

Wolves in Russia: Anxiety Through the Ages. Will N. Graves. (Edited by Valerius Geist, PhD, Professor Emeritus of Environmental Science, University of Calgary.) 2007. Destellig Enterprises, Calgary, Canada. 222 p. US\$26.95. paperback. ISBN 978-1-55059-332-7.

"Wolves are not killed because they are gray, but because they eat sheep."

Those interested in the controversies concerning wolves and livestock in the western United States may find much to ponder in this somewhat exhaustive compilation of "interactions" of wolves, livestock, and people in the sprawling Eurasian habitat that they have all mutually occupied for centuries. Drawing on church records, newspaper accounts, and official Tsarist, Soviet, and present day Russian Federation reports, as well as much untranslated Russian scholarship (and an intriguing assortment of over 250 wolf-related proverbs and sayings), author Will Graves demonstrates his familiarity with his subject, and raises questions that may be pertinent to the management of these powerful keystone predators in the North American context.

Though Graves is not an accredited specialist, he has long been a devoted student of the Russian wolf. After an adventurous episode serving as a horseback "Livestock Inspector/Vaccinator" (roaming Mexico as part of an aggressive postwar US-Mexico foot-and-mouth disease suppression campaign), Graves, following enlistment in the US Air Force, trained as a Russian language specialist. Posted to Moscow, he enlarged his vocabulary by engaging in conversation with the Russian guards outside the US embassy. He soon discovered that many shared his interest in hunting and the outdoors, and over time he became acquainted with Russian sportsmen, naturalists, and scientists (alas, he does not reveal whether he was ever a spy, or whether he was spied upon). Given his prior experience with animal-borne disease, he had a particular interest in the connections between wolves and outbreaks of rabies (to which a chapter is largely devoted).

Like many would-be authors without professional standing, Graves faced significant hurdles in finding a publisher for such an amorphous work. Now in his eighties, he has at last found the assistance of a well-credentialed editor who could shape this near-lifetime's collection of information from disparate sources into a coherent and informative volume. This task has been admirably served by Dr Valerius Geist, Professor Emeritus of Environmental Science, University of Calgary. Dr Geist has the distinction of having contributed to the Saskatchewan coroner's inquest of the 2005 death of Kenneth Carnegie, the first (and so far only) officially documented wolf "taking" of a human in North America.

This book will be controversial among ardent wolf supporters as it challenges much conventional wisdom concerning wolf behavior (wolves avoid people, they'll only attack if rabid, they do not engage in excessive "sport killing"), and exhaustively enumerates reported instances of wolf depredations on livestock and people (especially children). Investigators of potential livestock depredations may appreciate a proverb that notes, *"A wolf slices cattle but a bear tears."* Researchers may find suggestions for further avenues of inquiry, such as what may account for the seeming differences in behavior of the less-aggressive North American wolf compared to its Russian cousin. Editor Geist offers his own informed opinions on this question in his introduction and afterword (including the observation that North America had a well armed, predator-vigilant frontier populace, whereas in Russia access to firearms by rural "peasants" has always been severely curtailed; in short, frontier era wolves did indeed learn to fear and flee humans).

Graves makes clear that he appreciates the Russian wolf while at the same time remaining an advocate for its careful management:

I wanted to write about the experience Russians have had over a long period of time with large numbers of wolves. I believe that Russian experiences with wolves shows [sic] the importance of good science and research being used on wolf management without being greatly influenced by emotions (p. 16).

Mr Graves' tenacity and dedication has made a vast amount of Russian experience with its major pastoral predator accessible to North American readers. Hopefully this may contribute to wise choices in the management of "Wolves in America."

"From the entire flock, the wolf selects the poor man's only lamb."

Jim Thorpe, Rancher, Newkirk, NM, USA. ♦

