

HOWLINGS



Through education, dispelling the myths.

New Initiative through Partnership Flagship Project

Spring edition 2016

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North-Eastern Alberta Wolf & Coyote Bounty
Research & Education Project:

Fostering Coexistence to Maintain Ecological Integrity

In Alberta, bounties to control wolves and coyotes have been implemented since 2007 under the pretense of minimizing livestock depredation. In the last 5 years, more than 1,400 wolves and 25,000 coyotes have been killed by bounty hunters.

Although bounties are known to be an ineffective management practice, they are maintained by some Alberta municipalities under the pretense of reducing livestock depredation by wolves and coyotes. However, there are no data ascertaining such claims, and the persistence of bounties in rural regions is anecdotal and largely based upon misperceptions, small scale surveys and unscientific extrapolations rather than science - based evidence or facts.

This project aims to assess the importance of livestock in the diet of wolves and coyotes in areas where small farms and ranches abut upon or are near wilderness areas in northeast Alberta, and provide education to both public and producers about non-lethal methods for preventing conflicts and deterring natural predators, (i.e. methods of co-existence) as well as the ecological values of wolves and coyotes.

We will collect and analyze scats at different times of the year, over 2 years, and discuss the current status of livestock losses and husbandry methods with resident farmers and ranchers. This study is vital to properly understand and manage human-wildlife-predator conflicts in areas where farms are interspersed with wilderness areas.

This project offers a unique approach to livestock-predator conflicts because it is solution oriented and provides "boots on the ground" education about coexistence through one on one dialogue, public workshops and presentations, and the ability for evidence-based decision making for future best management practices.

Project partners involved in this initiative include:

Lead researcher who designed the study, Wildlife Biologist Dr. Gilbert Proulx, Director of Science at [Alpha Wildlife Research & Management Ltd.](#);

Certified predator-friendly rancher Louise Liebenberg, co-owner of [Grazerie Farms](#), providing consultation and presentations on non-lethal options, and

[Coyote Watch Canada](#), a Federal, Not-For-Profit, community-based wildlife organization, which advocates positive wildlife experiences through education, research, mediation, intervention, and conflict resolution.

And of course, [Wolf Awareness](#), bringing this project forward with the help of supporters like you! The priority here is helping people to learn about responsible methods of conflict prevention instead of practicing reactionary and ineffective killing programs.

This is a very important project, and we need funding to initiate it this spring!



Image courtesy Peter A Dettling



Image courtesy Sadie Parr



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www.WolfAwarenessInc.org

Stop Killing Wolves! For the Love of Dog!

By Wolf Awareness Executive Director Sadie Parr, article will appear in an upcoming issue of *PetsMagazine*.

Anyone who shares their life with a dog knows that these animals experience a wide range of emotions, thoughts and sensations that include love, suffering, happiness, fear, joy and pain. With the help of animal welfare organizations such as the SPCA, municipalities across the country have established basic bylaws against cruelty to domestic animals and the vast majority of public are strongly against unjust practices such as puppy mills. There are now fines for people who leave their dog in a hot vehicle, and rightfully so. There are even heated debates surrounding the use of electric shock collars when training dogs.

World-renowned large carnivore expert Dr. Paul Paquet has described dogs as "the wolf in your living room". Genetically, dogs are grey wolves, save for a difference of about 0.2% mitochondrial DNA. Dogs and wolves are extremely close relatives. Many biologists disagree with Western Canada's ruthless massacring of wolves, ancestor to all dogs and one of Nature's greatest achievements. Why do we silently condone this harmful mismanagement?

Wildlife management policies in British Columbia and Alberta treat wolves like vermin. Allowable killing seasons are long (sometimes year-round), reporting of kills is often not mandatory, and killing methods such as bait stations are highly questioned for their morality. Current actions also include shooting wolves from an aircraft after chasing them down, strangling wolves to death using neck snares, and allowing the killing of pups and/or nursing mothers. In Alberta wolves (and coyotes) are subject to slow and excruciating death through the extremely dangerous poisons Strychnine and Compound 1080.

It is true that both Alberta and BC governments have a long history of brutality towards wild canids. Yet it is beyond time that we stop condoning these massacres in the name of wildlife "management". There is more than irony involved when comparing current wolf management policies to domestic animal cruelty bylaws and accepted societal actions – clearly, there is hypocrisy.

In 2011 BC faced a moral blow when learning of the execution-style killing of 100 sled dogs in Whistler. All of Canada felt sickened with the event. Many asked the questions: What kind of person would do that? Who could sanction the cruelty these animals faced? Who could murder them? These are important questions for every level of society. Indeed, even former BC Premier Gordon Campbell spoke of the Whistler occurrence as being tragic and disturbing.

Most dog-lovers know that their trusted companions are the living descendents of wild wolves, *Canis lupus*. It is often traits that have been inherited from wolves that we love the most in our canine friends; playfulness, loyalty, strong social bonding, protection, assistance in hunting, empathy, and more. Not including mongrels, mixes, or crosses, there are around four hundred recognized pure breeds of dogs that currently exist and they all have one common ancestor: the wolf.



While dogs are defended vehemently each time they mistakenly step into a baited trap, a local resident can bait, trap or shoot a wolf nearly every single day of the year in Alberta or BC. Many wolves and coyotes are killed and piled in high stacks during killing contests, legal events that wildlife authorities excuse and overlook. Although nearly one thousand wolves are killed in each province annually through hunting and trapping, no one claims to eat wolves. Many areas have no restrictions, or limits, on the number of wolves allowed to be killed. In Alberta, wolves are also subjected to prolonged and widespread suffering before death when they ingest either Strychnine or Compound 1080, reckless poisons that have no place on a natural landscape and can bring suffering and death to everything sharing a food chain. They are also wrongly killed for financial incentives in areas of Alberta hosting bounty programs, although this is known to be an ineffective management practice.

Animal behaviourist Dr. Marc Bekoff often asks people to pose the following question when considering the ethics behind an action:

"Would you do it to your dog?"

Many people often wonder why he asks this questions or squirm when he does, and in most cases, the answer to this question provides a strong moral compass. If you won't do it to your dog, why do you allow it to be done to other sentient beings? Why do we spend millions of dollars on puppy food and yet subject the wolves in the wild remnants of these provinces to a bloodbath? Haven't we deceived our children long enough?

The following questions arise; *Will enough of us speak up to stop the suffering? Will we put an end to reactionary and ineffective killing programs? Will Wildlife Management stop ignoring contemporary science in regards of wolf social dynamics; ecological roles; habitat requirements; and conflict prevention. Will we stop practicing wolf kill programs and start preserving intact families of wolves. Ultimately: Will we allow wolves to be wolves?*

Why not show the wolf in your living room how much you appreciate and respect their social nature, fascinating characteristics and wild ancestry. Wild wolves need all the help they can get from the guardians of their domestic canid-cousins. #NoWolfCull



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Eastern Wolf Update



Image courtesy of Gustav

The Committee on the Status of Species at Risk in Ontario has submitted their report to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry regarding the review of eastern wolves' at-risk status. While the contents of this report remain confidential, the Ministry now has less than 90 days to amend the legal status of species part of this review. Given the estimated population size of less than 500 animals across their range, the report likely recommends more protection for the eastern wolf population. Should the at-risk status be increased to *Threatened* or *Endangered*, improved protection should include a significant expansion of the no-harvest buffer around Algonquin Provincial Park. The harvest ban re-established natural social order and eliminated human-caused mortality for this rare species.

At the federal level, the 2015 recommendation to increase the wolf's status to *Threatened* is in extended consultation until October 4th 2016. Stay tuned to learn how you can submit your comments and demand more stringent protection for Canada's rarest wolf.

This past winter, Ontario put forward a proposal to change hunting regulations, making it easier to kill both wolves and coyotes by proposing to remove the requirement to hunt with a species specific tag for either wild canid. A suggestion to remove limits on the number of coyotes allowed to be killed as also included. These suggestions were put forward under the guise of increasing dwindling moose populations. Wolf Awareness was not the only group to strongly oppose these suggested changes, which would put politics in the place of responsible ecosystem-based wildlife management. Working with other conservation and animal welfare NGO's, Wolf Awareness helped ensure that people were aware of the brief comment period, read media coverage [HERE](#).

If moose are in decline, there are better ways to promote their recovery. Increasing the number of wolves and coyotes killed will not address very real issues such as poaching, climate change, loss of thermal cover and habitat, etc. It is beyond time that ecosystems be managed holistically and we step away from a species-specific approach. This type of tinkering has only lead to unbalance in the past.

Join our Wolf Conservation Team!

Play an active role in wolf research & conservation efforts. *Follow My Paw Prints* © Sponsors receive an update about one of our research projects and the wolves involved, and a wolf "photo from the field". A single sponsorship is \$40, group/class sponsorships are \$50 and corporate sponsorships are \$100.

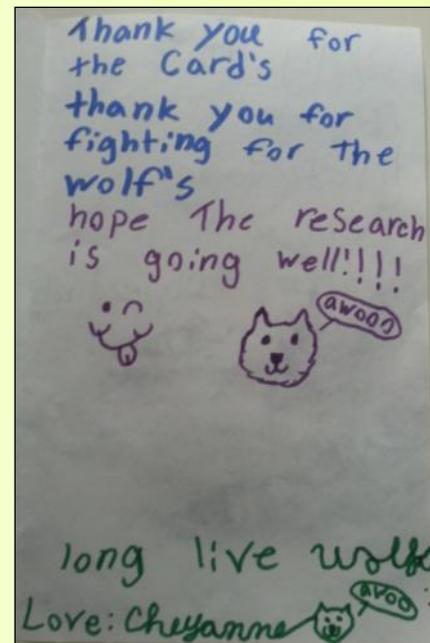
All sponsors will receive a tax receipt and a certificate recognizing their important contribution.

UPCOMING EVENT:

On April 1st, Wolf Awareness Executive Director Sadie Parr will be presenting about wolves at the Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society AGM, in Summerland BC. She is thrilled to have this opportunity to discuss wolf biology, behaviour, and conservation concerns in a part of the province where wolves are newly returning to the landscape following previous eradication.

Wolf Awareness would like to thank the [Valhalla Wilderness Society](#) for coordinating this event with the Parks Society, where Valhalla Director Craig Pettitt will be presenting about the organization's well-established [Selkirk Mountain Caribou Park Proposal](#).

Would you like to host presentation?
Contact : wolfawareness@gmail.com



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FOCUS ON BANNING KILLING SNARES



Article by Dwight Rodtka, Retired Predator Control Specialist [38 yr] Alberta Agriculture

A snare is just a simple noose of some material and is one of the oldest and deadliest devices we use to capture animals, birds, and fish. After hundreds of years their design is still archaic and causes a lengthy torturous death. They are cheap, easy to use, and very effective, thus their popularity.

Death is supposed to be caused by strangulation and a stoppage of blood flow to and from the brain. Under field conditions this can take anywhere from several minutes to days or longer because of the high variability of snare positioning on the body, a malfunctioning lock, weather conditions, or the gait of the animal. Recent attempts at improving their design such as spring locks, break aways, diversion wires, and "power snares" are still susceptible to frequent malfunction. In real life death is often caused by dehydration, exhaustion, or freezing. Despite being incredibly inhumane there is no mandatory check time required by regulation in Alberta, yet with certified "humane traps" there is a 24 -48 check time.

Animals often chew off snares from their anchor and escape to an exceptionally long and painful death with the snare remnant cutting deeper and deeper every day. I had to shoot a mature cougar that had been snared around the flanks and broke loose. The snare had cut thru hide and flesh over time and it's intestines were spilling out on the ground. It's hard to imagine a more hideous death. A trapper was complaining this winter that 5 of 14 wolves he snared chewed out.

Snares are non selective, meaning they catch whatever they are exposed to. With trappers setting 50 - 200 snares in a radius around a bait pile of carcasses and on game trails they create a virtual "wall of death" almost impossible for anything to escape. Grizzlies, cougars, moose, deer, elk, wild horses, eagles, and peoples pets are all caught. Their best hope is to be strangled slowly rather than held for days before they die. There are no regulations governing where snares can be set or requirement for warning signs and except for some animals on quota [and grizzlies] there is no regulation requiring these non targets to be reported; assuming anyone would report.

Today, snaring is largely recreational driven by bounties and higher prices for coyote pelts. There are more humane alternatives and therefore snares are no longer acceptable and should be phased out as soon as possible and in the interim be on a 24 hour mandatory check.

National Media Coverage <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/alberta/use-of-snares-in-western-canadian-wolf-culls-fuels-ethicaldebate/article29189350/>

HAVE YOU SIGNED AND SHARED THIS CALL TO HELP ALBERTA'S WOLVES ?

The [Raincoast Conservation Foundation](#) and [Wolf Awareness](#) are asking for an **IMMEDIATE HALT TO LETHAL WOLF "control" IN ALBERTA.**

Click above to sign.

5 Reasons to Ban Neck Killing Snares



1. Killing snares are **not required to meet International Animal Humane Trapping Standards**

2. Snares are **open to abuse** as they are **inexpensive, easy** to make, and **require little effort** to set

3. Due to the thick muscled neck anatomy of wolves, killing snares cause **prolonged and excruciating suffering**



4. The **scientific community** is making a strong case about the **non-selectivity** and **in humaneness** of killing snares, along with continued concern from **animal welfare advocates**

5. **In Europe**, neck snares are either banned outright or not used in ten Member States (Austria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Luxembourg and Malta). Switzerland also has a complete ban on the use of snares.



Read this Scientific Paper: [Humaneness and Selectivity of Killing Neck Snares Used to Capture Canids in Canada: A Review](#) by Dr. Gilbert Proulx and other wildlife experts, published in the *Canadian Journal of Wildlife Biology and Management* (2015: Vol 4, No 1).



RUNNING FOR THEIR LIVES!



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Teaching wolves and promoting land health will reduce livestock losses.

Forested land, whether public or private, is prime habitat for wolves, other natural predators, and ungulates: the original inhabitants. Where predators and livestock overlap, there will always be losses. As wildlife and nature are part of a **public trust**, one presumes that biodiversity and ecosystem health are a government priority. Another priority should also be helping farmers with prevention instead of reactionary and ineffective killing programs. The wide message is that non-lethal is as good for farmers as it is for the wolves, and people too, since we depend on a healthy environment.

A growing number of farmers using predator deterrents and/or responsible animal husbandry are becoming able to successfully prevent depredation. Recognizing and understanding cycles of heightened prey vulnerability and/or predator energy demands can help ensure that non-lethal predator deterrents such as range-riders or fladry are used **efficiently and effectively in the long-term**.

Several methods that help prevent conflicts, such as rotational grazing, herd size, and timing of calving seasons also benefit overall heard health and land health by mimicking the behaviour and patterns of natural prey, as described in reports published by Keystone Conservation, an American organization with over two decades of proven success with predator coexistence and rangeland stewardship in the Northern Rocky Mountains and Montana.

Society has come to seek products that are certified as "Farm Friendly" by the SPCA to ensure that animal welfare is prioritized when sourcing meat, eggs and dairy. This type of consumer choice has helped protect marine ecosystems through certification such as "dolphin-friendly tuna" and "ocean-wise salmon", but Canadian food stores have yet to offer beef or lamb that is certified as "predator-friendly". Fortunately, there are several individual livestock producers across Canada who choose to actively prevent conflicts from occurring using non-lethal methods. Unfortunately, there currently exists no way for consumers to choose these products nor support the producers who choose to coexist with wildlife.

Long before sophisticated science and the economic valuing of ecosystem services, Aldo Leopold proposed his infamous land ethic: "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise". We are **ethically** and morally obligated to take care of all of nature's resources whether this is convenient to our schedule or not. If we can embrace this principle as a guide, perhaps we can help livestock and predator and prey to coexist into the future. If we continue to ignore this principle, we had better get ready for the intense and unpredictable effects of climate change - effects that will radically outstrip concerns about livestock depredation and force us to reconsider our very idea of living close to the land.

Wolf Awareness stands behind the notion of that it is better to teach wolves to stay away from livestock than to remove them if the ultimate goal is to reduce depredation events. Rather than free up habitat for new, unpredictable wolves, it is logical that we teach individual wolves to rely on wild prey, and let them pass those skills and knowledge down to their offspring.



Photo courtesy of Peter A. Dettling

HOWLINGS

NEW! ALBERTA WOLF MANAGEMENT PLAN

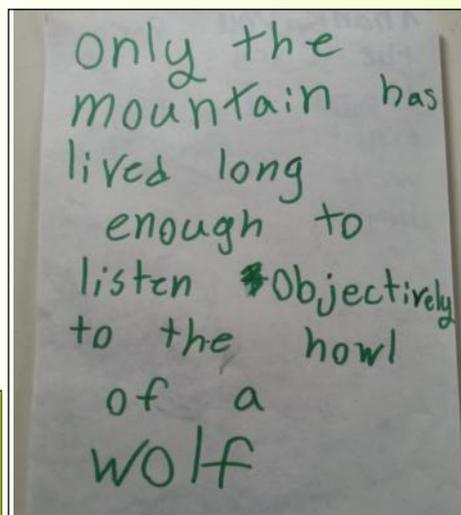
During 2016, the province of Alberta is reviewing and revising its Management and Conservation Plan for Grey Wolves. The proposed plan update is said to be completed by government staff by the end of this fiscal year, at which time there will be a public comment period.

We encourage you to submit your comments NOW. By outlining the many ways that current practices are failing wolves and ecosystems in Alberta, we can provide a clear message that we expect future management to be based on sound science, ethics and ecology that would provide wolves with a **Life Worth Living**.

We have provided a template letter [HERE](#)



This quote was taken from Aldo Leopold's collection of essays in A Sand County Almanac, and shared with Wolf Awareness by the Willoughby family.
Thank you Chayenne and Shona for caring for wolves!



Wolf Awareness WISHlist!
Gas cards for transportation costs (research, education, outreach).

Wolf Awareness would like to offer a HOWLING THANKS

to the first three sponsors who have stepped up to support the North-Eastern Alberta Wolf & Coyote Bounty Research & Education Project:

Fostering Coexistence to Maintain Ecological Integrity.



This MAY, Calgary-based Community Natural Foods has chosen to support our Wild Canid Coexistence Project through their Change for the Earth program. Please help them help us: shop there this MAY with a reusable bag and bag refunds will help support our project.



For the next year, LUSH Fresh Handmade Cosmetics will be supporting this project through their incredible Charity Pot Initiative.



De Voshaar Outdoor & Education is donating a portion of each new inscription to the group.

Wolf Awareness Inc. was established in 1987 as a non-profit, charitable foundation (Canada Revenue Agency Charitable no. 119301851 RR001) whose primary goal is to foster an awareness and appreciation of wolf ecology and conservation. We achieve our mission through the development and implementation of educational programs and by supporting scientific wolf research. WAI functions as a critical link between scientists and the public, using the results of scientific research as a knowledge base for educational and public outreach programs.



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