



The Katharine Ordway
Natural History Study Area

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ORDWAY BULLETIN
No. 85

MACALESTER
COLLEGE

located at 9550 Inver Grove Trail (Dakota County Road 77), Inver Grove Heights, Minn.

HUNTERS at ORDWAY (III).

They come in a "pack", three in all - one large black, a smaller shaggy black and an aging cream-colored dog who always lags slightly behind the others. For two winters I have seen them prowling about the woods, have seen the evidence of their hunting activities. They constitute another of the "unbalancing" factors which come to exist in places which border intimately upon residential areas.

They originate from some nearby residences and seem to have formed some sort of attachment for each other, a behavioral trait among wild dogs and sometimes manifested by domesticated dogs (Canis domesticus) when they are removed from the domiciles which they usually occupy in their role as "man's best friend".

Their activity seems to be almost routine - they meet somewhere and then the trio proceeds along the railroad track and enters the woods where they course about in their hunting depredations. Individual effects are difficult to document and so it is impossible to make an accurate remark as to how many squirrels, rabbits and other small mammals and birds have been disrupted and terrorized by this crew of scalawags. The effect on the deer is a little more evident. Last year's heavy snows (1978-'79) gave much evidence of the harassment of deer by dogs, the tell-tale tracks, the marks of floundering about in knee-deep snows. Considering that the does are carrying their young by February (they will born in April or May) the harassment by dogs brings about undesirable exertion which frequently leads to abortion or stillbirth of the fawn.

I like to think that the owners of dogs would control their pets and I continue to resist the advice to "shoot them (the dogs)" and thus solve the whole problem. It is not easy to contemplate injuring or destroying a pet; on the other hand the incursion of hunting groups of dogs is a factor which intrudes very strongly upon the natural scene and needs to be controlled and/or removed.

R J CHRISTMAN,
Naturalist

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