

STRYCHNINE is a neurotoxin being used by the Alberta government as part of the wolf kill program under the guise of caribou recovery. Laced bait stations are placed within caribou ranges to attract wolves. It is also available in a 2% liquid form that can be purchased for use on gophers, ground squirrels and other small animals. Strychnine is a central nervous system stimulant that is toxic to ALL wildlife. It causes extremely painful muscular convulsions with asphyxiation being the final cause of death. There is **no antidote to strychnine** poisoning.

Strychnine was first used in Canada in 1928. However, according to Pesticide Management Regulation Agency records it was first registered for use in Alberta in 1987 for the control of wolves, coyotes and black bears.

Read this [paper by Dr. Gilbert Proulx](#) and other experts titled *Why poisoning wolves with strychnine is unacceptable in experimental studies and conservation programs*, stating;

"the use of strychnine in scientific investigations is unethical according to contemporary animal care guidelines, and adversely affects sympatric predators and scavengers. Accordingly, we believe that the use of strychnine poisoning in wildlife conservation should be prohibited and condemned by the scientific community, governments, and conservation groups" (Proulx et al. 2015).

The most recent government approval of Strychnine use in Alberta occurred in 2012, during which time registration was approved and renewed. **Strychnine use is currently up for renewal in Alberta.**

Strychnine is a bitter, odorless, crystalline and highly toxic powder. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rates strychnine as a Category 1 toxicant, the most acute class (EPA 1996). Strychnine is very toxic to humans and many other animals. ([LD50](#) = 16 mg/kg in humans, 1–2 mg/kg orally in rats and mice (INCHEM: Chemical Safety Information from Intergovernmental Organizations: Strychnine. <http://www.inchem.org/documents/pims/chemical/pim507.htm> Accessed May 31, 2017)

In terms of strychnine use targeting wolves in regions with declining caribou, Strychnine does not discriminate and kills every species within an ecosystem; and thus

cannot be considered as an acceptable tool for conservation. As the ends do not justify the means, the use of such a poison in a conservation campaign aimed at caribou recovery is hypocritical and ludicrous. Not only are the methods of death inhumane to all species that encounter the poison, but there is no evidence to indicate that the province's wolf kill program has significantly increased caribou populations, despite killing more than 800 wolves since 2005.

In addition to causing the excruciating pain, suffering and death to 154 wolves over a seven year period in the Little Smoky woodland caribou (*Rangifer tarandus caribou*) range, below is a list (incomplete) of non-target species killed from Strychnine-laced baits during 5709 bait-site days between 2005 - 2012¹:

Coyotes = 36
Ravens = 91
Foxes = 31
Fisher = 2
Weasel = 2
Lynx = 3
Marten = 4

Note that strychnine was not used 2009 – 2010.

Similar collateral damage has been documented where Strychnine has been used at Livestock Damage Sites in Alberta. Between 2000 and 2012, the following wildlife kills were recorded² (incomplete list):

Wolf =183
Coyote = 42
Raven = 99
Magpie = 45
Eagle = 3
Fox = 7

¹ Dave Hervieux, Mark Hebblewhite, Dave Stepnisky, Michelle Bacon, and Stan Boutin. (2015). **Managing wolves (*Canis lupus*) to recover threatened woodland caribou (*Rangifer tarandus caribou*) in Alberta.** Canadian Journal of Zoology. **92**:1029 - 1037 – supplementary data
<http://www.nrcresearchpress.com/doi/suppl/10.1139/cjz-2014-0142>

² Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development Use of Toxicants for Wildlife Management – Internal document. Report updated July 6, 2012.

“The primary health concern with any strychnine formulation is its acute toxicity to humans” (PMRA 2005.) It is currently registered as a rodenticide/predacide. Strychnine is soluble in water, persistent in soil, and has the potential for bioaccumulation (PACR2005-08.)

It should be noted that in Alberta, livestock *producers have access to 2% liquid strychnine concentrate, thereby increasing the opportunity for off-label use and stockpiling.*³

The US Department of Agriculture has documented the strychnine-caused death of the following endangered species: Attwaters’ greater prairie chickens, burrowing owls, whooping cranes, bald eagles, peregrine falcons, northern aplomado falcons, jagurundi, ocelots and wolves.⁴

³ COSEWIC Assessment and Status Report on the Swift Fox *Vulpes velox* in Canada. 2009

⁴ U.S. Department of Agriculture – Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service – Animal Damage Control. 1994. Final Environmental Impact Statement.