

People - Benson

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Pet Timber Wolf Answers Call of the Wild at Eagle

Journal Special Correspondent
Eagle, Wis. - Children aren't the only ones wishing for snow these days. Orin Benson, widely known Eagle dog trainer, has been watching the skies for the last week.

Fresh snow is good for tracking. And Benson has a special reason to want to track.

Kepa, his pet timber wolf, broke a snap on his chain while his pen was being cleaned Nov. 26 and took off into the wilds.

The pet is shy and harmless, Benson says, and may one day have a starring role in a wild-life movie.

Forest Nearby

Benson's property borders the southern unit of the Kettle Moraine state forest in Waukesha county. The forest contains thousands of acres of timberland.

Mr. and Mrs. Benson describe Kepa as a quiet, gentle house pet that is a devoted stepfather to puppies brought into their home.

Benson and his wife are convinced that Kepa, though enjoying his freedom, has remained in the area. One sighting has been reported.

Snow will help them track him down to a specific area, the Bensons believe.

"Then we have some things we could try," he said.

The couple also keeps a female wolf, Pake, whose cry has been especially mournful since her mate disappeared. The Bensons plan to use an amplified recording of Pake's howls after

the tracking operation gets into high gear.

Benson said Monday that Kepa probably was "feeding on deer guts." Several deer had been reported wounded in the area by hunters, but never found.

The Bensons prize their gentle house pet, who looks like a friendly husky.

Aloof to strangers, he probably would "run away" if he saw someone in the woods, Mrs. Benson said.

Both of the couple's wolves

were born in captivity in northern Wisconsin. Timber wolves have virtually vanished from Wisconsin and they are now a protected species.

Benson said his wolves had been sought for roles in a movie on the vanishing species, to be filmed by a federal agency.