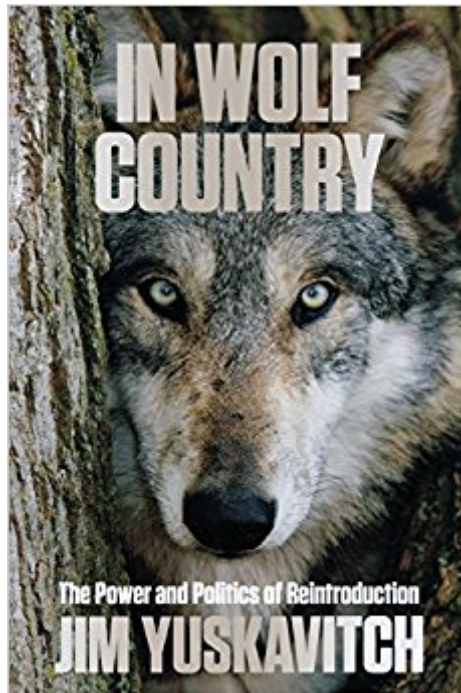




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In Wolf Country: The Power And Politics Of Reintroduction



Synopsis

In Wolf Country tells the story of the first groups of wolves that emigrated from reintroduced areas in Idaho to re-colonize their former habitat in the Pacific Northwest, how government officials prepared for their arrival, and the battles between the people who welcome them and the people who don't, set against the backdrop of the ongoing political controversy surrounding wolf populations in the Northern Rockies. The political maneuvering and intense controversy that has defined wolves' recovery in the West makes this a compelling and timely read.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Jim Yuskavitch has worked as a freelance writer and photographer since 1993. His other books include *Fishing Oregon* and *Mysteries and Legends of Oregon*. He lives in Sisters, Oregon. He regularly blogs on wolf-reintroduction and other environmental issues.

Deep within Jim Yuskavitch's *In Wolf Country*, a quote credited to Mark Henepin, former wolf coordinator for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife follows. "I think there must be something wrong with you if you are not moved by a wolf howl." Yuskavitch, a freelance writer and photographer who regularly blogs on wolf-reintroduction and environmental issues has, in 170 pages, packed an enormous amount of information about wolves. Someone not versed on all things wolves may be a bit overwhelmed by the volume of wolf information in this short, but easy to read book. Subject matter of *In Wolf Country*

include information about: wolf packs; reproductive and social life; interspersed with a brief history of wolf extermination; Yellowstone and Idaho wolf re-introduction. He provides a good explanation of what was meant by an experimental non-essential wolf population, and the lawsuits that were formulated in an attempt to block wolf reintroduction. He spends time with Judge Downes decision ruling that the re-introduction was illegal, and the subsequent reversal of Downes ruling. Yuskavitch also spends time informing the reader of Idaho's unwillingness to help in wolf recovery resulting in the Nez Perce involvement, as well as the intransigence of Wyoming coming up with an acceptable wolf management plan. All this is wrapped around the movement of wolves into Oregon and Washington. In Wolf Country is perhaps the first book about wolf reintroduction in the NRM States that spends time with some of the personalities of the anti-wolf movement, the individuals and organizations, and their paranoid droning. Anti-wolf websites

“howl” that wolves will: put ranchers out of business; end the hunting of deer and elk; attack people; spread diseases; and threaten the rural way of life. Wolves are a form of government bio-warfare against mankind, as well as the “illegal introduction of a non native species of wolf that is larger and more aggressive than the wolf that once inhabited the area. During the course of In Wolf Country, Yuskavitch addresses each of these “concerns”

One area where Jim Yuskavitch In Wolf Country really shines is the history of elk in the NRM states and the impact of both wolves and human hunters. He explains that fires of the early 20th century (1910 3 million acres burned, and 1937 more fires) burned mature forests, which were replaced by young forests that provided nutrition for elk. Peak elk habitat extended from 1940 until the late 70's. The Lolo elk herd peaked at 16,000 elk in 1989 and Yuskavitch explains how the decline began, including the winter of 96/97, prior to any real wolf impact. As the forests mature, they provide nutritional support for fewer elk. This has coincided with the wolf reintroduction, and the wolf has become the convenient scapegoat for fewer elk. Yuskavitch explains that wolves kill mostly calves and cow elk. Yes, wolves do kill elk. However, a study by IDFG wolf biologist Jason Husseman from 1999 until 2001 (supporting a Yellowstone study by Dan McNulty that claimed wolves target calves but don't really begin to target adults until they are 10-11 years old) shows that “although wolves mostly killed elk calves, the cow elk they killed averaged 12.6 years old, compared to cows killed by hunters that averaged 7.3 years”

This corroborates with an Isle Royale study of 307 wolf-killed moose from 1958-1974 where 9.8% of wolf killed moose were < 1-2 years of age. The percentages of wolf-killed moose then drops off precipitously until moose are in the 6-7 year range and accelerates to 10.1% by time moose are 10-11 years of age. An interesting aside is

that the older moose make up a much smaller percentage of the total population, yet make up a much greater percentage of moose killed by wolves. Yes, wolves will kill elk and moose of all ages, but the wolf economy thrives on calves and older individuals. Yuskavitch says elk evolved among an army of "fearsome" predators for tens of thousands of years. If wolves, as some claim will destroy all big game species, they would have done it thousands of years ago. It hasn't happened and it's not going to happen. He addresses the phenomena of surplus killing by wolves and humans (poaching), and how the "surplus" killed by wolves are the pictures typically found on anti-wolf sites, even though, if left alone, wolves will typically return to the kill sites to consume more of the carcasses. In *Wolf Country* describes quite admirably how wildlife managers strive to maintain a sweet spot in sigmoid growth curves for maximum harvest, and the concepts of additive and compensatory mortality in regard to elk and wolf populations. Jim Yuskavitch spends time with the concepts of trophic cascades and a cost benefit analysis of Yellowstone wolves to the area. He argues that when one considers, while trying to maintain that sweet spot in the elk sigmoid growth curve, many neglect the agricultural damage, auto collisions, and potential for chronic wasting disease (CWD). Yet, he emphasizes the "harvestable levels of game species are an undeniable natural resource. He does, however tread on thin ice while discussing elk as above objective population size in most hunting districts in the NRM States by not mentioning the presence or absence of wolves in these zones. The verdict is still out in regard to wolf contribution to top down trophic cascade effects. He sites on page 161 that more berries are being found in bear scat, and says this is evidence of elk not over browsing the bushes that produce the berries. Yet, caution must be exercised with this conclusion as an alternate hypothesis states that as the white bark pines seeds, an important source of food for the bears has declined due to White pine blister rust, the bears have merely switched to the berries to replace the nutritional calories no longer available from pine seeds. Jim Yuskavitch *In Wolf Country* is an ambitious book. It is jam packed with information about wolves that may swamp the casual reader. It is sort of a greatest hits of all the pros and cons in regard to wolves, with the pros far out weighing the cons. Jim Yuskavitch weighs in that reasoned disclosure is something that has been in short supply throughout two decades of wolf reintroduction, recovery and management in the NRM States. Yuskavitch's book makes a strong case that, "As is so often the case, wolves are defined as separate from wildlife, their natural interactions with prey species as destructive and normal ecological processes between the two as something to be fixed at the expense of wolves and the people who value them." His book hopefully will be read by many, and

along with the work of others, concord can be established in all things wolf.

Better than I expected. A great overview from the initial 1995 reintroduction of gray wolves into Yellowstone and central Idaho to the present day. Jim not only researched in great detail but spent a great deal of time with experts in the field documenting wolf activity.

Well researched, easy to read summation of the trials of wolf reintroduction.

In wolf country shows how man's mind set about the wolf is just in their dead. Science can show that wolf's are needed and should be left alone to live there lives

My book shelves are loaded with books on the reintroduction of wolves to Yellowstone, but this is the first one to describe what happened a few years after the reintroductions. Loaded with facts and references. I recommend it to anyone interested in the continued existence of viable populations of wolves in the United States.

... Yes .. It's true .. The author Jim Yuskavitch offers an Enormously Personal Perceptive for "those" who Loves Wolves , giving "us" a compelling Wildlife study that extends beyond "our own" expectations ... So , Strongly Recommended ... Doubtless

Hubby loved this.

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