

ANOMALIES ON ALASKAN WOLF SKULLS

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Twenty-one hundred wolf (Canis lupus) skulls from Alaska, collected by hunters, trappers and Alaska Department of Fish and Game personnel between 1941 and 1984, were inspected and non-genetic anomalies were recorded. On the average 38% of the skulls showed irregularities, and the location on the skull, the size of the anomaly, and probable cause were recorded.

The relationship between anomaly type, size and frequency, and capture time and location of the wolf will be discussed, addressing differential injury frequencies associated with hunting specific prey. Prey species associated with these skulls are bison (Bison bison), moose (Alces alces), caribou (Rangifer tarandus), black-tailed deer (Odocoileus hemionus) and Dall sheep (Ovis dalli). Food habits of the wolves in question are inferred from stomach content, radiocesium analysis and food availability in the different Game Management Units over time as found in the literature.

The results will be viewed in light of the hypothesis that injury frequencies increase with size of prey animals.



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