

# Shaun Ellis: Leader Of the (Wolf) Pack



Did you ever pretend to be an animal for a little while? Maybe you crawled on the floor and barked like a dog or meowed like a cat.

Now imagine living like an animal all the time -- eating, sleeping, and howling like an animal. That's what Shaun Ellis, a man who studies wolves, does. He says living with wolves and behaving like them is the best way to learn about these interesting animals. Ellis has lived with wolves in the U.S. and in England. He has played with wolves and learned to growl and snarl like them. He even puts his food in a plastic bag and hides it inside the dead animals he and the other wolves eat. That way, the wolves think he is eating raw meat.

As part of his work, Ellis also lived for 18 months with three wolf pups that had been abandoned by their mother. He acted like a mother to the young wolves. While he lived outdoors with them, he tried to teach them the skills they would need to survive in the wild.

## NEWS WORD BOX

dominant    survive  
abandoned    imagine  
recorded    communicate

Ellis has also spent a lot of time studying wolf howls. He recorded many different wolves and listened over and over to their howls. Soon he could tell one wolf's howl from another's. He also learned that different howls mean different things. After spending so much time living with wolves, Ellis can communicate with them and he knows how to use wolf sounds to protect himself.

Ellis hopes his work will help people better understand wolves so that humans and wolves can live together peacefully.

## **MORE FACTS ABOUT SHAUN ELLIS**

- When he was raising the wolf pups, Ellis lived in an outdoor den that had no heat and no bedding. On cold nights the heat from the wolves' bodies kept him warm.
- Ellis was viewed as the dominant male among the pups, which meant he had to eat the heart, liver, and kidneys of whatever animal the wolves were eating.

## THINK ABOUT THE NEWS

Think about an animal you would like to be for a day. What would you eat? Where would you live? Who would your enemies be?