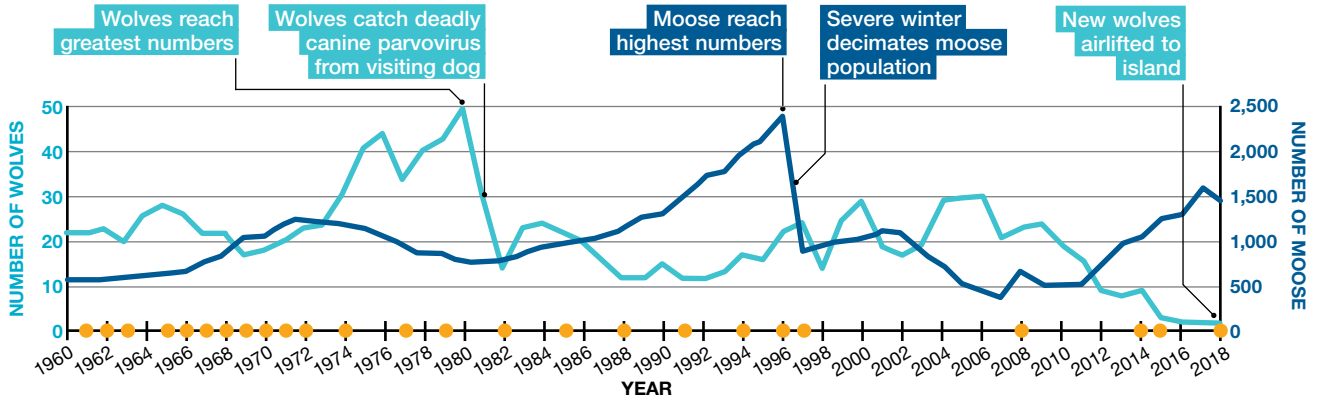Name: _____

CHANGING POPULATIONS

In "The Wolves of Isle Royale" (p. 20), you read about how changes in the number of wolves on the island had big effects on its moose population. In this activity, you will analyze population data collected by the Isle Royale National Park Service. Examine the graph below, and then answer the questions that follow.

PREDATORS AND PREY

Scientists have been tracking the numbers of wolves and moose on Isle Royale since 1958 to study the relationship between predators and prey. What happened to the moose population as wolves dipped to their lowest numbers?

KEY
— Wolves — Moose
● Ice bridge to mainland formed

SOURCE: NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

ANALYZE IT

1. Why do you think wolf and moose populations are represented on the same graph?

2. How does the graph's scale for the wolf population compare with the scale for the moose population? Why do you think that is?

3. When was the moose population at its highest? Its lowest? What did the wolf populations for those same years look like? What can you infer from this data about the two populations?

4. Look at the period of time from 1985 to 1992. What happened to the two populations during this period? What likely caused that trend?

5. Using the graph and information from the article, explain how top predators like wolves help keep ecosystems in balance.