

# URGENT

## WOLVES IN WESTERN CANADA NEED YOUR HELP NOW!



**Wolves in Western Canada are running out of places to hide.** Two winters back, the province of **British Columbia** announced plans to kill up to 184 wolves before the snow melted, aiming for a total of approximately 700 dead wolves when all is said and done. Though only successful at killing 84 wolves for caribou the first winter, that number more than doubled the next year with the use of Judas wolves, individuals that are radio-collared to unknowingly lead shooters to kill their entire family. Aerially gunning re-starts each January when the snow is fresh, with this wolf killing program slated to continue for a minimum of 5 years. Wolves are chased by helicopters until they are exhausted, and then shot under the guise of helping to recover dwindling caribou herds in the South Selkirk and South Peace areas of Canada's westernmost province.

The war on wolves is playing itself out in Alberta and demands just as much attention and participation.

Since 2006, more than 1,000 wolves have been killed under the guise of protecting **Alberta's** Little Smokey Caribou herd in habitat 95% disturbed by oil and gas infrastructure. Wolves were killed in strangling snares, gunned down from helicopters and poisoned using elk and moose killed and laced with strychnine. Indiscriminate weapons, snares killed 676 other animals, *including 2 caribou*. There is no way to estimate how many non-target animals died of strychnine. Unfortunately, this highly dangerous and inhumane poison is still used in Alberta along with Compound 1080 to kill wolves and other wildlife.

The sad reality is that caribou are in this situation because of us, not because of wolves. **BOTH** provinces have knowingly allowed industry to destroy caribou habitat for more than 50 years. Activities such as energy development, logging, mining and high-impact recreation continue in critical caribou habitat. As a consequence of our neglect, the government has sanctioned the killing of one species to save another. We believe that the ends do not justify the means.

**FACT:** Wolves are emotional and intelligent beings whose predation on caribou is facilitated by continued habitat destruction.

**FACT:** Wolves are a **keystone species, capable of causing trophic cascades**. Wolves help to maintain biodiversity and facilitate large-scale processes in our wilderness ecosystems.

**FACT:** A death sentence for wolves will NOT save endangered caribou, but it will further impoverish these ecosystems.

- *We deserve to know how wildlife and wild places are being cared for.*
- *We deserve to have our input listened to and considered.*
- *We the public deserve to be informed on how our tax dollars are being spent, to what end, and for how long.*

**Killing is NOT conservation.** The decision to kill more wolves is **scientifically unsound**. All evidence to date shows that killing wolves does not reduce predator numbers for more than a season since their behaviour allows populations to rebound quickly and fill in the vacant space created where resident wolves have been killed. No wonder this outdated management practice has consistently failed to increase ungulate populations long-term. This is not the first time wolf helicopter killing has occurred in these provinces. **However, with your voice, we can work to ensure it is the last.**

This is also a **question of animal welfare**. The morality of causing harm to hundreds of intelligent and sensitive animals for any reason should be questioned. **Are we prepared to spend the next several decades shooting wolves from helicopters in a vain attempt to maintain small herds of caribou in degraded habitat?** Areas that have been protected for caribou, such as in the South Selkirk region, are not only small, but they are isolated. Small, isolated populations of caribou will likely be wiped out by disease outbreak, inbreeding depression, natural disasters, or hard winters whether or not every wolf family in the area is scapegoated and killed.

**FACT:** Aerial shooting is not an approved method under Canada's current guidelines on Approved Animal Care.

These provincial caribou recovery plans are not built on an understanding of wolf ecology nor conservation ethics. Instead, an apparent pre-determined agenda which encourages killing wolves has been exposed. In addition to opposing the destruction of wolves in a last ditch effort to save caribou, we stress the importance of instituting effective conservation measures to preserve old-growth habitat critical to the survival of caribou, to restore natural areas and decommission access routes, and to keep humans out of sensitive areas. To win this battle, industrial encroachment must be halted and habitat allowed to regenerate.

Please become informed and involved. This is a defining time for the values of Canadians.

Sadie Parr  
Executive Director, Wolf Awareness Inc.



**Contacting your local MLA and asking them to raise the issue at the provincial level is one of the best ways to provoke change.**

**Consider including your local editor and/or other newspapers too. Here are some other relevant contacts that influence these decisions:**

#### **In British Columbia**

The Honourable Christy Clark, Premier  
PO Box 9041, Stn Prov Govt  
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The Honourable Minister Steve Thomson  
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Phone: 250-387-6240  
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The Honourable Mary Polak,  
Minister of Environment,  
PO Box 9339 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria BC  
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**Email:** [ENV.Minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:ENV.Minister@gov.bc.ca)

cc:  
NDP FLNR Critic and Harry Baines  
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Green Party Leader Andrew Weaver  
[andrew.weaver.mla@leg.bc.ca](mailto:andrew.weaver.mla@leg.bc.ca)

*"The real responsibility resides  
with those who remain silent;  
they are allowing others to prevail".*

*-Martin Luther King*



**Wolf Awareness**  
Research • Education • Conservation

#### **In Alberta**

The Honourable Rachel Notley, Premier  
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The Honourable Shannon Phillips  
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Deputy Minister Bill Werry  
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**Sue Cotterill**, Section Head  
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Alberta Environment and Parks  
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