

# Where the wild things are

## Wildlife vet is moved by moose

by Shirley Byers

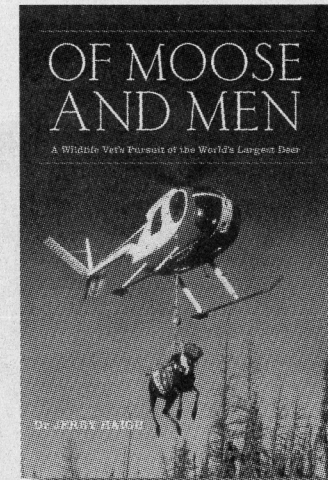
Moose are on the move. They're showing up in all sorts of places not best suited to their species (like the Regina airport). Those that must be sedated, removed, and relocated may fare better because of wildlife vet Dr. Jerry Haigh, and the work he did in the 1970s with regards to moose capture techniques, and the types and dosages of tranquilizing drugs. Too little can endanger the captors, too much can kill the moose, as can pursuits lasting more than a couple of minutes.

Haigh has studied the moose since 1975. His latest book, *Of Moose and Men: A Wildlife Vet's Pursuit of the World's Largest Deer*, is all things moose. Wild and tame moose. Young and old moose. Healthy and unhealthy moose. Lone and lovelorn moose. There's even a chapter on harnesses and harnessing because, as it turns out, moose can be domesticated. There have been moose dairies, with

moose turning up at milking time and trotting into their places to meet their milker. In Sweden, Sune Häggmark runs a 1962 Volvo on moose droppings.

Dipping into the fun, but not necessarily factual, Haigh shares lore of Swedish moose used in the ancient military and for postal deliveries. In Estonia, moose ridden or in harness were said to have been banned from the capital because they were spooking the horses. In Russian moose lore, a group of Siberians supposedly escaped from a Cossack army on – you guessed it – mooseback.

In his book, Haigh describes his study of the moose: "During my personal journey in the company of the charismatic moose, which spans thirty-six years, and my time spent delving back 10,000 years into their history, I have come across many fascinating facts and corresponded with over eighty people around the planet."



*Of Moose and Men* is Haigh's third book. His first was *Wrestling Rhinos*, which he describes as, "a sort of mix of a young greenhorn learning his trade, a love story, and my evolution into an experienced wildlife guy." His second, *The Trouble with Lions*, he says, is a "more serious look at conservation issues." *The Trouble with Lions* was shortlisted in two categories for Saskatchewan Book Awards in 2008.

"The books sort of sit in a mental Rolodex and when the time is right I start to write," he says. "I have bits and pieces of other books stored on my computer or in my head. Once I get going, I write early mornings and do the research, picture selection, and so on later in the day."

Haigh is also an oral storyteller. "I think I have been storytelling for a long time. My lectures tended to be described that way," he says. "After the first book came out, I realized that I could tell the

stories as well as write them, and so I joined the Saskatoon Guild and then things went on from there. I have had a few gigs and there are more to come."

He's not sure which medium he prefers. "I enjoy both, but I'm fortunate that I don't need to make a living doing either. That would require a lot of work, and I have retired." ❖

***Of Moose and Men: A Wildlife Vet's Pursuit of the World's Largest Deer***

**Jerry Haigh**

**ECW Press**

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**with colour photos in section, b/w photos throughout, bibliography**

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