



**PHOTOGRAPHER PAMELA
UNDERHILL KARAZ CAPTURES
THE SECRET LIVES OF OUR
ADIRONDACK NEIGHBORS**

Call of the Wild

Just after Christmas some years ago, a coyote emerged from a stand of evergreens on Pamela Underhill Karaz's property near Barneveld. Wildlife sightings on Karaz's 40 acres in the southwestern Adirondacks were nothing new, but she grabbed her camera and watched as the animal approached a stuffed toy her golden retrievers had left in the driveway. It sniffed the toy, looked around and sniffed again. Then the coyote picked it up, threw it in the air and bucked around in circles, playing for almost five minutes. Finally, it looked back at the house, grabbed the toy and ran into the woods.

Karaz's photographs of *The Toy Thief* have been used by Project Coyote, an organization with a mission to end wildlife-killing contests, where competitors win prizes for shooting the most or largest of a given species. "He's been used to help promote that they are animals that have been unfairly maligned and misunderstood," she says. "Coyotes get a bad rap."

Every one of Karaz's wildlife portraits has a story. And the way she captures her subject matter has everything to do with helping people make a connection with the creatures they often overlook. A doe balancing on her hind legs, getting a face full of snow after snacking on cedar branches. A great horned owl finding its strength, climbing with talons and wings back to its nest after spending three days on the ground. A gray fox tending to her five kits, all of them nudging into her, touching noses. "I want people to look into their eyes and to feel that animal," she says. "It helps make us care."

For two decades Karaz was primarily a wildlife painter, snapping reference photos to take back to the studio. But after seeing a snowy owl irruption, photographing bird after bird and even assisting banders from Project SNOWstorm, an organization that tracks snowies to better understand them and promote conservation, she switched mediums.

These days Karaz and her husband, Rich, live in Lake Placid and recently opened The Curious Otter, a wildlife gallery on Main Street (www.thecuriousotter.com, 518-637-1075). The gallery "is an important part of my work," says Pamela, where "I can share the stories behind the photographs, so these creatures can live on." —Annie Stoltie



TOP: Bluebird.
ABOVE: The Lookers.
FACING PAGE: Great Horned Owllet.
PAGES 38-39: Close-Up.





ABOVE: *The Chat.*

FACING PAGE: *The Toy Thief & Baltimore Oriole.*

