



Ramses

Wisdom is not a trait specific to humans.

Wisdom can, and will be seen in the eyes of all creatures, as long as you are wise enough to keep an open mind. Have you ever looked into the eyes of an animal and thought they are much older than the number of years that their age reflects? One animal that immediately comes to my mind when I think of the trait wisdom, is my friend Ramses.

Ramses had been moved from where he was born to Wolf Haven. This change of scenery, mates, people, etc. put him in a constant state of defense. This made it hard for him to feel safe and secure in one spot. Once he moved to Wolf Haven International on October 12, 1993 he found his home.

Ever since I met Ramses he seemed to be somewhat shy. Even his reclusive mate Kiani showed herself more than he did when I was around their home. During our first few encounters he did not come toward me when I stopped at their enclosure. He would retreat to the back of his enclosure and hide behind some of the foliage. Peering at me from the safety of cover, I could see him watching me, trying to determine whether I was friend or foe. Later I found out that he had an innate fear of men, which in my mind only widened the gap between us. This did not deter me from trying to befriend him, nor prevent him from trying to figure out my true intentions.

Since Ramses and Kiani were older animals they were fed small meals on a daily basis, unlike the other animals that are fed twice a week. This gave me an opportunity to try to earn their trust little by little. We would feed them during our morning walkthrough, and when we'd come around the corner they would both be standing there waiting. Kiani would come up to the fence for her share and Ramses would stand back and wait for us to throw his portion in. They were fed this way for some time, until one day I walked around the corner and Ramses was up at the fence with Kiani. They both stayed at the fence for their breakfast. When they were full



they would pull away from the fence to stand and look at you.

Ramses and his mate Kiani, like most older beings were accustomed to a slower pace of life, which came with their well-earned age. Wolf Haven was an ideal place to call their home during the last years of their lives. Trying to respect their slower ways, I would consciously make sure that I spoke quieter, walked slower, and moved slower around them. I think Ramses noticed that I was making a conscious effort to not disturb their long-deserved peace. If I was in a hurry I would still take the time to move slower around them so they wouldn't have to worry so much about what I was doing. Ramses eventually started to trust me more. He started to stand his ground when I would walk up, rather than retreat into the brush of his enclosure to watch me. Yet he would still watch me very closely to ensure that he was aware of what I was doing.

Their home offered peace of mind and body. They had a large enclosure with two very large Douglas fir trees. One of which is an old growth tree that not only sheltered them from the unforgiving elements, but also gave them a safe place to hide. At the bottom of the Douglas fir there was a large den that they would frequent quite often, especially during the winter months when the ground above them was frozen solid. The summer months were more comfortable for both of them. They would lie down at the rear of their enclosure on a large grassy patch. Lying next to each other they would soak up all the day's

| tribute

Daniel Curry, *Animal Care Specialist*

sun before getting up. They did not explore their surroundings too often -- they seemed to like to pick spots that would suit their needs for that particular time of the day and rest there until they stood up and walked slowly over to the next spot to rest. Kiani and Ramses weren't overly affectionate toward one another, but they did like to spend most of their time with each other.

Their health started to wane with their mounting age. Kiani started to lose her fight with sinus cancer that attacked her body

relentlessly. The disease, coupled with her age, meant there was nothing that neither she nor her caretakers could do to fight the disease. All that could be done was to make her last moments as peaceful and comfortable as possible. She left her body and transitioned from this life to the next naturally, before there was need for her friends (caretakers) to intervene.

After Kiani's passing Ramses did change, but not for the worse as some might have suspected after the loss of his mate, Kiani. He started to become much more active and exploring his enclosure, checking every little nook and cranny with a newfound energy and curiosity. He would stay out more even during bad weather. I frequently saw him looking off into the distance with a smile that made him look much younger than he actually was. Once he noticed he was being watched he would snap back into reality with a look that reflected his annoyance at being disturbed during his moment of serenity. During morning rounds Ramses would wait right next to his water bucket. He seemed to shed all of his previous concerns about his caretakers. He wasn't shying away like he used to; he would wait for his breakfast to be brought to him. He would ever so gently grasp each piece of meat with his incisors and toss it back with a throw of his head. During each bite he would look straight into your eyes. In doing so he was giving the most precious gift that he had to give, his trust.

continued on page 22

CONSERVATION continued from page 10

difficulty with their traditional prey which has led them to be more bold in their pursuit of food.

CANADA

An inquest into the death of Kenton Carnegie was completed November 1. Mr. Carnegie was killed while hiking near a working camp in northern Saskatchewan in November 2005. While there was disagreement between wildlife experts over the probable cause of his death, the jury came to the decision that a pack of wolves was responsible. All parties agree that the unprotected garbage dump of this camp and others like it serve as attractants for wild animals and can easily lead to increased confrontations between animals and humans. Whether wolves were responsible for Mr. Carnegie's death or not, it is undeniable that there were several wolves that were demonstrating unusual fearlessness around humans. As the first documented case of wolves killing a human in North America in over 100 years, this unfortunate tragedy demonstrates the critical need to ensure that wild carnivores do not become habituated to the presence of humans and their garbage or food. 🐾

ANIMAL CARE EMERGENCY continued from page 12

He would still be in a confined space, but at least he would be in the sanctuary surrounded by his conspecifics, as well as familiar scents and sounds.

Wolfy seemed to perk up immediately after the move and we were hopeful. However, the following morning I noticed some swelling ventral to the wound and by the second day the swelling had doubled in size. Because the drain hole had closed up, we assumed that the swelling was due to fluid pooling in the body cavity. Wolfy returned to the clinic so that Dr. Brown could reopen the drain hole so fluid could continue to drain. A quick fix... or so we thought. Dr. Brown intended to make just a small cut in Wolfy's abdomen, express the site and then send him home. Because it was to be a simple procedure, Wolfy was anesthetized but rather than move him to surgery, Dr. Brown opted to perform the procedure while Wolfy remained in his crate. He proceeded to make the initial incision, and as expected, fluid spilled out but then, so did what appeared to be subcutaneous fatty tissue- though nothing too unusual or alarming. Dr. Brown cut away the fatty tissue, but the more he cut, the more spilled out. The tissue began to look suspiciously like omentum (large fold of the peritoneum) indicative of a hernia. Immediately, Wolfy was prepped for corrective surgery.

Exploration revealed a previously undetected tear in both the peritoneal and abdominal wall. Most likely it was not initially discovered due to the severe tissue damage inflicted by the bite. Wolfy's confinement allowed for abdominal contents to remain relatively intact, so there was no indication of a hernia, however, once his mobility increased, abdominal contents began

to protrude through the opening in his abdominal wall and that was of course the cause of the swelling we were seeing. Almost half of Wolfy's small intestine had pushed through, but thankfully the tissue appeared healthy. The contents were flushed repeatedly with saline and then pushed back through the opening in the abdomen before being sutured back up.

For the third time, Wolfy returned to the animal care office. I felt as though I had betrayed him, for upon his release only two days prior I had whispered to him that he wouldn't be going back to animal care, but alas, there we were. He was, understandably, less tolerant of his confinement this time around, and again, it was crucial that he remain quiet. Fluid and drug delivery was a bit more challenging, but fortunately for him and for us, he again proved to be a model patient.

One week later, we were able to move him back into the deckpen. I made no promises in his ear this time, only said a little prayer. As we drove through the main gate of the sanctuary he immediately perked up. His ears twitched left to right, his tail wagged slightly. His eyes were bright and alert and there was a slight grin on his handsome face. We parked in front of the deckpen and moved his crate into position and proceeded to open the gate. Wolfy was chomping at the bit and couldn't wait to get out. He greeted his neighbors with a series of excited whimpers and whines and they in turn reciprocated.

We monitored his progress assiduously, looking for any further signs of swelling but thankfully, there were none. We had finally reached a turning point where we thought it safe to say that he was out of the woods and would most likely make a full recovery. Because of how severe Meeka's attack was, it was decided that Meeka and Wolfy would be permanently separated and several weeks later, Wolfy was moved into a vacant enclosure, and after investigating, then marking, every stick, bush and tree, he settled into his new home.

As is tradition, I spent the Thanksgiving holiday with the wolves

and though I am ever grateful for each and every one of my lupine friends, this year's blessings were particularly abundant. 🐾

RAMSES continued from page 13

I believe that he knew his time was more limited than it ever was before, and that he would live it to its fullest, experiencing everything he could in the time he had left. I think he was happy, not because he was by himself, but because he was alive, and fully embracing every moment.

When you are given the honor to be responsible for someone else's life, you must always do what is best for them. You must always put their needs and wishes before your own. Euthanasia is always a hard decision at best. You are making a decision for someone that you love and respect, who cannot just tell you what they want. This requires you to be more in tune with that animal and with yourself than you might normally be. You are making a decision that will permanently alter their life. You need to make a decision that is not polluted by your human emotions -- to want to keep this animal alive for selfish reasons, or for reasons that are not in the animal's best interest. You have to do what is right for that animal even if it does break your heart. They are our friends and look to us for help in their times of need, throughout their journeys with us.

Ramses, during your last night I could see misery in your eyes, something that was never seen by me prior to those last moments, something that I wish you didn't have to experience. I feel that we made the best decision for you, my friend, and that it was made with love and respect for you. I hope that I used some of the wisdom you imparted on me during your last moments here on earth, and that you know I was listening to your silent dialogue during all those mornings when we had breakfast together. I am grateful for meeting you, my friend, Ramses. I hope that someday we will have breakfast together again. 🐾