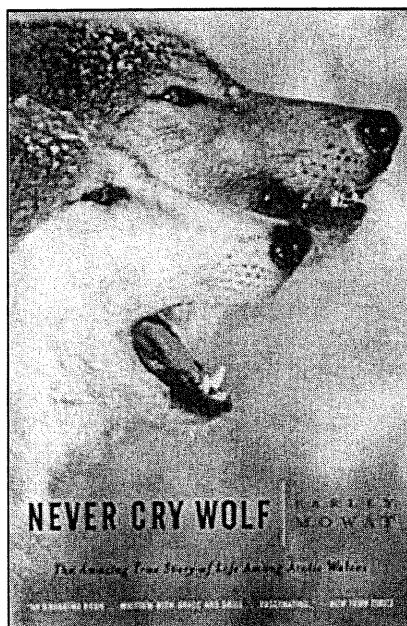


Spotlight on Classic Authors

Farley Mowat

Canadian writer, naturalist, and environmental advocate Farley Mowat was born in Belleville, Ontario in 1921. He started writing in his early teens, and began to publish a regular column about his observations of birds in Saskatoon's *Star-Phoenix* after moving there with his parents. In his teens, he also travelled to Churchill, on the west coast of Hudson Bay, with his great uncle, ornithologist Frank Farley, to study arctic birds. Killing birds for the sake of science disturbed Mowat, but at the time he went along with actions he would later condemn outright.

After serving in the army during World War II, and earning a B.A. from the University of Toronto, Mowat travelled to the arctic again as the assistant to a biologist. His experiences in the North led to his first, controversial novel, *People of the North*, published in 1952. *Deer*, published in 1952, expressed his outrage at the problems of the Inuit people and the responsibility of whites for their situation. *Lost in the Barrens* (1956) is an allegorical tale of two teens, trapped in an arctic winter, who are rescued by an Inuit boy. *Never Cry Wolf* (1963) introduced the world to a family of arctic wolves, contradicting the traditional image of these animals as vicious killers.



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Mowat's strong voice for ecological and environmental issues is heard throughout his writing career in books such as *A Whale for the Killing* (1972), *Sea of Slaughter* (1984), and *Rescue the Earth: Conversations* (1990). Now in his late eighties, Mowat and his wife Claire spend the winters in Port Hope, ON, and the summers in Birch Point, Cape Breton.

Never Cry Wolf, one of Mowat's most celebrated works, is a popular choice for teenagers learning about ecology. A recent Indiana counties reading initiative, for

Green Tip: Buy local and organic food whenever possible. Avoid wasting food. Use leftovers, eat food before it goes bad and only buy what you need.

example picked the book as its “teen read” in a program highlighting environmental concerns. Sometimes criticized for its “subjective non-fiction” approach, *Never Cry Wolf* is a quasi-fictionalized, first-person account of Mowat’s project as a government biologist to monitor the arctic wolf “problem.” His character gradually discovers that the supposed problem with wolves – their destruction of countless caribou – is actually a problem with men. While the wolves survive on mice, squirrels, and weak caribou, human trappers are slaughtering the herds to feed themselves and their dogs. Mowat’s startling discovery of the familial bonds, conversational abilities, and gentleness of these animals overturns conventional wolf lore, with magical results.

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— King, James. *Farley: The Life of Farley Mowat*. Toronto: Harper, 2002.

— Mowat, Farley. *Never Cry Wolf*. New York: Franklin Watts, 1963.

— Rubio, Gerald J. and Karen Grandy. “Mowat, Farley,” In *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. 2009.

Accessed April 10, 2009. <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/>

Crafty Recycling

Morsbag.com: Sociable guerilla bagging offers a great, environmentally-friendly craft option that can be adapted into a social library programme. Equipped with an old bed-sheet or curtain, some matching cotton material, an iron, and a sewing machine, you can follow their simple instructions to host a fashionable and economical library event, and learn about the problems of plastic and the merits of reuse at the same time.

Check out their website at: <http://www.morsbags.com/html/patterns.html>



Green Tip: Turn off computers and monitors when they are not in use.