

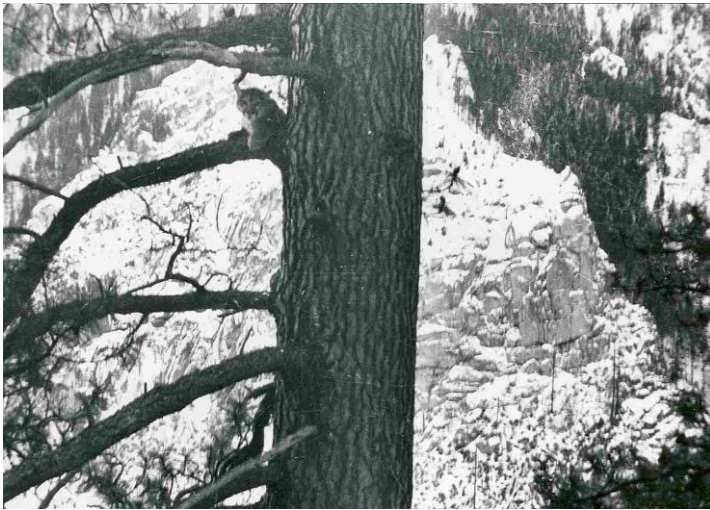
The Outdoorsman

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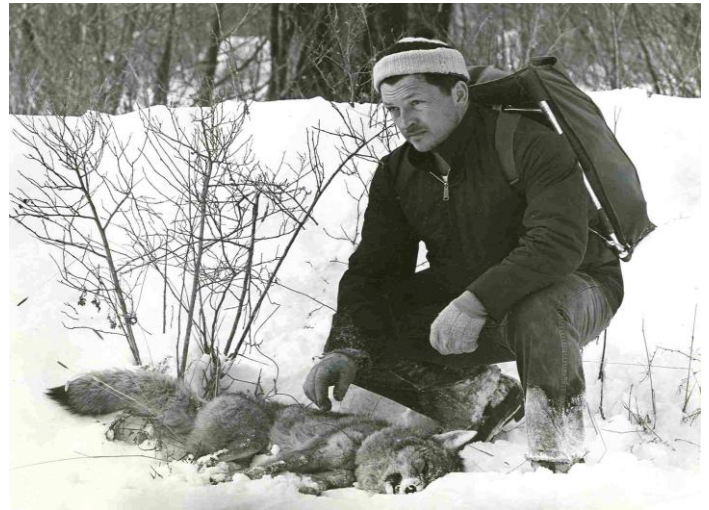
June 2004

Controlling Predators

by George Dovel



Hunting cougar in rugged terrain like the Frank Church Wilderness is expensive and requires considerable stamina.



The low price of coyote pelts, coupled with the high incidence of mange in some areas, offers little incentive to trap or snare them.

Few people are aware of the many functions performed by federal Wildlife Services, but most know that it controls coyotes committing depredations on livestock in the western states. From FY 1996-2002, WS killed an average of 5,255 coyotes in Idaho each year, with 66 percent of those shot from the air. The cost per coyote varied by state but it generally exceeded \$100.

The Congressional Committee on USDA Appropriations in FY 2001 directed the General Accounting Office to conduct an investigation into (1) the nature and severity of threats posed by wildlife, (2) what WS has done to reduce those threats, (3) WS analysis of costs-to-benefits, and (4) non-lethal predator control.

The GOA interviewed many government and private individuals and groups, including Defenders of Wildlife and the Humane Society of the United States. It concluded that wildlife damage from all sources amounts to several billion dollars annually and WS programs are both efficient and cost effective.

It also found that compliance with NEPA, filing Environmental Impact Statements and Environmental Assessments to satisfy environmental opposition have significantly increased the cost of assistance programs.

In 2001, predators killed a reported 12,000 sheep and lambs in Idaho *after* WS reduced the percentage of predator losses from 4.5% to 1.3% for adults and from 17% to 4.4% for lambs. This represented a 3:1 direct benefit-cost ratio and a multiplier benefit of 17:1. In Idaho, cooperators pay more than one-third of the costs.

GOA reported that killing predators is often crucial to the survival of game species. It cited 2001 Utah studies where coyote control increased fawn survival from nine percent to 42 percent and red fox control decreased adult sage grouse mortality from 82 percent to only 33 percent.

Utah biologists provided the following cost-benefit analysis on three mule deer herds using WS costs for controlling coyotes and the \$300 civil value assigned to each mule deer:

Henry Mountains – 1997-1998 aerial and ground removal of coyotes cost \$15,841 but produced 600 extra surviving mule deer worth \$180,000. Net gain \$164,159.

Bookcliffs – cost \$11,100 but produced 667 extra animals worth \$200,100. Net gain \$189,000.

Pahvant – three years cost \$27,480 but produced 2,073 extra deer worth \$621,900. Net gain \$594,420.

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In 1998 WS programs in the Western Region spent \$2,936,068 (federal and cooperative combined) to achieve benefits that ranged between \$5,872,136 and \$66,355,137.

GOA concluded that the arguments made by Defenders of Wildlife and HSUS (that WS predator control failed to target specific predators) were invalid. It also determined that none of the numerous non-lethal methods of predator control have achieved success.

Why Not Let WS Solve the Problem?

It is generally agreed that predation on livestock increases whenever wild prey species decline so why not just hire WS to control specific predators of wild game in situations where recruitment indicates a predator pit? The answer involves a budget that is limited and a cost that is still higher than necessary.

Livestock owners depend on the reliable history of WS working with them to solve their specific problems. Hunters and game managers have a better option that is substantially cheaper, and complements the WS control program.

Bounties were used effectively in every state to reduce a variety of predators and rebuild game herds to the highest level in the 20th century. F&G controlled lions and predatory birds with bounties from the 1920s through the early 1950s and paid up to 36 full time trappers to control coyotes and bobcats, along with the federal trappers.

Bounties Cheaper-More Efficient

In 1943-44 IDFG compared the relatively high cost of state and cooperative federal trappers with the lower cost of bounty predator control in other states and Canada. It was paying three times as much per coyote killed so it began a two-year experiment.

In 1945 IDFG paid salaried trappers \$14,000 to kill 802 coyotes and paid bounty trappers \$19,713 to kill 4,243 coyotes. The salaried trappers' coyotes cost IDFG \$17.46 each but the bountied coyotes cost only \$4.65 each.

In 1946 IDFG established the coyote bounty at \$3.00 and bounty trappers turned in 7,293 coyotes. Cost of the 600 coyotes taken by salaried trappers averaged \$30 per coyote – ten times as much.

It was rumored, but never verified, that a few pelts had been turned in from neighboring states but, if true, the amount was negligible and the practice preventable.

Both the coyote bounty and salaried trappers were replaced in the next biennium due to the federal 1080 program. That poison, manufactured in Pocatello, was the most effective coyote killer ever used but its use was soon limited and finally banned for predator control on federal lands by presidential order.

Although bounty systems are rarely selective enough to target individual predators, including those that are especially trap-wise or gun-shy, they accomplish the goal of temporarily reducing excessive predator numbers to allow an unhealthy prey population to restore itself.

Coyote bounties provide an extra incentive for sport hunters and trappers to get outdoors and help restore healthy game populations, and give professional trappers a \$20 or so subsidy to overcome low pelt prices. There are countless examples of the successful use of bounties to reduce populations of other predators ranging from wolves to pikeminnows (formerly squawfish).

Rattlesnake Bounties

Concern for public safety and the desire to minimize injuries to livestock and pets prompted several eastern states, and counties within those states, to offer a bounty on the timber rattlesnake. In Wisconsin, bounty records show a 70-80% decline over a seven-year period.

In Crawford County the number of rattlesnake bounties collected dropped from more than 10,000 in 1965 to 2,000 in 1973. In one Minnesota county, bounties paid for rattlers declined from 4,955 in 1980 to 191 in 1987.

Despite IDFG biologists' unreasonable opposition to bounties, they remain the most effective biological tool to correct predator-prey imbalance when increased seasons and bag limits fail to accomplish that goal. Recent successes in Utah and Wyoming cannot be ignored.

Wolf Delisting Plans

By George Dovel

A 1995 scientific article by North America's premiere wolf expert, L. David Mech, entitled, "The Challenge and Opportunity of Recovering Wolf Populations," outlines the history of wolves being relegated to wilderness in North America, and to the least developed parts of the rest of the world.

Mech asserted that, prior to the development of firearms, poisons and traps, wolves were distributed throughout the northern hemisphere in any area where large ungulates were found. Reintroduced wolves that had been considered wilderness animals now occupy a variety of habitats in the U.S. and in European countries.

In Minnesota one radio collared wolf came out of the northern forests where it was raised, and spent several weeks roaming the farm lands 18 miles south of the center of St. Paul. In Italy, Spain and Portugal, where much of the wolves' food is garbage, they inhabit the forests during the day and come into rural villages to scavenge at night.

In Spain wolves live like coyotes in wheat and sunflower fields where human densities are as high as 500 per square mile. In Idaho at least one wolf pack has already moved into desert farmland but the wolves were only detected by the dead cattle they killed.

Expanding wolf packs are expensive

Mech pointed out that from 1988-1993 Minnesota wolves expanded by only 15 percent but the number killed annually by Wildlife Services (WS) because of increased livestock depredation jumped from 59 to 139. From fiscal

year 1996 through FY 2002, the number of Minnesota wolves killed annually by WS has averaged 154.

None of the wolves were killed from aircraft and steel leghold traps and snares accounted for all of the 152 Minnesota wolves killed in FY 2002. Yet the cost totaled \$262,657, an average of \$1,728 per wolf.

Mech pointed out that neither non-lethal methods of control nor relocation of wolves work. Despite all of the optimistic reports, he said that guard dogs are not economical and only somewhat effective in small flocks (bands) of sheep.

Mech said that translocated wolves normally either return to the same area or commit similar depredations in their new location. He insists lethal control remains the only means of curbing wolf damage to livestock and pets.

DOW "Reimbursement"

The highly publicized program by Defenders of Wildlife (DOW) to compensate ranchers for confirmed livestock losses was simply bait used to get ranchers to accept living with wolves until wolf numbers increased. The necessity for discovering a carcass and having WS specialists examine it within 24 hours effectively prevents compensation in most cases.

Also, a joint cooperative study, involving the University of Idaho, Wildlife Services and the Nez Perce Tribe, on the impacts of wolf predation to cattle on summer grazing allotments in Lemhi County provided disturbing conclusions. The study indicated that for every calf killed by wolves and found by the rancher, as many as 5.7 additional wolf kills may have occurred without ever being detected.

Who Will Compensate?

DOW is already renegeing on its commitment to compensate all ranchers for livestock losses by claiming that many substandard federal ranges allow cattle and sheep producers to exist where they could not otherwise make a profit. It is actively pursuing removal of some historical grazing allotments with FS and BLM and advising some ranchers they will not be compensated.

Mech's article points out that as wolf numbers continue to increase and expand their territory to include all rural farming and ranching areas, both environmental groups and government agencies are reluctant to pay for increasing losses to livestock. Increased killing of livestock and pets also increases public resistance to wolves and he predicted a return to the pre-wolf recovery era unless protection of wolves in agricultural/residential areas is removed when they are delisted.

Wolf Management Zoning

Mech said that since some populations of wolves are flourishing in locations where they are not causing livestock damage, these areas should be zoned as protected areas. If wolf killing is allowed in the rest of the territory, Mech theorized that those moving through the unprotected areas at night would stand a reasonable chance of survival.

His analysis pointed out that an annual public take of 1200-1500 wolves in Alaska brings little or no protest. But the state's control of 150 wolves to increase big game herds brought vehement protests and legal action.

He suggested that allowing hunters, pet owners and livestock owners to kill wolves anywhere outside of the Protected Wolf Zones will be far cheaper and far more acceptable to the public than any other delisting proposal. He said that wolves could be zoned out of entire states or zoned into only large national parks or nature preserves.

Idaho and Montana Plans

Mech's wolf zone proposal has been generally followed in the recent re-colonization of wolves in Wisconsin and Michigan. However the state wolf plans submitted by Idaho and Montana require delisted wolves to be protected on all public and private property in each state, subject only to the unlikely event of witnessing a probable wolf attack.

Unless the special predator classification is restored in Idaho's plan, wolf killing, other than in defense of imminent threat to life or property, will be limited to restricted seasons, areas and bag limits. In an interview published in the June 20, 2004 edition of The Idaho Statesman, IDFG Large Carnivore Coordinator Steve Nadeau ignored the documented loss of 57 percent of the northern Yellowstone elk herd since wolves were introduced there.

He blamed the declining elk reported by Idaho outdoorsmen in areas where wolves are thick on the theory that wolves have trained the elk not to reveal their presence. Nadeau ignored the significant reduction in deer and elk on snow covered winter range and said "more research is needed before the agency (IDFG) can justify killing wolves to help elk."

Wyoming Wolf Plan

Despite the criticism of Wyoming's Wolf Plan by both Idaho and Montana, it is the only plan based on best available science and facts. Ten of 11 wolf biologists endorsed the Plan which exactly follows the guidelines established by Mech in his Wolf Zoning proposal.

It sets aside 2,534,800 acres of National Park lands where wolves will be totally protected and 2,043,520 acres of wilderness areas where wolves will be classified as trophy animals with regulated take. In the rest of the state, wolves will initially be managed as a predator *unless the number of packs there fall below seven*. In that event the predator classification will be eliminated in the wolf Data Analysis Unit which will be enlarged, if necessary.

The written FWS rejection of the Wyoming Plan was based solely on potential objections from extremist groups and from Ed Bangs who claimed "predatory animal status will make the delisting process more contentious, expensive and filled with harmful rhetoric." Wyoming filed a complaint against the Interior Department and FWS on April 22, 2004 to force FWS to accept the plan.

Degree of Danger

by George Dovel

During the years I lived in the Idaho Primitive Area I experienced five encounters with eight mountain lions that were not pursued by dogs or caught in a trap. Although all but one of them moved out of sight in typical wild feline fashion, none displayed any fear of me or of others with me.

In that period, encountering even one Idaho lion in a lifetime was considered extremely rare. Now, after 33 years of protection as a big game animal with strict limits on female lion harvest, lion encounters are no longer considered newsworthy in the rural county where I live.



Author with bobcat and mountain lion trapped by Jess Taylor in the Idaho Primitive area before lions were given big game status.

Following 1992-93 winter big game losses, Boise County's deer population reached record lows. Lone yearling lions that could not find a deer to kill and were incapable of killing adult elk, began killing smaller animals, including domestic livestock and pets. Cougar sightings became much more common throughout the state.

Metropolitan Lions

From September 2003 through April of this year, *The Idaho Statesman* published a number of news items concerning two dozen reported sightings of lions within the Boise city limits. Carriers refused to hand deliver newspapers to homes in a subdivision and some parents were forced to drive their children to school for fear they might be attacked waiting for the school bus.

The *Statesman* parroted IDFG officials' claim that the encounters were because "we live on land that was their habitat" and estimated there are probably about half a dozen cougars in the Treasure Valley. "Local biologists say they're surprised we haven't had a fatal encounter with one of the big cats."

Although IDFG Director Steve Huffaker and Region 3 Wildlife Manager Jon Rachael said F&G policy is to catch and kill any lion that is not just passing through,

after multiple sightings in the same location for five months they still had not captured any lions. Each time they investigated a new sighting, the lion had already returned to cover and could not be located without dogs.

On March 5, 2003 IDFG hired a hound hunter to locate and tree a 14-month-old lion that had been hit by a vehicle on Warm Springs Avenue in Boise. Once the lion was "treed" in a culvert it was trapped there and killed, but none of the other lions were removed from the Boise area.

F&G Biologist Neil Johnson claimed the lions have always been there but said the recent killing and mauling of two bicycle riders in California caused Boiseans to begin noticing them. Experienced lion hunters disagree and point out that rapidly increasing wolf numbers in Boise County are forcing more lions to move to more densely populated areas in Ada County to get away from the wolves.

Feds Don't Confirm Wolf Reports

Back in January, *Statesman* environmental reporter Rocky Barker interviewed federal Wolf Recovery Coordinator Carter Niemeyer concerning three packs of wolves that have reportedly been seen in the Boise foothills. Despite the sightings, Niemeyer said no (depredation) complaints had been filed so FWS made no effort to confirm the wolves' existence. "We don't begin to have the man hours to follow up every report," he added.

The Statesman published editorials praising the fact that Boise has lions on the Green Belt and wolves in the foothills and denounced the 2001 Legislative request for the feds to remove wolves "by whatever means necessary." It published F&G info on living with predators which listed these dangers from the following species:

"Mountain lion - will attack humans and pets; black bears - will attack if provoked; coyote - *can* attack pets and kids *when they get used to people feeding them;*" and "wolf - *can* attack *pets.*" The transparent effort to ignore unprovoked wolf attacks on humans, especially children, reflects the hidden agenda of this agency and its supporters in the urban media.

The following information reflects extensive research and many years of personal experience with large and small predators. It is intended to replace the biased information that is currently circulated, with facts about the potential risks of failing to properly control four common predators that pose a threat to humans, livestock and pets.

Literally thousands of human encounters with these predators never reach a newspaper. Hundreds more are never recorded by wildlife biologist/statisticians and other authors, whose research efforts are necessarily limited to government agencies, the urban media and eyewitness accounts. With this in mind let's examine some facts about the history of predator/human conflicts.

Expanding Mountain Lion Populations

During the first two-thirds of the 20th century predator populations were strictly controlled throughout the lower 48 states, and mountain lions were no exception. In 1969 wildlife biologists estimated there were only 6,500 mountain lions in the entire U.S. Ten years ago, in 1994, biologists estimated the U.S. lion population had reached 31,000-50,000 and was still increasing.

When lions, wolves, coyotes and other predators had been hunted, trapped, snared and poisoned for several generations the survivors learned to avoid humans, as did their offspring. This, combined with an abundance of prey, created a scenario where attacks on humans by these predators became extremely rare.

U.S. and European wildlife biologists published reports of 52 injuries and 17 deaths resulting from mountain lion attacks in the U.S. and Canada from 1890-2001. Other more complete sources covering that same period list several hundred incidents involving 22 deaths and numerous injuries ranging from minor to serious requiring reconstructive surgery.

Regardless of which source you choose, the majority of attacks, injuries and deaths from lions in the last 114 years have occurred during just the last 14 years and the frequency of attacks continues to increase. Lions have been allowed to expand far beyond the capability of their prey, causing them to kill more livestock, domestic animals, pets and an occasional human to survive.

Not surprisingly, two-thirds of the fatal attacks were launched against children, many by young lions less than two years old. Both yearling and adult lions have attacked and seriously injured or killed both men and women, including a mother and another woman who died defending children.

\$2 million awarded to lion victim

In 1986 a lion attack on a 5-year-old California girl in a regional park resulted in a \$2 million court judgment against Orange County for not posting warnings about cougars that were known to be frequenting the area. The girl, now 23, survived but remains blind in one eye and partially paralyzed as a result of the attack.

The "innate fear of humans" attributed to large predators by IDFG and *The Idaho Statesman* is a figment of the imagination of people whose "expertise" was not gained from personal experience. Wariness, like natural camouflage, is a behavioral trait that species inherit. But fear of humans is a learned behavior, which replaces the natural curiosity displayed by wild creatures that have never been exposed to humans.

In a three-year California study completed on December 31, 2003, 15 lions in the vicinity of a state park were radio-collared and tracked to learn their daily movement. They remained concealed during the day 100 yards or so away from the trails used by people, but moved closer by afternoon.

They typically hunted along the trails from dusk until dawn, which resulted in that being declared the period when humans are most at risk from lion attacks. While that may have been accurate in the study area, a significant number of the recorded lion attacks on humans and pets actually occurred during the day.

The few lion encounters I have experienced without dogs occurred from dawn to mid afternoon. They included a small female that two of my sons and I observed killing a yearling mule deer buck on the Middle Fork of the Salmon River on January 15, 1972.



Cougar are equipped to kill deer by biting the neck and gripping until the vertebrae separate and the spinal cord is severed.

We first saw the lion crossing the corner of an open flat 100 yards beyond several deer, and disappear into a draw (ravine). The young buck headed up an open slope between us and the draw for about 10 minutes and the lion suddenly burst out of the draw running toward the deer (and us) at a high rate of speed.

The deer changed directions twice in its effort to avoid the lion and the lion instantly reacted, switching its tail like a rudder in the new direction and abruptly changing its course. We later paced the distance from the ravine to the point of impact as 109 feet and found the cat had left nine sets of tracks in the snow.

The deer was unable to avoid the charge as the cat hit it and the two slid 30 feet to a stop in the snow with the lion's teeth sunk into the base of the deer's neck. Without appearing to change its original grip the lion dragged the deer several yards and then lay down, continuing to bite.

Later, when I inserted my finger into a single canine tooth wound in the front edge of one shoulder, I found three bone fragments about ½-inch long that had broken from the vertebrae under continued pressure from the lion's jaws. My unique experience caused lion biologists to discard their theory that lions killed deer by grasping the head with their claws and breaking the neck.

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I included the foregoing incident to illustrate my opinion that it is almost impossible for a human to escape a lion's predatory charge, and that protection of the head and neck area has helped some attack victims to survive. Attacks generally result in severe damage to the head, which the lion usually grasps to drag its victim.

In 1991 an 18-year-old boy was attacked by a mountain lion while jogging during high school track practice in Idaho Springs, Colorado. The lion was found three days later still feeding on the boy.

Wounds in the boy's forearm, hands and back, and torn up brush over a large area verified the boy's struggle to defend himself until the lion finally severed a jugular vein and carotid artery. Events leading up to this attack will be discussed in the summary at the end of this article.

Bears

Black bear attacks on humans result in more injuries but fewer deaths than grizzly/brown bear attacks. Relatively few of the non-fatal attacks are reported.

Through 2001, *recorded* black bear attacks on humans averaged only 25 per year with an average of only one fatal attack every three years.

Grizzly bears are a different story. Grizzly/Brown bear attacks are responsible for the highest annual human death rate from large predators in North America.

I have observed and photographed grizzlies in Alaska, Wyoming and two Canadian Provinces, taking some chances that I later realized were foolish. I've watched them chasing cow elk in May, quickly closing the distance and dropping a pregnant cow with a single blow.



This female grizzly bawled and charged Rob Donley while he was photographing her, lunging at his feet as he climbed a tree.

Hollywood films showing a trained grizzly bear lumbering after a running human are a fantasy. Grizzlies easily outrun elk and deer, crossing streams and other obstacles without even breaking stride.

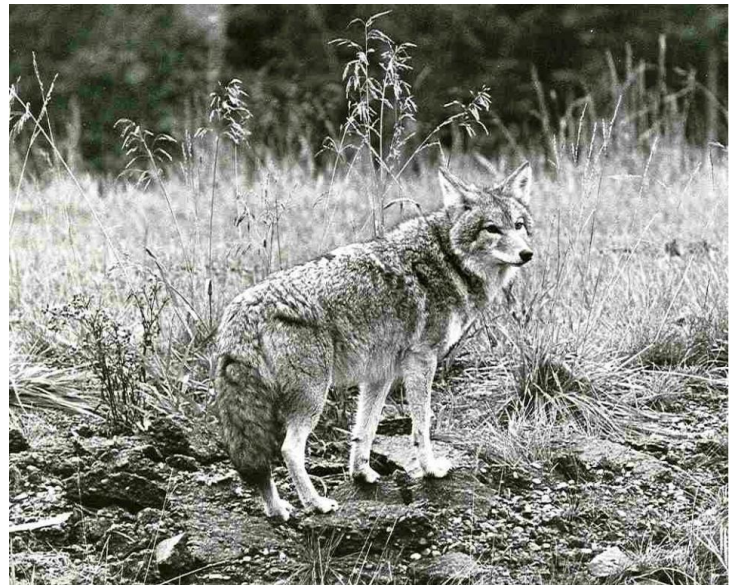
Grizzly activist Timothy Treadwell, who spent 12 summers living among grizzlies in the Katmai National Park in Alaska, promoted the theory that grizzlies are misunderstood. He published a book, appeared on David Letterman and was the consultant for a Disney movie, all of which "humanized" the bears.

He solicited donations to support his work, which he claimed protected declining Katmai grizzlies from "gall bladder" poachers. Alaska wildlife experts disagreed and said sporadic poaching isn't jeopardizing Alaska's 35,000 grizzlies. In Katmai Preserve, which supports the largest concentration of grizzlies in the world, only 13 cases of suspected poaching have been documented in the past 30 years.

Treadwell, 46, and his girlfriend, 37-year-old Amie Huguenard, were attacked and killed by a 1,000-pound Alaska grizzly last October. Most bona fide experts agree that mountain lions and grizzlies are not compatible with civilization and should be killed when they invade human settlements.

Coyotes

Coyotes have expanded their historical range to include most of the lower 48 states and Alaska. Although non-rabid predatory coyote attacks on humans result in relatively few deaths, they are currently considered a significant menace to children in urban areas from Cape Cod to California.



The coyote – a versatile predator that has expanded its historical range to include the eastern United States and Alaska.

The recent increase in the number of reported predatory coyote attacks on children in southern California is being blamed on the drought, which limits their food supply. In every incident during the past two months, parents or neighbors have heard the children's screams and have been able to beat or pry the coyote loose from its victim.

Wolf Half-truths and Lies

When two packs of wolves began attacking livestock in Montana's Madison Valley in March 2004, FWS Wolf Recovery Chief Ed Bangs received complaints from Montana's congressional delegation, the governor, ranchers and local officials. The angry response forced Bangs to order both wolf packs destroyed, yet he blamed the critics' attitude on "wolf folklore and mythology".

His comments were published in the April 4, 2003 *Bozeman Daily Chronicle*, which said "in extremely rare cases, wolves have bitten people, although most of those incidents involved rabid wolves or ones that had been fed and become accustomed to being around people. In North America, however, there are no documented cases of a healthy, wild wolf attacking people."

The article blames hatred of wolves in Europe on the fact they "occasionally" attacked *livestock* and said the "Three Little Pigs" and "Little Red Riding Hood" evolved from that hatred. False claims in the article typify the half-truths and lies that have convinced many urban dwellers to accept reintroduction of wolves on a worldwide basis.

Wolf Facts

Notwithstanding the wolf advocates' propaganda, several thousand recorded human deaths resulting from wolf attacks worldwide have been compiled and published. Many were copied from historical records covering only brief periods in time.

For example, during one three year period from June 1764 to June 1767, 210 recorded wolf attacks in the Gevauden Region of southern France resulted in 49 people wounded and 113 killed. Of those killed, at least 98 were partially consumed.

The government record keepers were familiar with attacks by rabid wolves and none of the 210 attacks fell into that category. Proof of this is that most of the dead victims were eaten and none of the survivors died from rabies.

From 1800-1824, statistics compiled from French records show that 225 victims were attacked by rabid wolves and another 295 were attacked by non-rabid wolves. But wolf attacks on humans dropped dramatically in France and other European countries during that period.

Wolf attack victims in France declined from 1,724 in the previous 100 years, to 196 in the next 175 years.

What Caused the Change?

The same two things caused the decline in wolf attacks on several continents. (1) Widespread use of firearms for protection from wolves in rural areas; and (2) massive predator control programs which resulted in wolves becoming extinct in France, Austria, Belgium, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

The same thing occurred in the United States for the exact same reasons. In most other countries wolf control programs substantially reduced wolf populations as

well as the number of wolf attacks on humans, except during major wars when wolf control was abandoned.

In Russia between 1944 and 1950, 22 children between the ages of 3 and 17 were attacked and killed by wolves in areas around Kirov. A government commission documented 80 Russians dying from wolf attacks during that period.

What Happened in Alaska

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, market hunters in Alaska killed tens of thousands of big game animals to feed a mushrooming population, including 15,000-20,000 miners living in or near Fairbanks. In 1917 a Fairbanks game warden estimated that 2,800 Dall sheep had been killed for the market during the previous four years.

Until 1925 when commercial market hunting was outlawed, the hunters scattered balls of sheep gut-fat laced with strychnine around their meat caches to kill wolves. Wolves were very scarce then and Alaska had more than one million caribou.

Between 1891 and 1902, 1,208 reindeer were brought to Alaska to provide income for the Eskimos. By 1932 that original reindeer herd had peaked at 641,000 animals and recovering wolves were killing thousands of reindeer.

In 1935, the federal government hired a specialist to shoot and trap wolves to halt the decline of reindeer and big game. Many of the Eskimo reindeer herders expressed fear of wolf attacks and allowed the wolves to slaughter and scatter the reindeer.

When Prey Declined, Attacks on Humans Increased

By 1940, there were only about 250,000 reindeer left and many of them were scattered. From 1942-45 there were four highly publicized wolf attacks on humans, three involving serious injuries and two resulting in deaths in which rabies was a factor.

In 1944 FWS in Denver, Colorado, trained Alaskan predator control agents in the use of poison to kill wolves. By then most of the reindeer were gone and the caribou herd had reached an all time low of 140,000.

About 65 percent of the caribou taken by Alaska hunters then were from the Nelchina Basin herd, which ranged between the Wrangell and Alaska Ranges. Wolves had reduced caribou recruitment to only seven calves per 100 total adults in the fall counts.

The federal government implemented a massive control effort, which included poisoning and aerial gunning. Predator agents killed more than 300 wolves in a three-year period in the Nelchina Basin and the ratio of caribou calves to adult cows and bulls jumped to 15 per 100. This allowed hunters to double their caribou harvest.

In March of 1952 the FWS predator agents moved to the arctic slope north of the Brooks Range. Seven FWS predator control agents flying out of Umiat in three light airplanes killed 161 wolves in the first three weeks. By

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May they had killed 259 wolves of which 102 were recovered for their pelts and biological information.



Wolves at a bait station. Pictured here is Dr. John Buckley, then head of the Wildlife Unit at the University of Alaska, at a poison bait station near Northway Village. After extensive predator control from 1946 to 1957, the Northway area and most other parts of interior Alaska had record moose, sheep, and caribou populations.

Following the intensive wolf control in the late 1940s and 50s, Alaska's moose, sheep, caribou and deer populations reached record highs. Wolves were increasing again but, with abundant big game, there were no recorded wolf attacks on humans.

With statehood in 1960, limited seasons were established for wolf hunting and trapping and the wolf bounty was discontinued in 1968. Alaska guides were reporting declining big game numbers again and in 1969 two wolves attacked a man near his cabin on Wien Lake

Like many back country dwellers, Alex Lamont wore a sidearm and shot the first wolf while it was biting his leg. Then he shot and killed the other wolf at close range.

The Cycle Repeats Itself

This was the first recorded wolf attack on a human in Alaska since the last big game decline in the 1940s. The ban on aerial wolf hunting followed and wolf advocates solicited funding and political support in the 'lower 48' to stop any wolf control in Alaska.

ADFG biologist Mark McNay published accounts of 43 wolf attacks or other significant encounters with humans in Alaska between 1974 and 2000. These included two dozen instances where the wolves were killed and most were checked for rabies.

The most highly publicized attack occurred at a logging camp near Icy Bay on April 26, 2000. Two boys, ages 6 and 9 were playing behind the school when a wolf chased them and attacked the younger boy, biting him severely on the back and buttocks.

Within seconds, witnesses threw rocks at the wolf and shouted but it picked up the boy and ran. It dropped the boy to get a better grip and a black Labrador retriever appeared and jumped between the wolf and the boy.

The boy's father shot the wolf and a necropsy revealed it was healthy with a normal amount of interior body fat. This incident was the subject of heated debate in the Alaska Legislature and wolf control was proposed for some rural areas to enhance public safety.

Fatal Encounters Lack Proof

When there are witnesses to a wolf attack they will normally attempt to aid the victim and prevent a fatality. When there are no witnesses, wildlife biologists do not classify it as a predatory attack by wolves.

For example, a child turned up missing one afternoon and searchers found wolf tracks and drag marks made by the child's body. Yet that was not classified as a wolf attack. In another incident, a trapper failed to show up in a settlement at an appointed time and experienced woodsmen searched in the vicinity of his cabin for several days.

They finally found a few scattered human bones and identified some shredded clothing. The large leg bones were shattered indicating that wolves, not bears, had fed on his remains, yet the cause of death might have been a bear attack, a heart attack or simply an accident.

Recent Attacks in Other Countries

Most people with some knowledge of wolves are aware of recent happenings in India when wolves carried off and ate dozens of children over a period of several months. Not so well publicized are recent attacks in other Asian countries.

In Iran in 1996, 329 people attacked and bitten by wolves received rabies treatment. In December 1997, a 4-year-old boy was seized by a wolf and eaten in Dushab village in central Iran according to newspaper accounts.

It would require far more space than is available here to list all of the documented wolf attacks in other countries during recent years. There are far fewer predatory attacks than occurred a hundred years ago but, when combined with attacks by rabid wolves, the number is still significant.

Yet worldwide wolf advocates have convinced a new generation of urban dwellers to accept reintroduced wolves in countries where they were exterminated earlier in order to protect citizens and their livestock and pets from wolf attacks.

By classifying attacks as being by wolves that are "habituated to humans", or "provoked" or by rabid wolves, wolf advocates somehow excuse the increased

frequency of wolf attacks which is tied directly to declining populations of prey species.

They lie about how wolves and humans have “peacefully coexisted for hundreds of years” and point out that we are less likely to be killed by a wolf than by a tiger in India, or a bear or a mountain lion in North America.

It is true that the *average* American’s odds of being bitten by a rattlesnake are far greater than being attacked by a wolf. Yet we cannot ignore the reality that a single wolf is a formidable predator capable of killing deer, elk, moose, buffalo and man.

Conclusions

The common denominator in all four predators discussed in this article is that they must be controlled, by killing some of them, whenever the ratio of predator to prey becomes excessive.

If biologists accept that a healthy predator-prey ratio is one mountain lion per 360 deer, and we have a statewide lion population of up to 3,000 as IDFG biologists claim, then we should have a statewide population of up to 1,080,000 deer, or other comparable wild prey.

If we only have habitat to support half that many deer then the habitat can only support half that many lions and the surplus must be harvested – not relocated. The additive effect of cougar, bear, coyote and wolf predation precludes any other course of action.

Trying to make hunters, ranchers and rural dwellers pay the penalty for IDFG’s reluctance to manage predators is counterproductive. But since we haven’t been able to accurately count predators, should we rely on biologists’ estimates? The answer is, “of course not.”

A Reliable Indicator

Although several natural forces affect prey populations, predation is the major factor that limits the number of prey species every year by limiting recruitment (the number of young that survive). If 100 female mule deer drop 160 fawns (a high percentage), about 80 of those fawns should survive to become yearlings in a normal year.

If only 40 survive under average climate and weather conditions, predators are out-of-balance with their primary prey. Limited biological studies indicated that about 25 fawns per 100 does are required each year to maintain population size *without human harvest*. Recent Utah studies indicate the breakeven figure was much higher at 35-37 fawns per 100 does in the study areas.

IDFG biologists already utilize surviving juvenile-to-adult female ratios to recommend hunting seasons. Examining these ratios for every game (prey) species including sage grouse every year, provides a reliable indicator of whether or not the species is in a predator pit.

What About Lions in the City?

On page 6, I briefly described a fatal mountain lion attack on a Colorado high school student at track practice during school hours. Examining events leading up to that attack proves it was both predictable and preventable.

In 1990, Boulder, Colorado had several reported mountain lion sightings and one significant lion attack. On June 2, a 28-year-old woman jogger encountered two lions that kept coming at her despite her efforts to scare them. She climbed a tree but the lions followed and the nearest one raked her leg with its claws attempting to dislodge her.

Bleeding, she used a learned karate kick to knock that lion out of the tree and a broken limb to stop the other lion. The cougars remained at the base of the tree until a deer showed up which they followed.

The lions should have been promptly destroyed but they were left alone, along with other lions that were frequently spotted from Boulder to Idaho Springs. In the early morning hours of January 11, 1991 a new deputy was dispatched to a lion seen at 7th and Colorado streets in Idaho Springs.

The lion was eating a freshly killed deer near the intersection and the deputy started to shoot it with his pistol but decided to let it live, a decision he lived to regret. Three days later a lion attacked the 18-year-old student just after he ran by the school and his classmates waved.

Instead of searching the area where the boy was last seen, police suggested other possible explanations for his disappearance. Three days later, a grid search turned up the horribly mangled body lying next to the lion that was still feeding on it.

The responsibility for this rare but needless killing must be shared by Division of Wildlife authorities, the local deputy, and officials in Boulder and Idaho Springs. Like the *Idaho Statesman* editorial, they emphasized the uniqueness of living with lions rather than address public safety concerns.

Arizona Responsible for Lion Attacks

This year, Arizona officials have been concerned about frequent reports of lion sightings in Sabino Canyon, a popular residential recreation area on the outskirts of Tucson. Reported encounters with humans included a lion growling at one person and another person being stalked.

Arizona Game and Fish has been harassed by the U S Humane Society and the Fund For Animals who sued the Forest Service in 2003 to stop AG&F from killing lions that were killing desert bighorn sheep. In March AG&F announced its decision to trap and transplant the Sabino lions to prevent a potential attack on humans.

When California lion biologist Lee Fitzhugh read the list of 40 reported lion sightings in Arizona’s Sabino Canyon, he wrote a letter urging Arizona to remove and kill the lions rather than transplant them. Based on 20 years of research, he warned that frequent encounters with humans and killing pets often precedes attacks on humans.

On April 6, 2004 an Arizona Senate Committee failed to approve a bill that would have given the State immunity from damage caused by wildlife. Officials were warned if a mountain lion attacks someone in Sabino Canyon the state can be held liable.

Evolution of Bad Legislation

Guest Opinion by Jim Beers

The career of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Biologist Jim Beers spanned 31 years. In the 1990s he was responsible for reviewing and approving requests for dedicated federal Pittman-Robertson funding. In 1999 he exposed misappropriation of \$45 million by FWS officials that was illegally removed from state game management agency funds over two years. Part of the stolen sportsmen funds were unlawfully used to promote wolf recovery in the U.S. and to sponsor non-game agendas in several foreign countries.

In his testimony before Congress, Beers revealed how the agency has changed from supporting hunters and trappers and the game they harvest, to supporting non-game environmental agendas using dedicated sportsmen dollars. He described being pressured by FWS superiors to approve P-R funding for the animal rights organization "Fund For Animals" specifically to promote anti-hunting propaganda.

The FWS Director involved in this corruption now works for the Defenders of Wildlife. But many of the corrupt FWS officials still have their jobs and continue to promote the animal rights environmental agenda –Ed.

The Get Outdoors Act (GO) has recently been introduced in the US House of Representatives. It proposes to spend over \$3 Billion per year for the Federal government to buy land, conduct "conservation" programs, give grants to cooperators, and give millions to state agencies each year to do the same things. The purpose of the bill is, ostensibly, to improve Americans' health and fitness by getting them "Outdoors." This bill is not new, it is like that patch of poison ivy in your yard that, despite everything you do to it (spray, clip, pull, burn, and dig) keeps popping up again each summer to present a threat to everyone using the yard.

In the midst of unprecedented Federal power growth in the environmental and animal rights arena, it is very worthwhile to lean back and review the origin and history of this proposed GO legislation. Like so many other "feel good" proposals (Endangered Species, Animal Welfare, Marine Mammal Protection, Wilderness, etc.) this one is a real werewolf that has been disguised over the past 25 years in more costumes than Lon Chaney and Laurence Olivier.

In the 1970's, Federal legislation expanded Federal jurisdiction over many migratory birds, any Endangered or Threatened Species, marine mammals, and an assortment of domestic and commercial animals. Federal land managers began managing (and not managing) Federal properties as if they were not within the states where they occurred but rather as separate (from state authorities) entities ruled by Washington bureau offices. All of this "save the (fill in the blank)" fever necessitated hiring Federal and state bureaucrats to "do NEPA", "preserve ecosystems", and begin to give "non-game" animals the attention that was formerly "lavished" on game species.

While the new employees were hired for Endangered Species this or Marine Mammal that, they chafed that they answered to employees who were "hook and bullet" types. They were also constantly complaining that "all" the money and promotions went to game animal (or timber management in the Forest Service or grazing management in the BLM) programs. The fact that the "hook and bullet" money and positions were generated by taxes, revenues, and Appropriations for those specific purposes was always ignored. They "needed" money for "non-game" management. Non-game management was variously painted as amphibian conservation, songbird research, native ecosystems, plant surveys, UN cooperation, wetland preservation, wildlife corridors, invasive species inventories, recreation, trails, and a whole string of "feel good" pursuits that could never surface for funding if forced to compete with legitimate government pursuits. More often than not, the hostility towards hunting or logging or ranching or trapping stayed beneath the surface but occasionally it boiled over and the anti-management agenda, while never justifiable, was seen for the waste it represented.

In the late 1970's the first attempt to get money for "non-game" (and all it's etceteras) was the "Chickadee Check-off" on state tax returns and a failed attempt to get a similar Check-off on the Federal tax return. Initial support at the state level soon waned and it was abandoned in most states.

Then there was the push to get birdseed manufacturers to accept an earmarked tax (like gun manufacturers, hunters, fishermen, and fishing tackle manufacturers had done 50 to 70 years ago.) That failed too. The manufacturers and the birdfeeders quibbled and hemmed and hawed.

Then there was the attempt for a Non-Game Recreational tax on recreation equipment. Purchasers and manufacturers of boots and binoculars and outdoor stuff were asked to support an earmarked tax like the hunters and fishermen but again there was no soap. The hikers wanted to know why it didn't all go to trails and the binocular folks wanted it all to go to birds and the tent people objected to even being included. In short the support for "non-game" funding was like the Platte River, "a mile wide and an inch deep."

Now at this point (the late 1980's) an honest person would have concluded that non-game support in the population was widespread but very weak. Hunters and fishermen believe that if they do not constantly pour money into their pursuits that eventually they won't be able to hunt or fish, so they cough up millions year in and year out to support their programs. Everyone says they support

“non-game” but unlike natural resource users, they proved unwilling to pay for what they say they “want.” Naturally, the conclusion was not that the citizens had spoken but rather that the citizens needed something that they were too ignorant to realize that they needed. The Federal bureaucrats, state bureaucrats, and all their environmental and animal rights cooperators set their sights on Appropriated Federal tax money as the proper source of funding to seek and they have never lacked for Federal and State politicians willing to help them for a price.

First they proposed a Federal Non-Game Program for Federal agencies like US Fish and Wildlife Service and others to get Appropriated funding for themselves and to pass through additional millions to state agencies. This would give the Federal agencies more power over the state agencies and further weaken state government resolve to manage their own natural resources. One need look no further than the recent Federal declaration about what uses states may allow on lands they have purchased over 50 years ago with the excise tax funds from guns and ammunition. Because the Federal government collected and apportioned those funds they (the Federal agency) may dictate whether dog field trials may be conducted on those “state” lands.

However, the Federal Non-Game Program never got off the ground. Once again, the concept of tinker bells skipping through the woodlands buying land and studying and “saving” things to no real purpose, failed under scrutiny.

Then in the mid 1990’s the old wine was yet again given a new label. CARA (Conservation And Reinvestment Act) was born. This multi-billion dollar proposal to buy land and study and save it had another new wrinkle. It wasn’t going to be taken out of the Treasury, no, it was going to be funded by offshore oil and gas revenues. Believe it or not, the papers and millions of folks actually believed that funding something out of money headed for the Treasury didn’t have the same effect (government cost) as taking out the money after it was deposited in the Treasury. The word “Reinvestment” acted like Lon Chaney’s mask in *The Phantom of the Opera*. Another wrinkle was that states that prohibited offshore oil development like California and Florida would get funds from oil leases off places like Louisiana and Alaska so states that did develop their offshore energy were given a bigger share of the “Federal” oil receipts. Go figure.

The truly insidious effect of CARA was demonstrated to me at this time. CARA was proposed as billions for the Federal agencies and billions more for the states to be passed through the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) for the state fish and wildlife agencies. This is just like the administration of the hunting and fishing excise taxes collected for 70 years and apportioned by FWS to the state fish and wildlife agencies. Enter the FWS appointees during the Clinton Administration.

In the late 1990’s I testified twice before Congress about the excise taxes being stolen from state fish and wildlife agencies and how those funds were being used for things Congress prohibited (for instance wolf reintroduction in Yellowstone and a new office in California), bonuses for top managers, and an assortment of things generally harmful to natural resource management. The General Accounting Office verified what I said and testified that over \$45 million had been so diverted (the polite word) in the previous two years. The state fish and wildlife agencies, their Washington lobby group (the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies) and the Washington-based “conservation” organizations like the Wildlife Management Institute downplayed the whole affair. When Congress set about to rewrite the law to prevent future theft of the funds (actually from sportsmen) these usual suspects opposed not only any publicity but also any law change. As a result no one in FWS even missed their bonuses that year and almost all of the “diverters” are still honored Federal employees or officers of Washington “conservation” organizations.

Why would states (from whom over \$45 million was stolen) keep quiet? Why would their lobby group and the national “conservation” organizations oppose preventing such a scandal in the future? Why were *Field and Stream* and the *Washington Times* covering this in depth and the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep awarding me a plaque for what I did while the state lobby group and the Washington “conservation” groups were actually hostile toward me? The answer is CARA. They were very upset that this scandal hit when they were expecting to get billions (and all the power and influence it would bring) from Congress to spread around just like the hunting and fishing excise taxes. If FWS was stealing millions from the states to do whatever they wanted, would Congress give them billions more to increase their “walking around money?” Not hardly.

CARA failed for all the reasons that all of its predecessors failed. When served to the taxpayer and examined, the refrain is “where’s the beef?” Add to this the activism due to recent bitter experiences of property owners, hunters, trappers, and rural residents and CARA was beginning to face not only the indifference of supporters but also the hostility of those who strongly opposed it.

In the mid 90’s while working for FWS I wrote a review of proposed CARA legislation that asked why weren’t lands acquired with these funds going to be open to hunting, fishing, and trapping? I didn’t get any bonus that year. The fact is that any lands acquired with these proposed funds and all the current Federal lands and State lands acquired in whole or in part with funds that came from Uncle Sam are a growing problem for us all. The old saw that it is better for government to “save” the slough or

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the woods or whatever than for it to be farmed or developed is not true. It is better for the land to grow families and food and communities than for it to grow government power or be used as an excuse to diminish our rights or to be a natural resource waste pit where management and use are forbidden.

We have seen how access to public lands has been reduced. We have seen how unmanaged resources cause fires and decimate logging communities and ranch families. We have seen how game species are ignored and dangerous predators are given the status of deities. We have seen neighbors arrested for trivia and friends who have lost their property without compensation. We have watched more and more land made off limits to hunting or fishing or even canoeing.

In the future there will be more. For instance, I have no doubt that a future anti-2nd Amendment President will have Washington appointees suggesting restrictive and expensive Federal gun licensing on these public lands. They will require "training" and "testing" and subject you to "inspections" while on such lands. Dogs and horses will be increasingly restricted and entrance fees will only increase until bureaucrats determine that they must be "rationed." Uses, active management (hunting, logging, grazing, etc.), and energy development will all be forbidden. Do any of us want this? Does it make sense to just keep pouring more and more private property into the control of bureaucrats and environmental and animal rights

groups that are so hostile to the things we hold dear? The answer is NO!

So today we have GO legislation proposed to slim us down and do whatever it is we want. It sits in drawers and on computers all over Capitol Hill. Some say it won't pass "this year, but maybe next year." Like so much other bad legislation it gestates waiting for the right conditions to germinate. A new President, a robust economy, an election when someone needs votes, an unrelated event that causes a chain reaction, there is no forecasting what the future holds or how it will affect events.

Remember they only have to win once; we must win every time. This confrontation is neither inevitable nor beneficial. The ultimate answer to this dilemma is to stop treating animals and the environment as though they rule us. We should not be in retreat before the environment or any animal. We should not be placing more and more of our land off limits to ourselves. We should be managing our environment in ways to compliment our human pursuits in a free society. The issue should not be managing ourselves to provide for the environment. The issue should be how to manage the environment to provide best for ourselves. In other words, we should provide the healthiest mix of plants and animals around and within our society and not manage our society so as not to intrude on the environment. This is an important distinction that may ultimately be the only answer to this recurring generational nightmare of the GO/CARA/Non-Game Check off.

Each month, Outdoorsman articles reveal little known facts about a variety of fish and game management issues that affect every Idahoan, especially those who cherish Idaho's hunting, fishing and trapping heritage. Please help distribute these facts to help stop the destruction of our billion-dollar wildlife resource and restore sound wildlife management for future generations. A donation in any amount will help defray the cost of printing and mailing these informative bulletins to elected officials. A donation of \$20 or more will pay the cost of printing and mailing all bulletins to you for the next 12 months, and will guarantee they will also be sent to the Senator and Representatives in your District.

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