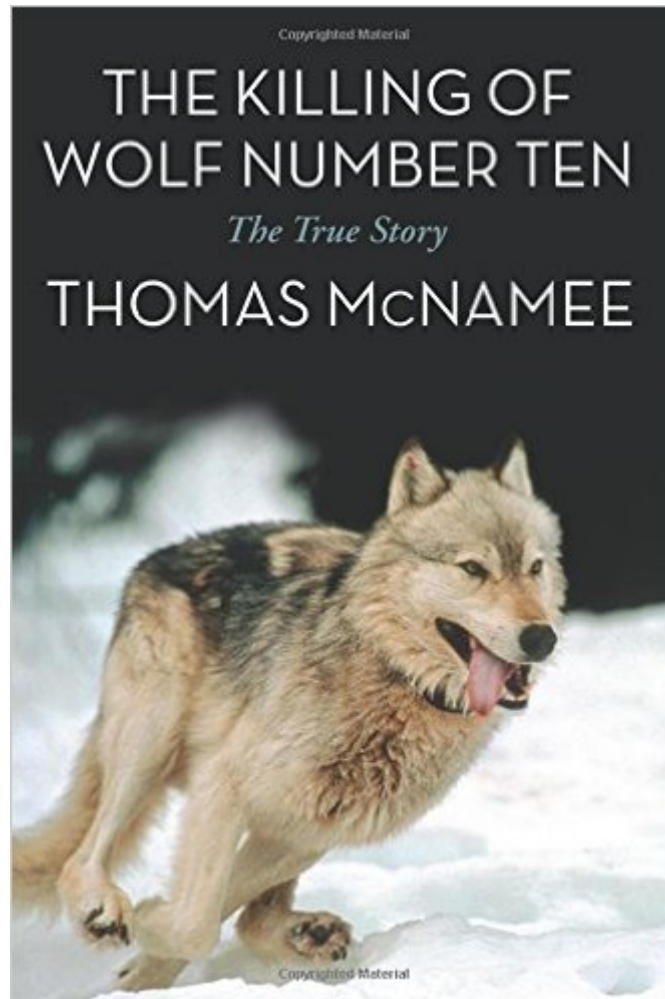


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The Killing Of Wolf Number Ten: The True Story



Synopsis

A killer. A manhunt. The triumph of justice and of the wolf. The greatest event in Yellowstone history. Greater Yellowstone was the last great truly intact ecosystem in the temperate zones of the earth; until, in the 1920s, U.S. government agents exterminated its top predator, the gray wolf. With traps and rifles, even torching pups in their dens, the killing campaign was entirely successful. The howl of the wolf was heard no more. The good animals; elk, deer, bison; proliferated, until they too had to be managed. Two decades later, recognizing that ecosystems lacking their keystone predators tend to unravel, the visionary naturalist Aldo Leopold called for the return of the wolf to Yellowstone. It would take another fifty years for his vision to come true. In the early 1990s, as the movement for Yellowstone wolf restoration gained momentum, rage against it grew apace. When at last, in February 1995, fifteen wolves were trapped in Alberta and brought to acclimation pens in Yellowstone, even then legal and political challenges continued. There was also a lot of talk in the bars about shoot, shovel, and shut up. While the wolves' enemies worked to return them to Canada, the biologists in charge of the project feared that the wolves might well return on their own. Once they were released, two packs remained in the national park, but one bore only one pup and the other none. The other, comprising Wolves Nine and Ten and Nine's yearling daughter, disappeared. They were in fact heading home. As they emerged from protected federal land, an unemployed ne'er-do-well from Red Lodge, Montana, trained a high-powered rifle on Wolf Number Ten and shot him through the chest. Number Nine dug a den next to the body of her mate, and gave birth to eight pups. The story of their rescue and the manhunt for the killer is the heart of *The Killing of Wolf Number Ten*. Read this book, and if you are ever fortunate enough to hear the howling of Yellowstone wolves, you will always think of Wolves Nine and Ten. If you ever see a Yellowstone wolf, chance are it will be carrying their DNA. The restoration of the wolf to Yellowstone is now recognized as one of conservation's greatest achievements, and Wolves Nine and Ten will always be known as its emblematic heroes.

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Customer Reviews

As an avowed pro-wolf individual (read some of my other reviews) I was looking forward to reading Thomas McNamee's *The Killing of Wolf Number Ten*. He sets the hook early on, in a diary sort of fashion, but the farther and farther I got into the book, it felt as though I had read this before, and found myself, ultimately, a bit disappointed. I will return to this in a bit. McNamee's cast of characters includes most of the major individuals immediately involved with the wolves capture and release, and includes interesting dialogue in regard to the immediacy of the task at hand. For one who knows nothing of the story of the wolf reintroduction to Yellowstone, McNamee's work is a short and compelling book, an easy one day read. His story line recreates the drama associated with would the wolves be allowed to be released in Yellowstone or not, after their capture in Canada and their ensuing trip south. It was a one-way journey, for while the trip to Yellowstone was in progress; last-ditch legal attempts were being made to block the release of the wolves. As Canada would not take the wolves back, it was either release or euthanasia. The story builds up to the wolves' release, and would they remain in Yellowstone or move back to from where they came, always with wolf number ten and his mate, number nine, as the central figures. The crescendo continues until the almost ant-climatic fashion number ten died due to the rifle of neer-do-well Chad McKittrick. The drama of his capture and prosecution, as well as the rescue of wolf number nine and her pups is then documented.

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