pieces. Due to wolves' perceived ferocity, men who were adept at killing them could not only expect to be paid

bounties, they were considered heroic individuals who were protecting their communities from dangerous beasts (Coleman 2004).

In most cases, hunting is a less economically efficient means[3] of obtaining meat than raising livestock (Bruckner 2007). Therefore, although exterminating wolves and other animals that threatened crops or livestock were valued practices, hunting for meat or sport was considered a frivolous distraction from the serious business of conquering the wilderness and converting it to pastures and croplands (Dizard 2003). Thus, in contrast to many indigenous hunting cultures, early Euro-Americans held wolves and hunters in low regard, though they highly respected wolf killers.

Although contemporary hunting organizations often claim that sport hunting is a deeply rooted, North American cultural tradition (Dunk 2002), it is the English author, Henry William Herbert, who was instrumental in first popularizing sport hunting in the United States during the mid-19th century (Organ and Frizell 2000). Therefore, it was not until the industrial revolution was well underway and many forms of wildlife were becoming scarce that hunting for sport began to gain popularity in the United States. Due to their concerns that unfettered capitalism was a threat to both hunting and the remaining wilderness areas, Theodore Roosevelt and other wealthy sportsmen formed the conservationist movement in the late 19th century. In addition to promoting the preservation of some wilderness areas and the "conservation" or "wise use" of resources located on federal lands, the conservationist movement advocated hunting for sport (Callicott 1990; Sandlos 1998).

Roosevelt and other influential individuals contended that killing wildlife offered men opportunities to develop masculine traits and to physically and morally improve themselves through strenuous activities and adherence to the sportsmen's ethical codes, e.g., "fair chase." Roosevelt (quoted in Fine 2000, 810) further asserted that, "the qualities that made a good soldier are . . . the qualities that made a good hunter." Thus, participation in hunting could not only enhance men's characters, it could help prepare them for war.

Despite advocating for the preservation of some wilderness areas, Roosevelt considered wolves vermin. In addition to posing a threat to livestock, they competed with human hunters for game animals. Therefore, he participated in killing both adult wolves and their pups (Lopez 2004). In the early part of the 20th century, Roosevelt's position on wolves was generally supported by professionals in the field of game management such as Aldo Leopold (1949).

[3]As mentioned above, one of the main arguments the State of Alaska puts forth in defense of its wolf killing campaign is that it is an indirect social welfare program to feed the rural poor. Contemporary hunters seldom travel by foot or dogsled, and the costs of purchasing and operating planes, ATVs, powerboats, and snowmobiles are often prohibitive. Thus, many people cannot afford to hunt. This is often the case in rural Alaskan communities where fuel costs are significantly higher than in urban areas (Loring and Gerlach 2009).

The Decline of the Status of Trophy Hunters and the Rise of the Status of Wolves

The percentage of the U.S. population that participated in hunting continued to increase during the first half of the 20th century and peaked in the 1950s (Dizard 2003). At mid-century, perceptions of hunters and wildlife began to change. Nibert (2002) contends that in the mid-20th century, in order to create effective demand for capitalistically produced goods, capitalists were forced to accept the necessities of Fordism and the Keynesian welfare state. The assurance that their basic needs would be met enabled many middle-class and working-class individuals to expand their fields of concern to non-human animals. Moreover, urbanization, the rise of large agribusinesses and the decline of small family farms combined to increase the ranks of people who do not consider wolves, or other wildlife, to be a direct threat to their livelihoods. These demographic and economic changes enabled social discourses to emerge in which wolves and other wildlife species were perceived positively (Coleman 2004), and those who killed wild animals were perceived negatively (Dizard 2003).

The majority of the public now has positive perceptions of wolves and supports reintroducing wolves to some of their historic ranges (Williams, Ericsson, and Heberlein 2002). In addition to the abovementioned demographic and economic changes, the multitude of fictional films and books that portray wolves as protagonists and wolf killers as antagonists have also likely positively affected perceptions of wolves (Simon 2009). Increased public interest in wolves can have tangible economic benefits. It was recently estimated that the renewed presence of wolves in Yellowstone National Park increased spending on eco-tourism by approximately $35 million annually (Licht et al. 2010). It can be assumed that these emerging economic opportunities give clear incentives for eco-tourism businesses to support wolf reintroduction programs and oppose wolf killing programs. It can also be assumed that exposure to wolves, via eco-tourism, may further increase positive perceptions of wolves.

Although eradicating large predators was generally supported by the scientific community in the first half of the 20th century, toward the mid-20th century, Aldo Leopold (1949) and other scientists began to argue that wolves and other large predators tend to promote biological diversity and ecological stability. The reintroduction of wolves into Yellowstone National Park in 1995 gave scientists an opportunity to observe how large predators can repair an ecosystem that has been over browsed by ungulates and enhance its biological diversity (Ripple and Beschta 2005). Some scientists are advocating the reintroduction of wolves to parts of their historic ranges, not for the sake of wolves, but to repair ecosystems that have been damaged by an absence of large predators (Licht et al. 2010). Wildlife biologists have also helped to dispel the old Euro-American myths that wolves pose a significant threat to humans (McNay 2002).[4] These scientific studies have been made widely

accessible through documentary films (Meyer and Meyer 2009) and books (Stolzenberg 2008) intended for the general public. Thus, a better understanding among scientists regarding the roles that large predators play in ecosystems has also likely positively affected public attitudes toward wolves.

There does appear to be a difference between the attitudes toward wolves among hunters and the general public. One study in Utah indicated that the general public (74 percent) had positive attitudes regarding wolves, whereas, 56 percent of hunters surveyed expressed positive attitudes regarding wolves (Bruskotter, Schmidt, and Teel 2007). Moreover, the body of scientific research, which indicates that large predators tend to enhance ecological stability and biological diversity, has had no apparent effect on the rhetoric or policies of many trophy hunting organizations (e.g., Safari Club International, Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife). This intransigence may partially be explained by Holsman's findings that, in general, hunters are interested in ensuring an abundance of the species that they hunt, but they have little interest in non-game species or the overall health of ecosystems. He concluded that, "A review of the research literature and several recent case-study examples suggests that hunters often hold attitudes and engage in behaviors that are not in support of broad based ecological objectives" (Holsman 2000, 808).

Changes in attitudes toward wildlife have led to a decline in hunting and an increase in activities such as wildlife viewing. In the 1950s, approximately 25 percent of men were hunters (Dizard 2003). In 2006, 10 percent of men and 1 percent of women participated in hunting (U.S. Department of the Interior 2006). Approval of hunting among people under 24 has declined (Dizard 2003), and younger professionals employed by state departments of wildlife have lower levels of support for "consumptive" uses, i.e., killing wildlife, than their older colleagues (Organ and Fritzell 2000). In the last decade, participation in bird watching, wildlife photography, and other forms of eco-tourism have increased (I. Urbina, "To Revive Hunting, States Turn to Classroom," *The New York Times*, March 8, 2008. http://nytimes.com/2008/03/08hunting.html). Like the rest of the nation, wildlife viewing is more popular in Alaska than hunting. In 2006, a total of 71,000 residents and non-residents engaged in some form of hunting in the state. In that same year in Alaska, a total of 496,000 residents and non-residents engaged in some form of wildlife viewing (U.S. Department of the Interior 2006).

Public approval of trophy hunting is particularly low. One study in Alaska found that the majority (87 percent) of Alaskans support hunting for meat. However, only 22 percent of those surveyed approved of trophy hunting. The same study found that *46 percent of Alaskan hunters were opposed to trophy hunting* (Miller, Miller, and

[4]According to wildlife biologist Victor Van Ballenberghe, who conducts research on moose in Denali National Park, some of the wolves in Denali have become accustomed to humans and will come very close to hikers. Although there have been incidents in which both grizzly bears and moose have harmed people, there has never been an incident in which a wolf has attacked one of the park's visitors (Personal communication, March 2, 2012).

McCollum 1998). Thus, Myers and Peacock (the individuals who killed Romeo) are members of a group, i.e., trophy hunters, that engages in acts which the majority of Alaskans disapprove of and only slightly more than half of all Alaskan hunters approve of. Both men are in their forties. Therefore, they belong to an age cohort born at a time when approval of hunting was already declining and has continued to decline throughout their lives. They also belong to an age cohort that has seen an increase in the positive perceptions of wolves. These variables likely contributed to their feelings of hostility and contempt toward the people who valued Romeo.

Trophy Hunters' Hostility Toward Their Critics and Wolves

As a group, hunters are disproportionately white males, who have higher than average incomes and hold more conservative political beliefs than the general population (Dizard 2003). Many of them feel ostracized by the media and the public. *Newsweek* reporter Andrew Romano ("Palin Kills It in Gun Country," January 30, 2011, http://www.newsweek.com/2011/01/30/sarah-palin-s-gun-control-warnings-at-safari-club- international.html) attended Safari Club International's (SCI) 2011 convention and reported that many of the speakers and attendees "seemed to see contemporary culture as an existential threat of sorts—a hostile force." Similarly, in his qualitative interviews with hunters, Dizard found that:

> Virtually every hunter I interviewed spoke defensively when our conversation turned to the general public's perception of hunters and hunting. Almost everyone complained about the way the media, especially the major television networks, portrayed hunters and hunting. The movie *Bambi* was frequently mentioned as casting hunters in a particularly nasty light. Many saw the negative portrayal of hunters as part of a larger agenda that included gun control and restrictions on land uses that they felt were elitist. (2003, 195)

Hunters sometimes respond aggressively to perceived criticisms. A common tactic among those who promote trophy hunting is to either imply or directly claim that anyone who objects to any form of killing wildlife is either an "animal rights extremist" or a "sissy" who is disconnected from nature (Anahita and Mix 2006). For example, Sarah Palin, who was the keynote speaker at SCI's 2011 convention, told her fans, "For most of these frou-frou, chi-chi types, the extent of their experience is in the Tiki Room at Disneyland" (Palin quoted in Romano, "Palin Kills it in Gun Country"). This form of verbal aggression can become much more extreme when it is employed by persons who are not public figures and do not expect their comments to be publicly scrutinized. For instance, the following exchange took place between the reporter, Ben Hamper, and Polson, a hunter, after Polson had read an article Hamper had written about hunting:

> Polson: "I should kick your worthless faggot ass! . . . I bet all your candy-ass writin' pals think you're clever . . . You're nothin' more than a dumb cunt . . ."
>
> Hamper: "I think you just enjoy killing things."
>
> Polson: "And faggots are at the top of my list!" (quoted in Fine 2000, 805)

Obviously, not all hunters are hostile toward wolves and wolf advocates, or indifferent to the overall health of ecosystems. Theodore Roosevelt's role in protecting the American bison and in creating numerous national parks, national monuments, and national forests is well known (Schullery 1978). Next to Roosevelt, Aldo Leopold (1943) is perhaps the best known advocate for preserving the sport of hunting (Fine 2000). Leopold is also generally credited with being the founder of modern ecocentric ethics (Pepper 1996). In Alaska it is important to note that the debate regarding the fate of wolves is far more nuanced than the "hunter versus anti-hunter" dichotomy often portrayed by trophy hunting groups. Some of the most vocal opponents of the state's wolf eradication programs are hunters, e.g., the wildlife biologist Victor Van Ballenberghe and the writers Seth Kantner and Nick Jans (Simon 2009). However, the data and anecdotal evidence discussed above indicate that there are clearly some hunters who feel unjustly stigmatized by the general public and that sometimes these feelings can manifest themselves in the form of verbal aggression.

The rhetoric regarding wolves has become particularly vitriolic. Many trophy hunting organizations, e.g., Safari Club International (Grasser 2008), Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife (2011), and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (Allen 2010), claim that wolves and their advocates are responsible for "the possible demise of our Western hunting heritage . . ."(Miller 2010, 39). Jason Carter's description of killing a wolf in Idaho is representative of the arguments employed by many of these organizations:

> It was a giant rush! We had done our part in helping control the wolf numbers . . . Words cannot express the devastation to the elk and deer herds that wolves are causing . . . The anti-hunting movement doesn't have me nearly as concerned as the wolves do in regards to the future of hunting. (2010, 36–37)

Of course, when trophy hunting organizations advocate eliminating or dramatically reducing the numbers of large predators as a means of preserving their "hunting heritage," they are not seeking to restore the ecosystems Lewis and Clark observed in the early 1800s.[5] Rather, they are calling for a far less biologically diverse landscape with an overabundance of docile ungulates, which resulted from capital's

[5]The Corps of Discovery travelled through a landscape that had already been dramatically altered by humans. They encountered the greatest densities of wolves and ungulates in the buffer zones between warring tribes, where wildlife populations were not exploited by human hunters (Martin and Szuter 1999).

destruction of wilderness ecosystems. Widespread hunting among Euro-Americans emerged in the late 19th century, after capital's destruction of the remaining wilderness areas was nearly complete. Therefore, it is understandable why some contemporary hunters would consider the 1950s, when practices like poisoning had greatly reduced the numbers of wolves in Alaska, or the 1930s–1980s, when wolves were virtually absent from the lower 48 states, the "good old days."

In Alaska, the state's public relations campaign in defense of its wolf killing programs is similar, albeit, less strident than the rhetoric employed by hunting organizations (Simon 2009). Moreover, due to the close personal ties among the leaderships of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Alaska's Division of Wildlife Conservation, and many trophy hunting organizations, it is often difficult to distinguish among the policies of these institutions (T. Williams, "Kill, Baby, Kill," *Audubon*, July–August 2009, 28–36). For instance, Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife published an editorial in support of Alaska's wolf killing campaign by Corey Rossi, who at the time,[6] was director of Alaska's Division of Wildlife Conservation. One page of the article included a photo of Rossi posing with a dead caribou, the next page of the article (C. Rossi, "Managing for Abundance: Producing a Bounty for All Users to Enjoy," *Sportsmen's Voice*, Summer 2009, 29–30) featured an advertisement for a t-shirt that contains a drawing of a wolf on a pack of cigarettes with the caption, "Keep the Herd Healthy, Smoke a Pack a Day."

A Wolf Joins a Human Community

It was in this social context that Romeo first appeared near the Mendenhall Glacier in Juneau during the winter of 2003. He was very curious about both humans and dogs and would closely approach them. Juneau is the most progressive urban area in Alaska. If the wolf had appeared in Juneau in the 1950s, or he had strayed into a less progressive Alaskan community, his curiosity would have likely quickly ended with a gunshot. In contrast to the reactions of early Euro-Americans, many Juneau residents did not fear the wolf or attempt to kill him. Instead, he played with local dogs and would often join people and their dogs for cross-country skiing and day hikes. The feelings of goodwill toward the wolf were not universal. Some residents either feared him and/or expressed the desire to kill him (Jans 2009).

[6]Despite the appearance of multiple conflicts of interest (e.g., being a hunting guide as well as a board member of the Alaska chapter of Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife) and not having a college degree of any kind, long time friend of the Palin family, Corey Rossi was appointed to the position of Director of the Division of Wildlife Conservation. *The Alaska Dispatch* reported Rossi resigned from his position in January 2012, subsequent to his arrest for multiple game law violations that allegedly involved guiding non-resident hunters and falsely claiming that he had killed bears that his clients had killed ("Corey Rossi and the 30 Bear Weekend," January 12, 2012, http://www.alaskadispatch.com/article/corey-rossi-and-30-bear-weekend?page=full).

Romeo's existence was likely an inconvenient fact for those who cling to the old myths about "vicious" wolves and refuse to accept the emerging social, ecological, and economic realities regarding wolves. He did not pose a threat to anyone's economic well-being. Juneau does not have a livestock industry. Romeo spent most of his time near the Mendenhall Glacier—an area closed to hunting. There are no moose or caribou in the Juneau area. The best places to hunt deer are on the nearby islands, e.g., Admiralty and Shelter, where there are no wolves. Moreover, Juneau has discount stores where meat can be obtained far more easily and cheaply than by hunting.[7] Romeo did create economic opportunities for local photographers and writers such as Nick Jans (2009), John Hyde (2010), and Mark Kelley.[8]

To those who wish to exterminate wolves, the most troubling aspects of Romeo's existence seem to be that many people considered him to be a being who was worthy of moral consideration and that they were not afraid of him. In their study of photographs taken by trophy hunters of their kills, Kalof and Fitzgerald argued that these photos are intended to convey that non-human animals are no more than means to an end for humans, that the hunter had vanquished a cunning opponent, and that, "animal bodies are the epitome of objectification—decapitated and dismembered, with their body parts displayed as decoration or at best useful substitutes for common household objects" (Kalof and Fitzgerald 2003, 119). Having a wolf widely regarded as a valued member of a community was a tacit challenge to the anthropocentric worldview many trophy hunters apparently hold. Moreover, the archetype of the hero who defends society from vicious beasts, e.g., Beowulf and St. George the Dragon Slayer, is deeply embedded in Western mythology. The survival of this archetype relies on the perception that there are dangerous, vicious animals. Without this belief, many perceive the wolf killer, instead of the wolf, as a predator who takes delight in killing innocent beings.

Illegally killing wolves in Southeast Alaska is apparently a common occurrence, whereas, being arrested and convicted of this crime is relatively rare. One study of radio-collared wolves in Southeast Alaska found that approximately 70 percent of the collared wolves died during the time of the study. Eighty-seven percent of these deaths were caused by humans. Forty-seven percent of the wolves killed by humans were illegally killed. The other wolves died from diseases, starvation, or were killed by other wolves. The authors of the study noted that, due to extensive logging, the deer population had decreased. They speculated that the decrease in deer would be misattributed to wolves, which, in turn, would likely result in an increase in the numbers of wolves killed both legally and illegally (Person and Russell 2008).

[7]I lived and hunted in the Juneau area for five consecutive years. Relative to other places I have hunted, e.g., Utah, Wyoming, and New York, I found the hunting in Juneau to be very costly and time consuming. Like some other hunters, I highly valued the wilderness surrounding Juneau and the opportunities to closely view Romeo and other wild wolves.

[8]Prior to learning of Romeo's death, the nature photographer, Mark Kelley generated enough income from photographing the wolf that he had planned to relocate his studio closer to the Mendenhall Glacier so that he would have easier access to Romeo. Personal communication with Mark Kelley, April 23, 2011.

Because the wolves in this study wore radio collars, poachers were apparently arrested at abnormally high rates. One of the authors of the study recalled:

> If I remember correctly, four different hunters or trappers were convicted on five different counts during the years of our study. For three of them, the radio collar led law enforcement to their doors . . . For the fourth person, who was convicted on two counts, we had actual video of his trap sets with dead wolves in the traps. He had collared and uncollared wolves and did not report any of them. We obtained the video by homing in on the mortality signal from a wolf collar and finding the mess. For the rest of our illegal or unreported wolves during our study, we found the collars, which were cut from the animals' necks and the mortality site was usually nearby . . . In most places in SE Alaska, it would be easy to kill wolves, bears, deer, or any wildlife and never be detected. (Personal communication with David Person, January 27, 2012)

Once Romeo's existence and behaviors became widely known, it was apparent that some community members would go to great lengths to protect the wolf and that other community members harbored animosity toward both the wolf and the people who valued him. It was also evident that the State of Alaska would not aggressively prosecute individuals who illegally killed Romeo or any other wolf. In the summer of 2006, a dead wolf, who resembled Romeo, was found displayed along a road. As noted in a *Juneau Empire* article on July 20, 2006 (''Wolf Found Shot Dead on Thane Road,'' http://juneauempire.com/stories/072506/sta_20060725005.shtm), he had been shot two to three times in the head, and his throat had been cut. Because the wolf had been killed out of season and its hide was not harvested, the wolf had been illegally killed. Although the matter had been reported to the State Police, Joel Bennett, a retired attorney and former member of the Alaska Board of Game, and author Nick Jans, decided to investigate the crime on their own. With little effort, Bennett and Jans received enough contributions to offer a $10,000 reward for anyone who could provide information that would lead to the conviction of the wolf poachers. Local residents Troy Portis and Patrick Peterson, the two men involved in the wolf's death, were arrested based on an anonymous tip. They reportedly killed the wolf in a remote location, transported the dead wolf to a populated area, and dumped the body along a road. If Portis and Peterson had not displayed the wolf in a populated area, and if Jans and Bennett had not publicized the incident, it is unlikely that they would have been arrested. The reward was never claimed. According to the *Juneau Empire* (Morris, ''Man Who Shot, Dumped Black Wolf Pleads Guilty,'' November 29, 2006, http://juneauempire.com/stories/112906/loc_20061129025.shtml), Portis was sentenced to one year of probation and ordered to pay a $1,000 fine and an additional $500 in restitution to the state. Peterson was found ''not guilty'' (State of Alaska vs. Patrick Peterson 2006). To the great relief of many community members, the dead wolf turned out not to be Romeo (Jans 2009).

[9]In Alaska, it is illegal to kill large animals with small caliber, rim fire rifles such as a .22 caliber.

In the fall of 2009, Park Myers, who had moved from Pennsylvania to Juneau several years earlier, and his friend, Jeffrey Peacock, a resident of Pennsylvania, purposely sought out Romeo and illegally killed him with a .22 caliber rifle,[9] a caliber which is often used by poachers because of the relatively little noise it makes. No one witnessed the killing. What is somewhat unique about Myers and Peacock's actions is that they clearly set out to kill a particular wolf[10] and subsequently gloated over the emotional pain they had caused the people who cared for the wolf. If Peacock had not bragged to people that he and Myers had killed Romeo, it is doubtful that they would have ever been arrested.

It is understandable why Peacock thought that the people whom he boasted to would admire his actions and not report him to the authorities. As discussed above, trophy hunting organizations have reduced the debate over wolf killing programs and wolf reintroduction programs to a dichotomy between "hunters" and "anti-hunters." Peacock apparently restricted his bragging to hunters, and thus possibly believed that anyone who hunted would applaud his actions. In an affidavit, Michael Lowman, a co-worker of Peacock's at R.R. Donnelly and Sons Printing in Lancaster, PA, stated that, subsequent to reading one of the stories about Romeo's disappearance in the *Juneau Empire,* Peacock gloated: "'Those morons! Ha! What idiots! I killed their beloved wolf! Ha!' He [Peacock] would shout at the screen saying: 'You fucking idiots! Sobbing over your poor missing wolf!'" Lowman, who is a hunter, further stated that,

> At one point, he showed us a picture of the wolf's raw bloody carcass, shortly after it had been skinned. That really outraged a lot of us, including me. I have killed many animals. I would not think of photographing—let alone sharing a photo of—the animal's bare body. To me, it was an outrageous, disrespectful thing to do. (Affidavit of Michael Lowman, State of Alaska vs. Park Myers 2010)

In an apparent attempt to gain a different kind of trophy, Peacock contacted Nick Jans shortly after Romeo's death requesting a copy of Jans' (2009) *The Glacier Wolf: True Stories of Life in Southeast Alaska* with the inscription: "Romeo, Romeo, Wherefore art thou, Romeo?" Once Jans became aware of Peacock's role in the crime, he provided this information to the court (Affidavit of Nick Jans, State of Alaska vs. Park Myers 2010). Peacock's animosity toward Jans and Romeo can be understood in the context of the reallocation of positive identities and economic opportunities. In the 1950s, a person, without fear of being ostracized, could enhance his social standing and economic well-being by killing wolves. Instead, to many, Myers and Peacock were social pariahs. The Alaska Wildlife Alliance gathered over a thousand signatures demanding that Myers and Peacock be fully prosecuted for killing Romeo and two bears (Alaska Wildlife Alliance 2010). A few decades ago,

[10]In court, the Alaska State Wildlife Troopers presented photographs of Romeo which had been taken by Myers and Peacock days before they killed him, author's field notes, November 3, 2010.

Romeo would have been considered a varmint or a demon. Instead, he was a valued member of the Juneau community and was the subject of numerous newspaper articles, two books, and countless photographs. According to a report in the *Juneau Empire* (Stolpe, ''Spirit of Romeo Rises over Old Roaming Grounds,'' November 21, 2010, http://juneauempire.com/stories/112110/loc_739556163.shtml), President Obama has a framed portrait of Romeo. In November 2011, in what was perhaps the first memorial service for a wild wolf in North America, approximately 75 people and numerous dogs gathered at Mendenhall Lake to dedicate a plaque to Romeo's memory. In Juneau's tourist shops, a wolf pelt retails for about $600.00. Jans reportedly earned an approximate total of $40,000 from photographs and publishing essays about a single wolf (Affidavit of Nick Jans, State of Alaska vs. Park Myers 2010).

Despite threats from Peacock to kill Lowman if he reported his crimes to the authorities (Affidavit of Michael Lowman, State of Alaska vs. Park Myers 2010), Lowman collaborated with Juneau resident, Harry Robinson, who is the founder of the group ''Friends of Romeo,'' to provide law enforcement officers with information that would eventually lead to Myers and Peacock's arrest. Robinson and Lowman informed U.S. Fish and Wild Service Special Agent Sam Friberg that Peacock was returning to Alaska to setup an illegal bear baiting[11] station with Myers. Myers and Peacock were arrested in the spring of 2010 and charged with multiple crimes, including illegally killing a wolf and two black bears.

Peacock had previously been convicted of driving while intoxicated, the *Juneau Empire* reported (Marquis, ''Black Wolf's Identity Still Unknown'' June 10, 2010 http://juneauempire.com/stories/061010/loc_651622296.shtml). Myers' criminal history involved sexually victimizing minors.[12] In Alaska, plea agreements were reached in the cases against Myers and Peacock. On November 3, 2010, Myers was sentenced to two years probation, his hunting privileges were revoked for two years, he was ordered to perform 20 hours of community service, forfeit the firearms he

[11]Bear baiting is a tactic in which stale baked goods and the like are placed in an area with the goal of habituating bears to a site. The photographs taken by Alaska State Wildlife Troopers of Myers and Peacock's bear baiting station showed that they had used both honey and stale hotdog buns. Once bears have become habituated to a food source, it is relatively easy to kill them. Bear baiting is legal in many parts of Alaska. It is illegal near Juneau due to the public safety hazards created by habituating bears to humans' food.

[12]According to Detective Louis Ippolitio, in December 1999, in Lancaster County, PA, Myers and his wife, Pamela Myers, provided alcohol and marijuana to two minor girls and played strip poker with them. One of the victims informed Ippolitio that Myers had allegedly fondled ''HER BREAST AND PELVIC AREA'' (Common Wealth of Pennsylvania vs. Park Myers 1999). In exchange for having several of the charges dropped, including a charge of ''Indecent Assault W/O Consent of Other,'' Myers pleaded guilty to one count of ''Corruption of Minors'' and one count of ''Sell/Furnish Liquor Etc. to Minor'' and was sentenced to probation. One of Myers' victims, Megan Kline, who is currently an adult, is reportedly still traumatized by the incident. In the spring of 2011, Kline contacted the *Juneau Empire*. According to *Juneau Empire* reporter Klas Stolpe (''Myers Pleads Guilty to Probation Violations, June 2, 2011, http://juneauempire.com/local/2011-06-02/myers-pleads-guilty-probationviolations), Kline recalls that the plea agreements, ''were to save her from any additional discomfort of a trial, as Myers had molested her in front of his wife.''

used in the commission of his crimes, pay $1,100 in restitution for illegally killing the wolf and black bears, and pay a $5,000. fine (State of Alaska vs. Park Myers 2010). On January 4, 2011, Peacock was sentenced to three years of probation and ordered to pay a $2,000 fine and $600 in restitution. Peacock's attorney successfully argued that, due to his receiving treatments for cancer, Peacock should not be sentenced to perform any community service (State of Alaska vs. Jeffrey Peacock 2010).

Prior to Myers' sentencing on November 3, 2010, District Attorney Douglas Gardner stated in court that, "Mr. Myers doesn't have a criminal history" (State of Alaska vs. Park Myers 2010). He also stated that although law enforcement officers had found an unspecified quantity of marijuana at Myers' residence, Gardner had not charged Myers with any offense related to his illegal possession of marijuana. Given the nature of Myers' well-documented[13] criminal history (which included providing marijuana to minors), Gardner's false statement to the court, his failure to consider Myers' criminal history in his sentencing recommendation, and his decision not to prosecute Myers for marijuana possession, are all surprising.

It is possible that Gardner's actions were the result of incompetence. However, his actions may have been calculated to protect his career. Most of Alaska's population lives in and around Anchorage and Fairbanks. These areas are far more conservative than Juneau. Unlike many states, district attorneys in Alaska are not elected, but appointed by the state's attorney general. Gardner was not elected by the citizens of Juneau and therefore had more incentives to be concerned about how state legislators, members of the state government's executive branch, and the rest of Alaska's population perceived his actions than the local people who valued Romeo. Governor Sean Parnell, who was Palin's lieutenant governor and became governor subsequent to Palin's resignation, strongly endorses Alaska's wolf killing campaign. Under both the Parnell and Palin administrations, the Board of Game, the upper ranks of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and the Division of Wildlife Conservation have become dominated by individuals who promote both trophy hunting and predator killing programs (T. Williams, "Kill, Baby, Kill," *Audabon*, July–August 2009, 28–36). An aggressive prosecution against Peacock and Myers, which fully acknowledged Romeo's social and economic importance to the Juneau community, could be construed as a tacit criticism of the Parnell administration's wolf killing campaign. Therefore, it is certainly possible that Gardner believed that his career as a state employee, and any future political ambitions he may have, would be undermined by appearing to aggressively prosecute the cases against Myers and Peacock. Shortly after his false statement to the court, the *Juneau Empire* reported Gardner was appointed Director of Legislative Legal Services for the Alaska State

[13]A copy of Myers' record was included in the prosecutor's file (State of Alaska vs. Park Myers 2010). Moreover, Myers' criminal history was mentioned in a local newspaper article, which was printed months before Gardner's false statement to the court. Reporter Kim Marquis (2010) had interviewed District Attorney Gardner for that article.

Legislature (Stolpe, "Juneau District Attorney to Take Post with Legislature," December 16, 2010, http://juneauempire.com/stories/121610/sta_757472712.shtml).

Conclusion

The intention here has not been to portray all hunters or hunting organizations as being hostile toward wolves or broader ecological concerns. As discussed above, being a hunter and an advocate for predator species are not mutually exclusive categories. Furthermore, although hunting is generally an economically inefficient means of attaining meat, there are other possible motives for hunting other than sport or the acquisition of trophies. If done sustainably at the local level for the purpose of gathering food, hunting typically creates less social harm, ecological harm, and suffering among animals than the meat products produced by agri-businesses (Bruckner 2007).

Hunting also has the potential to increase awareness of the human relationship to external nature. Leopold was disturbed by the degree to which many of his contemporaries were alienated from nature and unaware of their dependence on healthy soils, watersheds, and the like. In regard to meat hunting he maintained that,

> . . . [T]here is value in any experience which reminds us of our dependency on the soil-plant-animal-man food chain. Civilization has so cluttered this elemental man-earth relation with gadgets and middle-men that awareness of it is growing dim. We fancy that industry supports us, forgetting what supports industry. (Leopold 1943, 1)

This assertion is more valid now than it was in the 1940s.

Leopold further contended that methods of hunting that are heavily mediated by modern technologies are less intrinsically valuable than methods that utilize more primitive devices and require greater patience, skill, and knowledge of wildlife (1949). Contemporary hunters who use archaic weapons, such as black powder rifles and recurve bows, implicitly agree with this assertion. Hunters such as these may welcome the challenges of pursuing prey species that are more alert, and perhaps less plentiful, due to the presence of some of the predators with which they coevolved.

As evidenced by calls for decimating populations of wolves and the existence of hunting practices that require virtually no skill (e.g., bear baiting and killing captive wildlife on game farms), some hunters' primary goals are to kill animals by the most expedient means available. Hunters such as these are not guided by the ecocentric ethics of Aldo Leopold or an allegedly deeply rooted Euro-American hunting culture. They are guided by the values of capitalist culture, i.e., egocentrism, immediate

gratification, competition, and conspicuous consumption. It was not until capital's growth imperative had nearly destroyed the remaining wilderness areas, and capitalist culture was firmly entrenched, that hunting became a popular form of recreation among Euro-Americans. Therefore, it is not surprising that many contemporary hunters consider wildlife to be just another consumer good.

These types of hunters are likely to perceive wolves and positive perceptions of wolves as potential threats to their abilities to violently appropriate and conspicuously consume rare and coveted dead animal parts. Trophy hunting organizations and reactionary politicians capitalize on these feelings of persecution by demonizing wolves and wolf advocates. In this context, it is predictable that some individuals will feel compelled to exact revenge on the animals and/or people whom reactionary institutions and individuals have identified as their oppressors.

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