THE GOLDEN LAB AND THE COYOTE

A. SAAS, 230 Athabasca W., Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan. S0H 2B9

Spring was trying to arrive, forcing out the last days of Old Man Winter by warming up the hillsides and ravines. The sun seemed extremely warm and inviting today even though the odd snow bank was still trying to make a last desperate attempt to hang on for its life. Not being able to resist an invitation to the first call of spring, my dog Sam and I prepared for a brisk walk in the nearby valley.

I packed a thermos of coffee, a book to read in the warm sun, some dog biscuits and a litre of water for the dog. These we would enjoy at the picnic tables at the half way point of our walk.

The walk began after a 10 minute drive to get out of the city. It was great, tramping through mud and dry areas and a mixture of both. We stopped often on this first glorious walk of spring to make certain that we enjoyed everything around us.

The squawk of the early arriving Canada and Snow Geese let all around them know that they were messengers of spring bringing the sun and the warm winds. In tune with the geese was the quacking of the pintail and mallard ducks attempting to set up territory. The early chokecherry buds looked tasty on the trees as well as the old rose hips still left from last year. They occasionally whispered to Sam to come on over and leave his mark as other animals that passed by had done. No place could be better than the open air in early spring.

After an enjoyable walk of five medium hills and five ever so long, tall and steep hills we finally made it to the

picnic area and fell exhausted onto benches of the picnic tables.

As quick as a wink the first curcoffee was drunk up and Sam had water. This was our reward for our walk. The dog biscuits were quile eaten by Sam and with the second of coffee came the signal that we can now sit back and relax for a while course, before Sam could relax usual sniffing of everything arour usual sniffing of everythi

In the quietness of the easy he blowing in the trees and the sin flowers trying to bud, we became a pletely enwrapped in our relaxation

I was abruptly brought aroun reality by a strange grunting sour my dog. I hollered at him for so re interrupting my solitude. He sto but out of the corner of my eye l see him crawling on his belly. I qu continued to read and was almost solution to the mystery when Sam that same weird grunt sound aga was a sickening sound so I had to up to see what he was up to. No had crawled about 50 yards from he was and all this distance on his as the slide marks in the soft soil cated. There, ahead of him, v coyote doing the same type of cra as what Sam did. I stopped and wa in awe. There were both animals (ing towards each other making st 8 grunting sounds. I got frightene for myself and Sam as he got up fro his

and began walking over to the e. I was afraid for his life in case would fight so I whistled loudly. was a warning sound to Sam and opped. Meanwhile the coyote up very straight and watched. hen came running back to me and wn. The coyote then ran about ig steps straight ahead, did a comsomersault and ended up with its ointing every which way. Sam sat ving to figure out what was hapg. When the coyote began to ts bushy tail and walk towards us, cared. I immediately thought that rabies for its strange actions. In ghtened condition I grabbed a n off a dead caragana tree and ed on to the picnic table. I was ed to fight. It seemed to sense a e from curiosity to protectiveness

and it began to circle around instead of coming straight at us. It circled us for about 10 minutes and then headed towards the valley top. Once at the crest it stopped and lay down to watch us. Its coat meanwhile glistened in the warm sun and it blended in amongst the rocks at the top.

Slowly, we packed up and began our walk back. We were ever so watchful as we hiked the long trail. To this day, I do not know the meaning of all this activity by that coyote. Was it a new type of spring dance by the animals? Was it a spring ritual or was it the coyote-dog way to announce spring? Whatever it was that these two animals were going through, it sure made for an interesting first walk in spring.



R.E. Gehlert

HYBRID DEER

The winter of 1984 - 1985 was a fairly severe winter and a deer feeding program was instituted. Having a fair number of deer around (mostly Mule Deer and some White-tailed) took part in this program. It was surprising how soon the deer knew feed was being put out for them at evening and morning chore time. As if by magic at 8:30 in the morning and 4:30 in the afternoon deer appeared out of the tree shelterbelts. Those that had gone back to the riverbreaks were coming on the run, as if they were racing to see who could get there first.

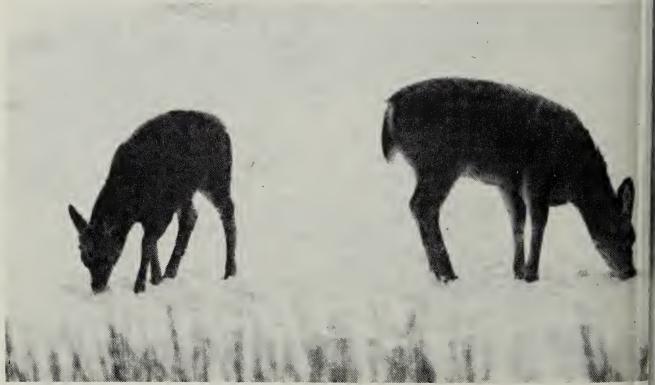
When spring weather arrived the deer spent most of their time in the riverbreaks, and much less time at the farm. In the fall of 1985 - 1986, when the first bad weather arrived, a small herd came in and were searching for food in the area that they had been fed the previous winter.

I was surprised to see that two of the Mule Deer does had White-tail fawns nursing on them. One had two and the other had one. These were soon

weaned but stayed close to mothers until spring.

The next fall, 1986 - 1987, they back again, but the mothers had Deer fawns. Two of the previous spring White-tails were bucks. were quite independent, the thindoe, followed her mother and sing The fall of 1987 - 1988 the same were around, except for one of White-tail bucks. It had either sing away or was taken during the hind season. This season of 1988 the deal back again and the surviving but now a proud specimen and the arrived with a youngster.

lam positive that these three de howere nursing on Mule Deer do 1985 - 1986 are White-tail and under crosses. It is hard to believe how Mule Deer would adopt other under let alone those of another spie when we had a White-tail buck as ling with the Mule Deer for sayears. — Sig Jordheim, White Bear 18 atchewan. SOL 3L0



Cross doe with 1988 offspring

Sig Joi



Mule X White-tailed Deer buck

Sig Jordheim



ecember 1989

229