



The Hidden Life of Wolves

By Jim Dutcher, Jamie Dutcher

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The photography is stunningly beautiful and the insights that Jim and Jamie Dutcher share with us opens a world of understanding into wolf behavior." *—Apogee Photo Magazine*

Delve into amazingly intimate wolf photography by Jim and Jamie Dutcher, a couple who spent many years living with a pack of wolves at the edge of Idaho's Sawtooth Wilderness, observing their complex social hierarchy. Here is the alpha pair, leaders of the pack, often the only couple that mate. Here are the pups, born with eyes shut in the spring, tousled by their mother through the first six weeks of life. Here is the omega wolf, lowest ranking wolf in the pack, whose subservience, often playful, alleviates pack tension. Here are moments of cooperation and moments of snarling dominance, moments of communication and affection. Here, too, are heartwarming moments of connection between the Dutchers and the wolves, caught in pictures that remind us how close the links are between wolves in the wild and the beloved family dog.

Short chapters introduce the wolves as individuals, describe the Dutchers' years of coming to know them, and address the complex conservation issues surrounding the near-extinction and now replenishment of the species in the wild. Sidebars explore myths about wolves, including Native American spirit stories, European fairy tales, and modern ranching hearsay.

For animal lovers, nature lovers, environmentalists, and especially dog lovers, this book shares the new understanding gained by six years of the authors' living intimately with wild wolves. Created to complement a traveling exhibition that makes its debut at Chicago's Field Museum in March 2013, it will also appeal to those unable to see the show.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Ever since, as a child, I read about Romulus and Remus and Rudyard Kipling's *Jungle Book*, I have been in love with wolves. This exciting book will help their cause—they deserve our concern and our protection."

—**Jane Goodall**

"An inspired account. The return of the gray wolf is a proud moment in the history of our American lands."

—**Bruce Babbitt, former U.S. Secretary of the Interior**

"The Dutchers are known for their world-class photography, and this volume does not disappoint...the mystery and awe that wolves have always evoked in humans is conveyed in crisp, color images. The photos are at once beautiful, startling and mesmerizing." —**Bill Cannon, former editor-in-chief of *Motor Age Magazine***

"The photography is stunningly beautiful and the insights that Jim and Jamie Dutcher share with us opens a world of understanding into wolf behavior." —***Apogee Photo Magazine***

"A richly layered work that speaks to the intricate and controversial relationship between wolves and humans." --***The Oregonian***

"Remarkable photographs...an in-depth and up-close look at the intimate behaviors and social bonds of [Wolves]." --***American Profile***

"Loaded with wonderful photographs...should go a long way to help protect these most amazing beings." --***Psychology Today***

"A richly layered work that speaks to the intricate and controversial relationship between wolves and humans." --***Oregon Live***

About the Author

JIM DUTCHER is an Emmy Award-winning filmmaker and cinematographer whose extraordinary camerawork has led audiences into places never before filmed: inside beaver lodges, down burrows to peek at wolf pups, and into the secret life of a mother mountain lion. His work includes the National Geographic special, *A Rocky Mountain Beaver Pond*, and ABC World of Discovery's two highest-rated films, *Cougar: Ghost of the Rockies*, and *Wolf: Return of a Legend*. JAMIE DUTCHER, Jim's wife and co-producer, has worked in the animal hospital of the National Zoo in Washington, D.C., bringing her knowledge of animal husbandry and medical care to film and enabling her to quickly gain access to the sensitive and secret inner lives of wolves. The author lives in Idaho.

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Drive north on Highway 75 into central Idaho, and you'll soon find yourself winding up a steep mountain road toward Galena Pass. Beyond this threshold, the ground drops away into the Sawtooth Valley. The headwaters of the Salmon River trickle down these slopes and gather in the valley below. There, a few ranches nestle close to the river with their backs to the vast wilderness. Above it all, the craggy spine of the Sawtooth Mountains looms to the west. The Sawtooths shoot boldly out of the valley floor, soaring gray walls in a blazing blue sky. It's a Wild West setting that rivals the more famous Grand Teton National Park.

Tucked away at the base of these mountains lies a bright riparian meadow. Tiny braided streams course through the grass, nourishing stands of willow and aspen before flowing into a lively mountain brook. Thick stands of spruce and lodgepole pine guard the perimeter, breaking just enough to reveal the Sawtooths in stunning backdrop. We had searched for the better part of a year for the perfect spot to create our wolf camp, facing a maddening list of criteria. It had to be far enough into the wilderness to avoid attracting attention or bothering the local residents, but it had to be accessible by four-wheel drive in the summer and snowmobile in the winter. It also had to be an area that the U.S. Forest Service would allow us to use. Above all, it had to be suitable wolf habitat with fresh water, a mix of cover and open space, and good places for denning. The moment we set foot in this meadow, we knew we'd found the spot. From the hushed beauty of a spruce forest blanketed in new snow, to the pastel spray of spring wildflowers, to the bold reds and golds of autumn, it was all that we as filmmakers could have hoped for.

More important, the land offered everything a pack of wolves would need. There were dense patches of forest and a maze of willows where they could seclude themselves and feel safe. There was a pond of spring water to drink from and to splash in. Fallen trees offered a choice of denning sites, and a grassy meadow provided a sunny nursery for raising pups. The wolves genuinely seemed to love being there.

Wolf camp was an ever-evolving project. After securing permits from the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, we had to get permission from three local ranchers to cross their land. Wolf reintroduction was four years in the future, but it was already a contentious issue. During the autumn of 1990, we staked out 25 acres, creating the world's largest wolf enclosure. Just outside the enclosure, we set up two sleeping tents and a round Mongolian-style yurt, which became a cook tent, a workspace, and the center of camp life.

Maintaining the camp and caring for the wolf pack was a seven-day-a-week job. The long Idaho winters were especially laborious. When three feet of snow piled up in a single day, we had to keep our tent roofs swept free, lest they collapse under the weight. We had to haul and chop a steady supply of firewood, especially for nights when temperatures dropped to 40° below zero. And we always made sure we had a clear path to the outhouse. Critically, we had to maintain contact with the local sheriff's department. If a deer, elk, or antelope turned up dead on the highway, we had permission to collect it for wolf food.

A few seasons into the project, we made a simple alteration that proved revelatory. We built a platform eight feet off the ground inside the wolves' territory, put the yurt on top, our sleeping tent on the ground beside it, and encircled it with chain-link fencing. Suddenly we were no longer entering and exiting the wolves' space every day; we became a constant fixture within it. More than ever, the wolves just ignored us. By this time, the pack was a mature family of six males and two females, and they began to reveal their lives in rich detail. When we remember the Sawtooth Pack, we remember them most fondly from this time.

Users Review

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