

Foreword

George Rabb

FORWARD IS THE NATURE of this book. It brings forward an immense, scattered literature of research on wolf biology, ecology, and behavior, coupled with salient materials on the conservation issues that surround this charismatic creature. Evident from the outset of this comprehensive volume is concern that we assemble credible information. The intensity of such efforts over the past thirty years is reflected in the record of research by the chapter authors. I see this intensity and the sheer number of scientists and natural resource managers and agents cited throughout the text as evidence that many of those involved deeply care about the fabled subject of their studies. And the final chapters and conclusion make it very apparent that caring for the wolf's future requires social and political skills and sensitivity as well as scientific credibility.

Editor-authors L. David Mech and Luigi Boitani show very persuasively that crucial to conservation of this fascinating animal is the realization that the wolf is no longer an animal of the wilderness, symbolic as it may be of wilderness for many. They assert simply that people must therefore come to accept the necessity for management control of wolf populations if the animal's survival is to be assured. What a sobering conclusion this is for many people who extend their empathetic feelings for dogs to the ancestral wolf. Likely supporting bases for this biophilic empathy are the social nature of the species, its exceptional abilities to communicate, its caregiving behavior, and the transferability of its bonding capacity to people. The wolf is thus well constituted to command our attention to its survival. And its survival is important in some measure to the survival of biologi-

cal diversity in the environments it occupies. While no longer an icon for pristine wilderness, the wolf is a symbol for conscientious caring for the environment, for conservation that is enduring. And the admirable effort that the contributors to this volume have made to provide the information on which such a conservation commitment should be based is to be celebrated and emulated.

Why should we care so deeply about another species? The question comes to what values predominate in our concerns and prevail in our behavior, culturally diverse as we are. While there are ecological and economic aspects that we might consider, more significant are positions on ethical and biophilic values that we hold and manifest. Ethically, we owe other people and future human generations the opportunity to share environments with the wolf. That we also owe coexistence to the wolf and all other species is an extension of this human societal consideration, which is widely accepted today as a moral obligation. Biophilic value, or deep innate appreciation for another living entity, is little understood. However, qualities of plants and animals that are attractive to us appear to reinforce this affiliative instinct. Beauty, power, and mimetic behavior are examples, and the wolf has such qualities in full measure.

From my own studies long ago of wolf behavior, and my contacts then and since with several of Durward Allen's students, I have great appreciation for the determination needed to document fully the nature of the wolf and its complex of relationships with people, their domesticated animals, and the environment in general. Impressively emergent from the accounts in this volume

is the extraordinary flexibility or adaptability of the wolf, rivaling our own plasticity in many ways. As people take away such impressions and extract detailed information from this great compendium, they too will surely come to have greater appreciation for the wolf and, I hope, greater commitment to its survival as a significant part of diverse environments throughout the northern hemisphere. These outcomes will well honor our friend Ulie

Seal, collaborator with Dave Mech and others on metabolic studies of wolves. Ulie, as chair of the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group of the Species Survival Commission, IUCN, was a man who dedicated much of his professional life to helping conserve biological diversity around the world by applying rigorous science along with his own very persuasive style of communication.