



The Outdoorsman

Bulletin Number 20

Non-Game, Wolves, IFWF

Aug-Sep 2006

“The Wildlife”

By Jim Beers

(Jim Beers is a retired US Fish & Wildlife Service Wildlife Biologist, Special Agent, Refuge Manager, Wetlands Biologist, and Congressional Fellow. He testified three times before Congress; twice regarding the theft by the US Fish & Wildlife Service of \$45 to 60 Million from State fish and wildlife funds and once in opposition to expanding Federal Invasive Species authority. – ED)

Up until 35 years ago State agencies that were responsible for all the wild animals in the State had a robust variety of names. “Fish and Game”, “Fisheries Commission”, “Conservation Department”, “Game & Fish” and “Game and Fresh Water Fisheries” were examples of the various expressions of individual States’ notion of the mission of these agencies.

Often when I was a Federal Game Agent in those days, rural folks called each of us (Federal and State, officer and biologist) “The Wildlife”. These State agencies represented the Constitutional authority of State governments over all wild plants and animals in the State.

Exceptions to this authority were migratory birds named in international treaties and therefore under Federal jurisdiction, and plant and wildlife matters that involved interstate commerce or importation into or through a State. While these State agencies were financed by license sales and permits for hunting, fishing, and trapping; they also shared in the Federal excise taxes collected on arms, ammunition, fishing tackle, and other items like bows and arrows.

F&G Used To Be Accountable To Voters

Up until 35 years ago such State agencies worked directly for the elected representatives of the government of their State and were thereby accountable to them and the voters of the State that elected them. This role was bolstered by the Depression-era requirements in the Excise Tax law that all revenue generated by hunting and fishing and all property and revenue under the auspices of the State agency had to stay under that agency and be used for “wildlife” management and restoration.

While there have been occasional scandals, dedicated State employees or informed hunters who made midnight phone calls to the residences of concerned

Federal employees with integrity (who also hunted and fished) always resulted in audits, payback, and chastened State politicians and State bureaucrats.

UN Convention Spawned ESA

Thirty-five years ago the Federal government “climbed into the sack” with radical animal rights organizations and extremist environmental organizations. They colluded in the acquiescence of the Federal government to sign a UN Convention that (unbeknownst to everyone but these early schemers) gave the federal government the legal authority to pass an Endangered Species Act.

That Act not only allowed Federal intrusion on any tiny biological portion of any plant or animal and any imaginary “necessities” for it, but also allowed the unlimited taking (by the Federal government) of private property, not only not for a public purpose, but also without compensation. Other related Federal laws were invented during this period of environmental and animal rights hysteria.

Federal authority over and complete non-management and non-use of all marine mammals was claimed under the Marine Mammal Protection Act. A judge just said sea lion research couldn’t be conducted because the researcher couldn’t prove it wouldn’t be “CRUEL.”

And right now rats and mice (bye-bye medical research) and even racing pigeons are being swept into the maw of the ever-growing Federal Animal Welfare Act that will soon include all dogs and cats as well as all domestic animals.

Federal intervention is everywhere, in spite of denials at passage of ever doing exactly what it is doing today. Federal Wilderness designations grow in size and number while Roadless Areas and road closures on Federal lands (from trails and county roads to State highways) are paired with Nature Conservancy easements, radical Wildlands strategies, and a host of Federal inventions.

These include Landowner Incentive Program payments (complete with “requirements”), Scenic River

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designations, Scenic Highway designations, and Sanctuaries like the recent Marine Sanctuaries that eliminate fishing and boating to “save” things. The questions are “what?” and “for who?”

License Sales Decrease

State fishing license sales decrease as fish populations are not restored or actively managed and hunting license sales decrease as game are allowed to disappear into Federally introduced and protected wolves and grizzly bears that are killing people too. Cougars expand their territories and numbers increase dramatically as hunting and controls are discouraged at every opportunity by State agencies despite local objections.

But where were the State agencies? Where were the State politicians? Where were the Federal bureaucrats that were the “guardians” of the millions of dollars doled out to state agencies each year for “wildlife and sport fish restoration”?

During the past 35 years Federal government employees got “green”. Civil Service “Reform”, race and sex preferences, and political intrigues to replace the retiring post World War II and Korean War veteran employees with permanent employees committed to the ideology and philosophies of environmental/animal rights socialist-oriented government was a “success” for the radicals.

The elimination of entry exams and grading and promotion requirements paired with radical political appointees hiring and promoting fellow travelers and reeducating and cleansing “reactionaries” (anyone know a better term?) to bring this about was effective. The laws and policies cited above increased the power, budgets, grades, and pensions of Federal bureaucrats and helped reelect numerous politicians.

Extremist Groups Prosper

They also increased the net worth, power and status of the radical and extremist organizations and University professors, and steadily preempted the rights and liberties and traditions of one group of Americans after another. But never too many at one time so as not to create a large opposition at any one time.

While all this was a wild success for these folks, where were the State agencies and politicians that many of us still thought were looking out for us and our hunting and fishing and wildlife management?

For the first 20 years of this infamous 35-year period, the Federal U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service dumped their Animal Damage Control employees over into the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture. Then they began “Listing” every imaginable group of plants and animals and even forcing protection for abundant worldwide species like wolves over State objections by hunters, ranchers and dog owners.

Attempts were made to convert National Wildlife Refuges into “Native Ecosystems” instead of the waterfowl

habitats they were purchased or set aside for. Non-hunting and non-fishing employees supported the anti-hunting and anti-fishing employees that rocketed into leadership positions.

FWS Thieves Were Never Punished

Oversight of the excise taxes for State agencies was no exception. State employees that had for decades looked on Federal employment as a move “up” both for pay and professional “status” took all this in. They no longer could depend on Federal “protection” from nefarious State politicians and appointees.

Several years ago the “new” US Fish and Wildlife Service managers and appointees stole \$45 to 60 Million from the excise taxes destined by law for the State agencies. No one was ever punished and the STATE AGENCIES from whom the funds were stolen NEVER even asked that they be repaid.

The New Non-Hunting Agenda

By this time they had decided that hunting and fishing and trapping and resource management and State Rights were things of a disappearing past. They decided that the future was one of “saving” imaginary things like Native Ecosystems and “distinct population segments” of whatever plant or animal some professor can get a grant to write about.

The future was to be financed, not with the excise taxes and licenses, but with Federal appropriations, with State portions (crumbs) falling from the new Federal agency. Criteria were created for keeping things from “becoming” Endangered, purifying ecosystems and enforcing Federal plant and animal mandates on the people within their State.

In short they would become serfs to Federal masters while appearing to be employees of the State residents and their elected officials. This involved “playing ball” with not only the Federal bureaucrats but also with the radicals and extremists that were pulling so many of the strings.

The last 10 years of this 35-year period have been a steady scenario of these “adjustments” by State agencies. That is why so many have been changing their agency names to “(State) Fish and Wildlife”. Yes it was a signal to all the radicals of a change of heart (no more “game” or “fish” or “wildlife” or “resource” stuff).

This was about their conversion but even more important it was the signal of solidarity, not with the State or the residents, but with the Federal agency. Meanwhile that agency was working to obtain the desired Millions per year from the US Congress for all the immeasurable things that would guarantee jobs and promotions and retirements far into the future.

And the US Fish and Wildlife Service loved it and has helped wean them from the old programs by all sorts of chicanery. When mandatory 5-year audits were reinstated after the theft of the \$60 Million, contract auditors were

hired and then fired when they found over \$125 Million had already been misused by the previously un-audited State agencies. The findings were quietly forgiven and government hacks were hired illegally to conduct “reviews” since they are not auditors.

Will Appropriations Replace Excise Taxes?

But I have written all this ad nauseam. So what’s new? Plenty.

Ten years of anti-hunters and “green” socialists growing the Federal behemoth by feeding it State authorities and individual liberties and property have resulted in the following “situations” in the State vs. Federal, excise taxes vs. “new” money, hunting & fishing vs. green agenda nexus today.

1. Congress recently requested an Audit of the excise taxes. It was a very small limited audit, requested secretly for secret purposes. The US Fish and Wildlife Service workers never saw the authorization (highly unusual) and managers dismissed it as a joke.

It is not beyond reason that the cost of collecting the federal excise taxes in this age of Homeland Security is prohibitive for IRS and Customs. It is possible that some Congressman will soon do away with it as one of his “colleagues” introduces the “new” funding from US Appropriations at an opportune moment in the near future.

So it is all a “secret” like Ivory-billed Woodpecker expenditures and “lynx hair” and the real wolf numbers and distributions. After all “they” know what is best for us, don’t they?

2. The two largest outdoor suppliers are underpaying the excise taxes. Importers are smuggling in fishing equipment and not paying the taxes. Arms manufacturers are underpaying the excise taxes but audits and enforcement are too expensive for the amounts being lost in this world of “big” stuff. No one cares though since we get such “good deals”, and nobody is saying anything.

3. The latest Federal overseer of hiring and firing auditors and erasing audit findings of misused funds in State programs just retired and was immediately rehired to oversee adjustment of “overhead fund accounting” in the US Fish and Wildlife Service as a contractor. As a hunter and fisherman, take it from me this is ominous.

4. One State is evidently using Millions in revenue from wildlife lands that is not even reported to the State or recognized by the Federal government. State auditors are carefully examining the political minefield here and the Federal government ignores it because any more scandals will delay the vaunted advent of firm and bounteous Federal appropriations for them to pass through with instructions. What Congressman or Senator can boast about a new program while an old program is racked by scandals?

5. Several States are selling off wildlife lands that were bought years ago for a pittance, for millions in today’s market. Needless to say the State wants to put the

5. money in the State General Fund. State F&G agencies are silent. Federal and State Auditors are looking to Washington.

Federal bureaucrats are working in a “policy task force” to authorize this - instead of either keeping the funds in the State agency or returning the proportionate amount (based on the original purchase) to Washington for redistribution. It will be a “win-win” for everyone except the hunter and fisherman.

Ever wonder why “our” sport hunting and fishing organizations never mention this? They hire these folks when they retire (for “influence”) and even “get” their employees hired there (at the agencies) from time to time. You’d think they’d notice, wouldn’t you?

Who cares? All the Federal employees are non-hunters or anti-hunters (the few that engage in any such activities have long since learned not to mention it at work much less stand up for it). No one really cares about these things and everyone has a stake in covering them up and denying them.

State Legislatures Must Reassert State Interests

The deterioration of the State agencies’ programs and their reeducation into environmental saviors and “sensitive” animal protectors continues apace and is nearly completed. The only answer is a reassertion of actual State interests by State politicians that know where we stand.

If we let the Federal government take over our State F&G Agencies as we have so much else, we have only ourselves to blame. Whether they hire more people or take on more jobs or get cut in half, those agencies should represent those of us in each State.

If that means standing up to Federal intrusions and providing the sort of environment desired by our communities and resource users, they either do it or find other employment. And we hire people who will fight for us and do the job. And while we’re at it, let’s start renaming “our” agencies with names that reflect “our” ideas and not the ideas of alien agendas.

In one hour and 45 minutes it will be the 4th of July. Somehow that seems worth mentioning.

Jim Beers

3 July 2006

(Both federal and state bureaucrats promptly disagreed with Jim Beers’ conclusion that state F&G agencies have shifted emphasis from managing game and fish to “saving” non-game critters from being listed. But Beers has thoroughly documented what is happening in a series of articles, and on July 8, 2006 he wrote another article entitled, “The Future of State Agencies.”

That article documents the recent addition of alternative energy sources, global warming and control of “invasive species” [e.g. rainbow trout, pheasants and bullfrogs] to state Fish and Game agency agendas. Most of the 500+ IDFG full time employees devote a significant part of their time to non-hunting/fishing activities. – ED)

Predation: Lies, Myths, and Scientific Fraud

By Charles E. Kay

(Charles Kay has a PhD in wildlife ecology from Utah State University and is an adjunct professor and senior environmental scholar there. As a researcher in the Northern Rocky Mountains for 20-plus years, his 1993 predictions concerning the number of wolves that would result from introduction, their impact on game, and delisting delays that would occur have all come true.

In the Dec. 2005-Jan. 2006 *Outdoorsman*, we published Dr. Kay's article, "Are Predators Killing Your Hunting Opportunities?" with permission from Dr. Kay and the Mule Deer Foundation. The following article by Dr. Kay, also recently published in the Mule Deer Foundation magazine, reveals the fraudulent origin of the myths about predators circulated by wildlife managers and predator advocates. – ED)

In the ongoing debate about predation, did you ever wonder how we went from our forefathers' views that predators have a negative impact on deer and elk and severely limit hunting opportunities to today's beliefs that predators have little or no effect on game populations?

To understand how this transformation occurred we have to go back 40 years and review five events; Farley Mowat's book "Never Cry Wolf", Hornocker's mountain lion study, Isle Royale's wolf study, the Kaibab Deer Incident, and Graeme Caughley's mathematical models.

"Never Cry Wolf" – Pure Fiction

First, let's look at Mowat's "Never Cry Wolf". As a young biologist working in northern Canada, Farley Mowat made an amazing discovery; namely that wolves did not live by killing caribou! Instead wolves survived on rodents and were needlessly being persecuted by man.

Never Cry Wolf was presented as fact and was later made into a movie by Walt Disney that was seen by millions. The trouble is Mowat's rendition of wolf biology was entirely incorrect.

Wolves live by killing large mammals, a fact readily admitted by all the wolf biologists that have ever lived. Thus, people who study wolves have known for years that Mowat's book was less than truthful.

What has only recently come to life, however, is that Mowat fabricated the entire story! Not only did he get wolf biology wrong, he was never in the places he said he was at the times he claimed in Never Cry Wolf.

Lying Created Support for Wolves

In short, the book is a work of fiction. Nonetheless it has been highly influential in changing the public's perception about wolves and other predators.

According to a group of noted wolf biologists, "Despite its depiction of fiction as fact, this widely read book probably played a greater role than any other in creating support for wolves.

When questioned on this, Mowat has been unapologetic and contends that in the end, protecting wolves justifies the means of lying. Mowat has also said that he would do it all over again if given the chance.

Lest you think this is old news and that Never Cry Wolf no longer shapes public opinion, think again. At a luncheon during the Clinton administration, I was seated next to a high-ranking Republican Congresswoman from New York, who was telling everyone within earshot that reintroducing wolves to Yellowstone would just be the greatest and that worries about game populations were unfounded because wolves ate mice!

When questioned about her statements, the Congresswoman cited Never Cry Wolf. Needless to say, she wasn't the least bit pleased when I informed her that Mowat had spun the truth to suit his political needs.

Another Theory With No Proof

In 1970 Maurice Hornocker's study of mountain lion predation on mule deer and elk in central Idaho was published as a "Wildlife Monograph" by the Wildlife Society; the professional organization for wildlife biologists. Doctor Hornocker contended that mountain lions had little impact on deer and elk populations, in part, because the cats socially regulated.

That is to say, mountain lions used social means to purposefully regulate their population below the level where the cats would affect prey numbers. In that same year, Douglas Pimlott claimed that wolves, too, socially regulate themselves.

Unfortunately, this is not how evolution works! It was not true when they wrote it and it certainly is not true today.

In their recent book the "Desert Puma", Logan and Sweaner, who are associated with the Hornocker Wildlife Institute, repeatedly stated that mountain lions "do not socially regulate."

David Mech and other wolf biologists have also acknowledged that wolves do not socially regulate. Instead, wolves are in the business of turning prey animals into more wolves as quickly as they can without any regard for the health of prey populations.

"We would expect wolves to kill as many prey as possible. There is little for wolves to gain by being prudent about resources within their territory."

This now brings us to Mech's 1970 book about wolves and moose on Isle Royale. According to Dr. Mech, wolves had little impact on the national park's moose population. Instead, moose numbers were largely controlled by habitat and/or weather.

As additional data has been collected over the last 35 years, however, at least five different interpretations of

predator-prey relationships on Isle Royale have appeared in various scientific journals. Nevertheless the popular press continues to cite Isle Royale as an example of the “balance of nature” and how predation has virtually no impact on ungulate populations.

Isle Royale Does Not Represent the Real World

The trouble is Isle Royale is not representative of conditions anywhere else in North America! As Isle Royale wolves kill most of the more vulnerable moose, wolf numbers fall and remain low long enough for the moose to increase. Because this is an island, vacated wolf territories are not automatically filled by lone or dispersing wolves.

On the mainland, if a wolf pack naturally winks-out or is removed by hunting or trapping, lone and/or dispersing wolves reoccupy the vacant territory, often within a matter of days. So in the real world, wolf pack density and wolf numbers seldom fall low enough to allow their prey to recover.

In addition, there are no bears on Isle Royale, either black or grizzly, while throughout the rest of North America, one or both species of bear are common. Research has demonstrated that bears often are a significant predator on newborn moose and other ungulates.

Moreover, bear predation and wolf predation are additive and together they have a significant impact on big game populations. In fact, throughout most of Canada and Alaska, combined predation by bears and wolves routinely limits moose numbers to 10% or less of what the habitat could otherwise support.

Bear and wolf predation also severely limit hunter opportunities. Acceptable human off-take rated in bear/wolf/moose systems vary from 0% to 5%, while in predator-free areas hunters harvest up to 55% of the over-winter moose population each year, without a decline in moose numbers. Thus, Isle Royale is an entirely abnormal situation.

The “Terrible Lesson of the Kaibab”

Many readers may be too young to remember the Kaibab Deer Incident but it figures prominently in debates over predators. The Kaibab Plateau, also called the North Kaibab because of its location north of the Grand Canyon in Arizona, is known for producing large-antlered mule deer, and because of that it was set aside as a game preserve by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1906.

Hunting was banned while wolves and mountain lions were killed. With predators eliminated, the mule deer population erupted to an estimated 100,000 animals that then proceeded to strip the range bare before starvation lowered deer numbers. Ahhh, the good old days when there were too many mule deer!

For nearly 40 years the Kaibab was cited as proof that predators limited ungulate populations and that hunting was therefore necessary where wolves and

mountain lions had been eliminated. Aldo Leopold and others cited the “Terrible Lessons of the Kaibab.”

All this changed in 1970, though, when Australian ecologist Graeme Caughley published a paper in “Ecology”, a scientific journal of the Ecological Society of America. Caughley’s paper was actually on introduced Himalayan Tahr in New Zealand and his belief was that ungulate populations are food-limited and that predators have little effect on prey populations.

Historically New Zealand lacked ungulates, all of which were introduced by Europeans, and New Zealand, to this day, still lacks predators. First however, Caughley had to discredit the prevailing paradigm of the day, namely the Kaibab deer incident, which he did, or at least he said he did.

Others, citing Caughley’s “Ecology” paper, have called the Kaibab deer incident a myth and deny it ever happened! Today the so-called myth is cited by many as proof that wolves and mountain lions have no effect on mule deer populations but instead deer numbers are set by available habitat.

Now, unlike Caughley, who in a later publication admitted that he had never set foot on the Kaibab, I have been to the Kaibab numerous times and I have spent a great deal of time looking for Kaibab documentation in various archives. Additionally, I can unequivocally report that the Kaibab happened just like Leopold said it did.

If there is any myth at all it is Caughley’s 1970 publication, a scientific paper in name only. According to Caughley’s view of the world, mule deer have always been superabundant in the West and deer have always severely overgrazed the vegetation, especially on winter ranges.

Thus, historical journals should be overflowing with references to abundant mule deer, archaeological sites ought to be full of mule deer bones, and the earliest photographs should show that vegetation on western ranges was very heavily grazed by mule deer and other ungulates. None of which is true.

Sightings of mule deer are rare to non-existent in first-person historical accounts. Mule deer and other ungulate bones are rare in archaeological sites, even on the Kaibab, and vegetation depicted in historical photographs shows absolutely no browsing by mule deer, elk or moose anywhere in North America. These are all datasets that Caughley never bothered to consult.

Flawed Model Provides Pre-Ordained Outcome

After his triumph in “Ecology”, Caughley developed a mathematical model of plant-herbivore interactions, which he claimed represented how the natural world works. These were paired, simultaneous differential equations containing a number of parameters, such as the rate at which mule deer turned forage into more mule deer.

Therefore there were, and still are, no data for most of these parameters, so Caughley simply picked numbers

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Predation, Lies...*continued from page 5*

that he claimed were representative of plant-herbivore systems. Caughley then grew his model 25 times a year inside his computer.

This produced an outcome where the vegetation and herbivores reached equilibrium after 2 or 3 oscillations. Caughley subsequently published various versions of this model in leading ecological journals in the U.S. and Europe.

None of these scientific journals, reviewers or editors ever required Caughley to present a sensitivity analysis of his model (this is where you vary parameter estimates singularly or in combination to determine how robust or universal is the model's output). Unlike most professionals, who have uncritically accepted Caughley's claims, I performed a detailed sensitivity analysis on Caughley's model.

By varying the parameter estimates in Caughley's model, within reasonable limits, herbivores can also take the plants to extinction or the herbivores and plants repeatedly cycle never reaching equilibrium.

You should also recall that to obtain the outcome that he published in various journals, Caughley "grew" his model 25 times per year, but mule deer and other ungulate populations only grow once each year; i.e. North American ungulates do not birth throughout the year.

If you grow Caughley's model only once per year, instead of the 25 times per year that Caughley used, it takes the herbivores and plants 600 years to reach equilibrium, not the 40 or so years reported by Caughley. Clearly, Caughley selected his parameters to produce a pre-ordained outcome.

Deception Practiced by Many Wildlife Biologists

How he deceived all the people all the time is certainly an indictment of the scientific process or at least how science is practiced by many ecologists and wildlife biologists. But Caughley did not stop there, for he then developed a model where he added predators to his previously defined plant-herbivore system.

This produced three simultaneous differential equations, one for vegetation, a second for herbivores, and a third for predators. Again, there are no actual data for any of the model's many parameters, so Caughley picked numbers he said "seemed appropriate" and hit the run button on his computer.

His outcome? Stability and equilibrium, and predators had little impact on ungulate numbers.

Same Methods – Same Results

As before, Caughley conducted no sensitivity analysis. When I conducted my sensitivity analysis on Caughley's plant-herbivore-predator model, I was shocked!

This was many years ago when I was still naïve. It was only later that I realized that Caughley had picked the only numbers that would produce the result he reported...equilibrium and no predation effect! Any other

numbers produced erratic model output, be they strange attractors or complex limit cycles.

Whatever Caughley's models are, they certainly are not science. So why have I spent so much time on Caughley, who you probably never heard about?

Well, Caughley co-authored a book on wildlife management that is still used in University classes. Caughley has since died but in his obituary that was published by the Wildlife Society, Caughley was hailed as a pillar of the wildlife community because his views on ungulates and predators have come to dominate the profession.

Never, Ever Trust a Modeler

In life there are liars, statisticians, and modelers. The first two are bad enough but you should never, ever trust a modeler unless you fully understand the underlying math and go through the computer codes line by line.

As an aside, did you ever wonder who anti-hunters and their technical experts cite as proof that you do not have to hunt deer or elk populations to keep those animals from destroying the range? Why none other than Graeme Caughley!

For he "proved" that plants and herbivores will reach equilibrium without any need for predators. Sweet!

Finally, predator enthusiasts object to characterizing wolves and mountain lions as killers. Instead they call them "adorable" and take tame wolves into schools to show the peaceful disposition of the animals.

Wolf/Lion "Homicide" Rates

But what about site-specific and intraspecific aggression? In a 15 year study of an un hunted mountain lion population in New Mexico, Logan and Sweanor reported that cats kill cats at a rate of 18% per year. Meanwhile David Mech reported that un hunted wolves in Alaska killed wolves at 36% per year.

Thus, mountain lions kill mountain lions at a rate of 18,000 per 100,000 per year, while wolves kill wolves at a rate of 36,000 per 100,000 per year. This is how the FBI reports crime statistics.

For comparison, the murder rate in the U.S. is around 7 people per 100,000 per year. So the mountain lion homicide rate, as reported in New Mexico, is 2,500 times the human murder rate, while the wolf homicide rate, as reported in Alaska, is 5,000 times the U.S. murder rate.

In addition, lions kill wolves and other predators whenever they can, and wolves return the favor killing cats and any other predator they can catch. This is not predation as the victims are seldom eaten. But it does prove that predators kill out of instinct and, at times, just for the act of killing.

A few years ago there was a nature special on TV about lions and hyenas in Africa. The entire hour was devoted to lions killing hyenas and hyenas killing lions. Finally nature depicted how it really is, "Red in Tooth and Claw."

The next day a member of my department asked me what I thought about the African nature special and I said, "It was great." She, however, admitted that she had to turn the TV off as it was too violent and it upset her sensibilities.

Violent yes, untruthful or unnatural...no. Whatever else wolves and mountain lions may be, the one thing that is without doubt is that they are stone cold killers.

Killing Wolves No Help To Cattle: Study Ranchers Call For Increased Compensation

Calgary Herald: Thursday, April 6, 2006

by Deborah Tetley

(Published in The Outdoorsman with permission from Deborah Tetley - dtetley@theherald.canwest.com - ED)

Killing wolves to reduce predatory attacks on cattle and sheep herds has been deemed ineffective by a University of Calgary Researcher, who has studied the issue for more than 24 years.

Marco Musiani, an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Environmental Design, found that using lethal means to limit the number of wolves -- thus decreasing attacks -- would require depleting as much as 50% of each herd (wolf pack) annually.

"Wolves are being killed as a corrective, punitive measure -- not a preventative one," Musiani said Wednesday from Yellowstone National Park, where he presented his American and Canadian findings to a conference with other wolf Scientists, Ranchers and wildlife management groups.

"Killing individual wolves won't rid the population from offenders. Other wolves will take their place and you'll have the same problem all over again," he said.

Musiani added he's hoping the study will lead to changes in how wildlife authorities and Ranchers react to attacks on their livestock.

Currently, Ranchers are offered market value prices by Alberta Sustainable Resource Development for attacks that kill their cattle or sheep, given that it can be proven. But local Ranchers say that with increased wolf attacks south of Calgary in recent years, industry and Government need to discuss increased compensation, as well as more effective prevention methods and surveillance.

Rick Burton, Chairman of the Government Affairs Committee of the Alberta Beef Producers and a Rancher near Claresholm, said losing an animal a year is acceptable and expected. "The odd wreck doesn't weigh too heavy, but when it's your livelihood, it doesn't make economic sense to wait for compensation," Burton said. "That's no way to market cattle."

Alberta Sustainable Resource Development spokesman John Lear said there are roughly 3,500 to 5,500 wolves in the Province. About 600 of those are trapped legally each year for their pelts, while an undetermined number are hunted from the fall until May. Landowners can kill wolves on their land and within an eight-kilometre radius, said Lear.

In recent months, Fish and Wildlife Officers have been shooting wolves from the air and on the ground to protect the Little Smoky caribou herd between Hinton and Grande Cache in northwestern Alberta. Lear said about 50% to 70% of 10 wolf packs in that area are being killed.

That number falls in line with Musiani's findings that roughly half of a pack needs to be killed to make a difference. Musiani is not calling for an end to wolf management practices, but he cautions there are several cost-effective measures to consider.

"If society wants to co-exist with wolves, it has to accept that there will be losses," the Researcher said. "When Ranchers lose animals, or if animals are injured, it costs money. There are also significant labour costs for increasing livestock surveillance to prevent attacks."

Musiani and other Scientists studied wolves killing livestock in northern Alberta from 1982 to 1996 and in Idaho, Montana and Wyoming from 1987 to 2003. The paper comes as several U.S. States consider removing the grey wolf from the Federal endangered species list.

The Rest of the Story

By George Dovel

The study report by Musiani et al entitled, "Seasonality and Recurrence of Depredation and Wolf Control in Western North America," was published in Wildlife Society Bulletin Vol. 33 no. 3 (Fall 2005), pages 876-887. It was part of a collaborative effort by several universities and so-called conservation groups, including Defenders of Wildlife (DOW), to explore alternatives to lethal control of wolves that are killing livestock.

DOW Rocky Mountain Field Coordinator Suzanne Stone organized a two-day "Non-Lethal Techniques and Tools Workshop" during the 18th Annual Wolf Conference on April 3-6, 2006 in Pray, Montana. Musiani was introduced as the featured speaker to present a "new" approach to resolving wolf predation on livestock.

Musiani offered high praise for a project Stone conducted under his leadership at Prescott College in Arizona, evaluating wolf conflict resolution strategies in the Northwestern USA. Stone, former wife of Idaho Wildlife Federation Executive Director Kent Laverty, is known for her role in promoting wolf recovery in Idaho.

"Use 'Natural' Ways to Limit Livestock Killing"

In a CBC interview, Cormack Gates, co-author of the Musiani study, said there will always be a necessity

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to kill individual wolves but ranchers and shepherds should look for other ways to control the amount of livestock they lose to wolves. He said there are “simple” and “natural” ways to reduce the risk to livestock from predators.

“Instead of running yearlings on their own in grazing dispositions, have some older animals that know how to react appropriately to wolves,” Gates said. He suggested running longhorn steers with the yearlings to provide some sort of protection.

Deterrents Costly, Limited Effectiveness

In addition to the proposed changes in animal husbandry and grazing techniques, numerous wolf deterrents were discussed during the non-lethal techniques workshop in April. These included use of “fladry”, “turbo-fladry”, guard dogs, radio-activated shock collars, King collars (plastic armor to protect the throat of sheep), radio-activated guard (RAG) boxes and the use of cracker shells and rubber bullets.

Fladry consists of thousands of closely spaced red flags hung on the outside of a lower fence strand and turbo-fladry is red flags hung on electrically charged fence wire. The flags, manufactured by Carol’s Creations of Arco, Idaho, reportedly cost \$2,137 for enough flags for a square 40-acre fenced field and this does not include the cost of the charger, installation, and continuous supply of electrical current.



“Turbo-fladry” (red flagging that waves in the breeze) hung on a “hot” fence surrounding an IDFG fish pond near Clayton, Idaho. According to FWS officials, Agent Niemeyer, WS Agent Williamson and “Defenders” (DOW) representative L. Thurston installed the turbo-fladry on April 15, 2005 “to see if it would deter wolves from catching steelhead smolts from the pond.”

The radio-activated devices mentioned above are even more expensive and require that a wolf be radio-collared and transmitting on the proper frequency to activate them. None of the devices provide reliable continued protection from wolf attacks and most do not prevent attacks by other predators.

Most wolf advocates admit this but claim it makes more sense to pay ranchers for the added cost of taking preventative measures than it does to fund the increasing cost of Wildlife Services (WS) killing the “problem” wolves. But, as is often the case with hidden agendas, there is more to this than is being told.

Wolves Increase 28% - Livestock Kills Increase 165%

According to the FWS Northern Rocky Mountains (NRM) 2005 Wolf Report, “minimum” wolf populations exceeded the criterion of 300 in 1999 and exceeded the 2005 criterion of 10 breeding pairs in each state by 61% in 2002. From 1995 through 2002, the average *confirmed* annual livestock kill by wolves in Montana, Wyoming and Idaho was 27 cattle and 73 sheep, with an average of 18 wolves legally killed in response to livestock losses.

Those averages include the 2002 kill of 52 cattle and 99 sheep with 46 wolves killed. As wolves began to overflow their territories, relatively small increases in wolf numbers began to reflect very large increases in the number of livestock confirmed killed by wolves.

Two years later, in 2004, with only a 28% increase in the number of wolves since 2002, the livestock kill nearly tripled (130 cattle and 270 sheep) despite 86 wolves being killed. In 2005 the livestock kill was reduced slightly by increasing the number of wolves killed to 103.

Deliberate Deception

As wolves continue to populate new areas and reduce local big game numbers, livestock losses will continue to increase unless wolf populations in those areas are cut by about 50% every year. The studies we have published by Mech and others prove that wolf biologists have known this all along but it is part of the deception described by Dr. Charles Kay in September 1993 - more than a year before Canadian wolves were brought in.

In a 1995 scientific article titled “The Challenge and Opportunity of Recovering Wolf Populations,” Mech pointed out that from 1988-1993 Minnesota wolves expanded by only 15% but the number of wolves killed annually because of livestock predation jumped from 59 to 139. From FY 1996 through FY 2002 the average number of Minnesota wolves killed each year by WS (USDA APHIS Wildlife Services) because of livestock losses increased to 154.

Although none of the 152 Minnesota wolves killed by WS in 2002 involved the use of aircraft the WS cost was still \$262,657, an average of \$1,728 per wolf killed. The difficulty WS has experienced this year in killing non-collared wolves using traps or snares in several Idaho locations indicates the costs may be even higher in Idaho terrain.

Mech’s “Wolf Zone” Solution

Mech’s 1995 article reported that neither the various forms of non-lethal control nor relocation of problem wolves had been successful in reducing wolf predation on livestock. He explained that as wolves expand

their territory to include all farming and ranching areas, government agencies and environmental groups are reluctant to pay for increasing wolf control and increasing losses to livestock.

Mech emphasized that increased killing of livestock and pets increases public resistance to wolves, and predicted a return to the pre-wolf recovery era unless protection of wolves in agricultural and residential areas is removed as they are de-listed. He said other areas where there are not wolf conflicts should be zoned as “protected”, and that wolf killing should be allowed in all agricultural/residential areas.

Wyoming Plan Approved – Later Rejected

As we reported on pages 2-3 of the June 2004 Outdoorsman, the Wyoming Wolf Recovery Plan followed the Mech Zone Plan and was endorsed by 10 of the 11 wolf biologists who were asked to review it by FWS. In a series of oral and written communications from December 2002 until January 13, 2004, FWS voiced approval for the Wyoming Plan – yet rejected it on Jan. 14, 2004, following protests from DOW, the National Wildlife Federation and other wolf preservationist groups.

Those groups ignore the reality that Wyoming’s plan would: a) protect all wolves in 2.5 million acres of national parks; b) classify wolves as trophy animals with carefully regulated take in 2 million acres of wilderness; c) dramatically reduce wolf attacks on livestock, pets and big game species at little or no cost where wolves are managed as a predator; and d) change the “predator” classification to “trophy species” if the number of Wyoming wolf packs outside of Wyoming’s national parks fell below eight.

Only 57,374 Sq. Mi. Suitable in ID, MT, WY

The issue of whether or not to include protection for wolves outside of the Core Recovery Areas (defined in the 1994 EIS as nearly 20,000 sq. mi. in NW Montana, 24,600 sq. mi. in the Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA), and 20,700 sq. mi. in Central Idaho), was addressed in February 2006 by FWS. In its Notice of Rulemaking to delist the NRM population of gray wolves,” FWS repeatedly stated that most land in Idaho, Montana and Wyoming was neither critical nor desirable to wolf recovery (see Feb. 8, 2006 Federal Register Vol. 71 pages 6633-6660)].

It emphasized that about 87% of the 65,725 sq. miles, selected in the three states in 1987 and 1994 as suitable habitat, has been continuously occupied by wolves since the recovery goal was first achieved in 2000. “We believe the remaining roughly 13 percent of theoretical suitable wolf habitat that is unoccupied is unimportant to maintaining the recovered wolf population.”

“We consider this **57,374 mi**² (148,599 km²) of occupied suitable habitat as the significant portion of the recovered wolf population’s range because it is the only area required to maintain the wolf population above recovery levels for the foreseeable future. (emphasis added).

“These core population segments will continue to provide a constant source of dispersing wolves into surrounding areas, supplementing wolf packs in adjacent but less secure suitable habitat. However, occupancy of such theoretically suitable habitats outside of the core recovery areas will not play a significant role in maintaining a long-term viable wolf population.

“Unsuitable habitat, and small, fragmented areas of suitable habitat away from these core areas, largely represent geographic locations where wolf packs cannot persist. Although they may have been historic habitat, many of these areas are no longer suitable and are not important or necessary for maintaining a viable, self-sustaining, and evolving representative wolf population in the NRM wolf DPS (Distinct Population Segment) into the foreseeable future.”

Core Areas in NRM Wolf DPS

In addition to delisting, the FWS information provided by Wolf Coordinator Ed Bangs in the Feb. 8, 2006 Federal Register included its proposal to establish a NRM DPS consisting primarily of the three core recovery areas discussed above and illustrated in the following chart:

<u>Recovery Area</u>	<u>Core Area Approx Sq Mi</u>	<u>Primary State</u>	<u>State Ttl Sq Miles</u>
NW MT	~19,944	Montana	147,046
GYA PAA*	25,000	Wyoming*	97,818
C ID PAA	<u>20,781</u>	<u>Idaho</u>	<u>83,574</u>
Totals	65,725	3 States	328,438
87% Core Area	57,374**		

* GYA Primary Analysis Area includes portions of MT and ID.
 ** continuously inhabited areas are only 17% of states’ total.

Of the three core areas, Central Idaho, with 9,375 sq. miles of designated wilderness, is considered the most valuable by Bangs and produces the most wolves. In the GYA, Yellowstone National Park alone is 3,472 sq mi. and the total area of the Parks, Parkway and contiguous wilderness areas is 7,138 sq mi.

NW MT Area Fails to Meet Recovery Criteria

According to the Federal Register information provided by Bangs, although the NW MT Area has suitable habitat in Glacier National Park and the Bob Marshal Wilderness, it is not as large or as high quality as the Central ID or GYA areas. Most of the prey species do not winter at those higher elevations and the rest of the wolf habitat there is a mixture of public and private lands where wolves are vulnerable to human-caused mortality.

Naturally occurring wolves, including those that migrate from Canada and North Idaho, comprised the NW Montana area recovery effort for 26 years from 1979 through 2004. Yet they only reached the 1987/1994 minimum *individual* recovery area criteria of 100 wolves and 10 breeding pairs in one year - 2002.

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FWS Keeps Changing Recovery Criteria

In the April 1, 2003 Federal Register Vol. 68, pages 15816-15818, FWS said the failure to meet wolf recovery goals in NW Montana through 2001 was caused by the white-tailed deer die-off following the severe 1996-97 winter. Bangs claimed the criteria of 30 breeding pairs and 300+ wolves for three years was “developed” in the 1994 EIS and said that would be the new criteria for Rocky Mountain wolf recovery, but did not say how it would be apportioned between the three recovery areas.

But after two more years of only half enough wolves and breeding pairs in the NW Montana Recovery Area to meet the individual area criteria, Bangs created a brand new criterion in the Jan. 6, 2005 Federal Register. It consisted of “a minimum of 30 breeding pairs, each consisting of an adult male and an adult female that successfully produced at least 2 pups that survived until December 31, that are equitably distributed among 3 recovery areas/States for 3 successive years.”(emphasis added)

Bangs Rewarded Montana FWP

In the next sentence, Bangs wrote, “Our current estimates indicate wolf populations in northwestern Montana where they are designated threatened, and in central Idaho and Yellowstone where they are designated experimental, have exceeded this recovery goal.” His partly false statement rewarded Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks (**FWP**) for its allegiance to the FWS wolf agenda and its failure to follow the Montana Legislature’s mandate to control large predators to benefit big game populations.

By replacing the criterion “10 breeding pairs in each area” with “equitably distributed” and inserting the word “states” as an alternative to “areas”, Bangs relieved FWP of having to wait for years to possibly meet the NW Montana Area minimum recovery goal. By pretending the change was retroactive to include 2004, 2003, 2002, 2001 and 2000, Montana FWP was given immediate authority to assume wolf management.

But Wyoming was severely penalized by those changes because the requirement to meet recovery goals suddenly shifted from the entire Greater Yellowstone Area (**GYA**) to only land within Wyoming’s borders. Outside of its national parks and wilderness areas, much of eastern Wyoming is high desert and prairie, more similar to mid-western states than to the Northern Rocky Mountains.

Thanks to some off-the-record arm-twisting by Bangs and his wolf preservationist associates, each state was persuaded to submit a plan to manage for 15 breeding pairs per state rather than the 10 pairs per area that has been the recovery goal since 1987. With more than eight breeding pairs supported in Yellowstone National Park for the past six years, Wyoming’s plan agreed to manage for 7 or more breeding pairs outside of the national parks - but that doesn’t satisfy Bangs or FWS.

They now object to classifying wolves as predators and insist Wyoming must commit to manage 15 breeding pairs anywhere in the State. That includes the thousands of square miles of poor wolf habitat with livestock conflicts in the Great Plains in eastern Wyoming, which is not even part of the Rocky Mountains - much less the Northern Rocky Mountain Wolf Recovery DPS.

In Bangs’ own words in the Federal Register, these areas “largely represent geographic locations where wolf packs cannot persist.” Wyoming has no authority to manage wildlife in its national parks so if Yellowstone Park officials continue to allow wolves to deplete big game herds Wyoming would likely find it impossible to manage for even 10 breeding pairs elsewhere without continuing excessive livestock and game losses to wolves.

WY G&F Director Tells It Like It Is

On April 6, 2006 Wyoming Game and Fish Director Terry Cleveland sent a 22-page response to Bangs detailing numerous discrepancies, inaccuracies and misrepresentations of facts in the FWS information published in the Feb. 6, 2006 Federal Register. That letter, which has not been publicized by FWS, has received high praise from several of North America’s foremost wildlife authorities as a rare example of how representative government should work.

They point out that the Wyoming Director is representing the governor and legislators who are elected by the citizens to represent their interests, while wildlife officials in many other states appear to have allegiance to predator preservationist organizations, not their elected superiors. The wildlife agencies are given preference in courts as being scientifically sound and unbiased, which empowers radical environmental groups’ lawsuits against sound resource management.

Idaho, Montana Facilitate FWS Agenda

Instead of joining WYG&F in pointing out gross FWS misrepresentations in the Federal Register before the April 10, 2006 comment deadline, both IDFG and MT FW&P gave their tacit approval to the FWS agenda. Both agencies have rubber stamped every FWS wolf proposal during the past two decades; both participated in deceiving sportsmen and the general public about the consequences of introducing Canadian wolves; and both failed to take action to mitigate excessive wolf predation on local elk populations.

FWS Repeats IDFG Exaggerations

In 1993, the IDFG Director and four of his biologists provided deer and elk population densities for inclusion in the Draft Wolf EIS that were **six times as high** as the highest census counts conducted that year. That was documented in testimony read in the Congressional Committee, and even Bangs admitted that the figures were probably exaggerated.

But because the gross exaggerations were the basis for the false FWS claims of limited wolf impact on big

game and livestock after delisting, FWS continues to publish them in the Federal Register with assurance that Idaho wildlife officials will not expose the fraud. On page 6645 of the Feb. 8, 2006 Federal Register, Bangs repeated the 1994 EIS lie about the number of wild ungulates serving as a post hunting season (early winter) prey base for wolves in the Central Idaho PAA.

“The GYA and central Idaho recovery areas, 24,600 mi² (63,714 km²) and 20,700 mi² (53,613 km²), respectively, provide abundant ungulate populations neighboring in the range of over 99,300 ungulates in the GYA and 241,400 in central Idaho (Service 1994).” (emphasis added). The Idaho figure represents an average of 12 ungulates (more than 11 deer and elk) for every square mile of the recovery area, including the farms, towns, rural subdivisions, bodies of water and mountain peaks. That would reflect an average of several hundred deer and elk for every square mile of winter range!

FWS Also Misinterprets Wolf Kill Data

In his list of misinformation provided by FWS in the Feb. 8, 2006 Federal Register, Wyoming G&F Director Cleveland included, “Misinterpretation of data to discount predation impacts.” He documented the fact that Bangs and FWS were implying that bears – not wolves – had the major impact on elk calf recruitment because they kill more newborn elk calves than wolves do.

Cleveland cited studies proving that radio-collaring newborn calves makes them far more susceptible to bear predation. He also cited other studies proving that, although bears are the major predator of elk calves during the first 4-6 weeks of life, most predation during that period is “compensatory” (i.e. a fairly high percentage of newborn elk calves will die from some other cause if not from predation).

He cited Wyoming studies indicating that, without wolves, 80-90% of elk calves that survive until the end of September, will survive the 243-day “winter period” (Oct.-May) to become yearlings. However of 608 documented wolf kills during the winter period from 1995-2004 in the GYA, 250 (41%) were calves (White and Garrott; Wildlife Society Bulletin Vol. 33 no. 3 [Fall 2005]: 948).

Wolves selected elk calves at 3-4 times their availability in the general population during the winter. “Various researchers estimated three predation rates during the winter period (October-May): 0.05, 0.075, and 0.10 elk/wolf/day (White and Garrott 2005:945).” In his letter, Cleveland included the following information projecting wolf kills during the winter using the three kill rates and the FWS Dec. 2005 estimate of 325 wolves in the GYA:

Age/Sex Class	~% Each Class	@ .05 elk/wolf/day	@ .075 elk/wolf/day	@ 1.0 elk/wolf/day
Calves	41%	1,624	2,435	3,247
Cows	39%	1,533	2,288	3,065
Bulls	20%	792	792	1,585
Totals		3,949	5,923	7,897

How Many Idaho Elk Are Wolves Killing?

By projecting the three eight-month kill rates for Idaho’s 650 “minimum” wolves (current FWS estimate) plus 70% of those winter kill rates for the remaining four months (122 days) of the year, Idaho elk killed by wolves would be: 10,673 @ 0.05%; 16,010 @ 0.075% or 21,346 @ 0.1%. Using the FWS estimate of 70% of those kill rates for the summer months indicates that the minimum annual elk kill per wolf is between 16.4 and 32.8.

But those figures ignore the reality that no one knows how many wolves there are in Idaho. The FWS “minimum” population does not include unconfirmed breeding pairs or packs, most undocumented groups of 2-4 wolves traveling together, or most lone wolves.

The actual number of wolves in Idaho may easily be 800 or higher which indicates that wolves may already be killing substantially more Idaho elk than hunters are. But even using the FWS minimum wolf estimate and the biologists’ lowest wolf kill percentage estimate, we know that wolves are killing more than half as many Idaho elk as hunters are.

And unlike elk killed by hunters, 80% of the wolf kills are replacement calves or adult females. Regardless of which set of figures one uses, wolves are currently having a much greater impact on Idaho elk recruitment than hunters are and it is virtually all additive (in addition to deaths from other causes).

IDFG Ignores Facts, Science

Yet IDFG Large Carnivore Program Manager Steve Nadeau continues to tell the F&G Commission and the media they lack evidence that wolves are having an impact on most elk populations in Idaho! He knows that radio-collaring fraction of 1% of Idaho’s cow elk cannot provide a statistically reliable sample yet insists it will.

Discussing wolf watchers at Stanley who were angry because a local rancher scared a wolf away in June, Nadeau parroted Suzanne Stone’s and Musiani’s agenda, “It would be nice if the livestock owners and the wolf advocates could come up with a long-term solution that didn’t mean killing wolves.”

Nadeau ignores the biological reality that failure to control wolves, whether in Alberta or Idaho, ultimately results in decimated big game populations and increased livestock depredations. Spending thousands of dollars on one ranch in a temporary effort to reduce wolf predation simply results in increased predation on adjacent ranches.

Misplaced Priorities

Alberta Wolf Program Biologist Bruce Treichel says that wolf trapping and hunting without the use of large baits is ineffective. While Alberta is shooting about 100 wolves from aircraft to save a threatened herd of 100 woodland caribou from extinction, Idaho biologists refuse to kill enough lions to save the handful of endangered caribou that are left in Idaho’s Selkirk herd.

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In an article in the *Clearwater Progress* published in Kamiah, Nadeau responded to Scott Richards' concerns about not bringing dogs into the woods in wolf territory without a gun (see June-July 2006 Outdoorsman). Ignoring recent wolf attacks on dogs in a Stanley campground, a Troy back yard where children had been playing, and the killing of Scott Richards' hounds just outside Grangeville, Nadeau claimed, "There is absolutely no reason to fear taking pets into the woods. People should not be afraid to go into the woods."

Nadeau Says "Wolves Misunderstood"

"Wolves by nature are fearful of humans. A lot of wild animal behavior is misunderstood," claimed Nadeau. The claim that dangerous wild predators are misunderstood has become the favorite theme of predator protectionists like Katmai National Park Grizzly advocate Timothy Treadwell and Australian TV "Crocodile Hunter" star Steve Irwin.

Both were criticized for filming irresponsible behavior around dangerous animals or reptiles and Irwin had a large TV audience who he claimed was "hoping to see me get bit." In 2004 he generated a storm of protests when he held his month-old son in one hand three feet from the open mouth of a 13-foot crocodile he was teasing with a dead chicken in the other hand.

Treadwell and his girlfriend were killed and eaten by a grizzly (Kodiak) bear in 2004 and Irwin was killed by a stingray he was filming on Labor Day, Sept. 4, 2006. The public has been bombarded with so much fiction about wolves displaying humanistic behavior that some appear to forget they have the potential to kill and eat you or your pets.



Wolf advocates rarely publish photos of snarling wolves in a feeding frenzy, choosing to portray them as beautiful animals in benign poses with the claim they are "misunderstood because of old wives' tales." YNP Photo

Wolf Attacks, Wounds Six People on Labor Day

Also on Labor Day 2006, two families and an individual adult were attacked, in three separate episodes by a single wolf in Lake Superior Provincial Park.

According to several newspaper accounts, the 73-pound wolf "left six people, including a three-year-old girl, bloodied, torn and terrified."

After the park supervisor shot and killed the young adult male wolf some distance from the three attack sites the following day, examination of its brain revealed no evidence of rabies so the series of rabies shots for the six injured people were halted. A necropsy revealed the wolf was in good condition but had sustained a broken fang and a broken clavicle, which biologists speculated may have caused it to be forced out of its pack.

Like Alcoholics in Denial

A biologist with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources told the media there have been few instances in Canada where wolves have bitten people and "no one has ever been killed by a wolf attack in North America." Like alcoholics in denial, wolf advocates continue to repeat that claim despite two recent widely publicized wolf attacks resulting in humans being killed and partially eaten.

Both took place in Canada, with the most recent fatal attack on November 8, 2005, involving engineering student Kenton Carnegie in Saskatchewan (see article by Dr. Val Geist in Feb-Mar 2006 Outdoorsman). Witnesses who found Carnegie's remains shortly after the attack occurred, described tracks in the snow indicating the wolves had pulled him down three times before he stayed down and was partially eaten.

No Witness Means No "Proof" of Wolf Kill

RCMP officers who investigated verified the wolf and human tracks in the snow and the punctures by teeth from a "canine-type" animal that caused Carnegie's death. This was confirmed in the autopsy report, yet Ministry of Environment spokesman Art Jones denied that wolves, or even predators, were the cause of death with the following statement:

"There was no direct linkage to wolves. We don't have an eyewitness account, all we know is that a young man was found dead and he had been scavenged. We are unable to determine whether the man was killed or whether he died of other causes."

Jones claimed there has never been a documented case of a wolf killing anyone in North America, but immediately after the attack, the Saskatchewan government issued a "predator attack warning" in the area and officers shot two wolves at a local dump. Meanwhile, a First Nations (Aboriginal) tribe in the region issued a "wolf warning" and told residents to remain inside after dark and not to walk in town.

Alberta and British Columbia operate sanctioned wolf hunts to help control the wolf population but there are no such hunts in Saskatchewan where wolves are protected. Very few are killed by trappers and, as in Idaho, other citizens are only allowed to kill wolves when issued a special permit for livestock predation or if wolves pose an immediate threat to people or livestock on private property.

An outfitter and a spokesperson for the Hatchet Lake First Nation tribe both blamed increased wolf-human encounters on too many wolves and a shortage of prey animals in the area. Area residents pointed out that increased killing of dogs by wolves and the attack on Fred Desjarlais ten months earlier were warnings that should have been heeded

Victim Fought Back in Earlier Attack

On New Year's Eve 2004, Desjarlais had just finished his shift at a uranium milling facility and chose to jog back to the company housing rather than ride a shuttle bus. He heard a sound and saw a large wolf approach and circle him.

Instead of backing off when Desjarlais yelled to scare him, the wolf launched repeated attacks, inflicting several bites to his back and groin. After several attempts while rolling across the rough ground wrestling the wolf, Desjarlais, who is described as incredibly strong, was able to straddle the wolf's back, "bulldog" him to the ground and hold him there briefly.

According to the report by the company safety officer, just as his strength played out a shuttle bus full of co-workers appeared and rescued him, carrying him to safety. Despite Desjarlais' remarkable effort to stop the wolf from killing him, and the fact that several layers of clothing helped prevent even more severe wounds, there is little doubt that the outcome would have been very different if the shuttle bus had not happened along.

Saskatchewan officials could then have claimed there was no evidence that he was attacked and killed by wolves and pretended they were not liable for his death, as they did with Kenton Carnegie 10 months later. As it was, biologists insisted the attack would not have occurred if the wolf had not had some injury that prevented it from killing larger, faster, more powerful prey.

As Dr. Geist has illustrated in his recent Outdoorsman articles, wolf advocates appear to be more interested in providing excuses for wolf attacks on humans than in preventing such attacks by maintaining a high ratio of prey to wolves. When a severe winter upsets that ratio by killing off the primary prey species, predators turn to alternate prey, which ultimately may include humans.

Following extreme mule deer losses in Idaho Unit 33 during the 1992-93 winter, there was a significant increase in yearling mountain lion attacks on dogs and domestic livestock. The young lions lacked the skills to kill the more abundant but larger elk so they promptly became "habituated to humans" and began grabbing family pets from yards or front porches.

Predatory Attacks on Humans Increasing

Of particular significance is the fact that the number of *predatory* wolf attacks on humans is increasing (i.e. where humans are the intended meal). The wolf that attacked both children and adults in the Canadian park on Labor Day, attempted to carry off a 10-year-old boy by

grabbing him by the buttocks, and also the three-year-old girl by grabbing her arm the first time and the hood of her parka the second time.

Bystanders, who thought it was a large black dog at first, joined adult family members in saving both children from a horrible fate. But these are not the only recent attacks that were publicized in the media.

On July 7, 2006, Anchorage schoolteacher Becky Wanamaker was attacked and bitten on the back of both legs by a wolf in a public campground as she sprinted for the safety of an outhouse. Campers heard her screams from inside the outhouse and rescued her as the wolf watched from a distance.

Wolf-Human Encounter Case Histories

It is important to remember that most wolf-human encounters are never reported but this does not mean the unreported attacks did not occur or that some may not have involved potentially serious or fatal outcomes. Of the 62 individuals that Alaska researcher Mark McNay either wrote to or interviewed in his 2002 "Case History of Wolf-Human Encounters in Alaska and Canada," 47 were either wildlife biologists or other government employees with personal knowledge of the 80 encounters he discussed.

Despite wolf supporters' claims to the contrary, McNay did not imply that these were the only wolf-human encounters that occurred during the 101-year span of his recorded incidents. Only 36 of his recorded encounters occurred during the first 90 years and half of the remaining 44 incidents occurred during 2000-2001.

Of the 80 encounters, 12 involved known or suspected rabid wolves and 39 more involved aggressive behavior. These included documented attacks on wolf biologists and other experienced observers where serious injury or death would probably have resulted if the wolves had not been shot in the act of attacking the humans.

Fear of Humans Learned – Not Inherited

McNay cited examples of wolf confrontations in remote areas where the wolves showed no fear of humans because they had probably never seen people and/or been conditioned to avoid them. The eight wolves involved were killed and all tested negative for rabies.

He wrote, "Such encounters are common throughout remote areas of Alaska and Canada where human densities are low and wolves occupy relatively pristine habitats." This parallels my experience landing a helicopter in some of the most remote locations on this continent and often being examined up close by curious animals that had never seen a human, heard a rifle shot or engine noise, or been spooked by a low flying aircraft.

During the years I lived and traveled in remote parts of Idaho's back country, I learned that wild animals' fear of humans is learned behavior. But whether wolves are unafraid or have learned to avoid humans the bottom line is when prey is scarce, wolves revert to their natural instincts.

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Conflicting Advice

As the frequency of attacks on dogs and other wolf-human confrontations continues to increase in Idaho, the potential for a hungry wolf carrying off a child also increases. The recent warning from both the Governor's Office and the local F&G Officer to keep children indoors or under adult supervision in areas frequented by wolves (see page 7 of Feb-Mar 2006 Outdoorsman) conflicts with Nadeau's publicized claim that people have nothing to fear.

This type of irresponsible advice resulted in a California jury awarding \$2.1 million dollars to the mother of a small girl who was attacked and injured by a mountain lion in an Orange County Wilderness Park. During the 1991 trial, the defendants (Orange County) argued that there had never been a recorded lion attack on humans in southern California, and none in northern California during the past century except for an attack by a rabid lion in 1909.

They disputed any liability using the claim that they did not know of the threat and were not responsible for the acts of a wild animal on unimproved public property. But the plaintiffs' lawyer argued that lions had attacked humans, especially children, in other states and Canada and defendants should either have removed the lions or posted warnings about the potential danger they posed.

But despite lion sightings, the park continued to issue information stating that the "most dangerous form of wildlife" in the park was poison oak and that the mountain lion was "shy, secretive, with a healthy aversion to human beings." That is almost identical to Nadeau's published claim, "Wolves by nature are fearful of humans."

As the IDFG Large Carnivore Coordinator in charge of managing wolves in Idaho, Nadeau is the State's official authority on wolves. By ignoring wolf behavior studies and repeating wolf advocates' false propaganda that wolves are naturally fearful of humans, Nadeau has encouraged private citizens to make themselves and their children and pets vulnerable to wolf attacks.

But unlike Ed Bangs and the preservationist groups who circulated this false information to achieve wolf reintroduction, Nadeau's allegiance must be to the Director and the Commission who manage Idaho wildlife in trust for the citizens of Idaho. By continuing to publish misinformation about the potential danger to humans from large carnivores, F&G is making Idaho officials liable for any attack that may occur.

Wildlife officials in Saskatchewan also promoted the preservationist clichés (i.e. "wolves were here first, humans have invaded wolf habitat, humans are responsible for habituated wolves, there has never been a documented human death from a wolf attack," etc.). Then when the fatal attack happened they refused to admit it.

Despite unanimous agreement by investigators, including the local coroner, that wolves caused the death of Kenton Carnegie, wolf biologists conducting their own "investigation" have delayed publication of the report for 10 months. On September 11, 2006, Saskatchewan's chief coroner, Dr. Kent Stewart, announced that a report would "no longer be coming out" and said a Coroner's Inquest will be scheduled instead.

The Provincial Government's refusal to admit the cause of death illustrates the eventual result of allowing "Never Cry Wolf" fanaticism to be substituted for science. If Idaho's Governor, Attorney General and Legislators continue to tacitly endorse F&G's portrayal of large carnivores as not posing a threat to humans, they will likely share the liability for having failed to issue a clear warning to Idaho citizens once a wolf attack involving injury or death occurs.

The Habitat Excuse

When IDFG first hired biologists, they attributed the world class Clearwater elk hunting to the 1910 wildfires that burned out of control. With three extreme winters between 1948 and 1952, biologists refused to feed after the first winter and blamed the elk starvation losses on declining habitat in the Clearwater Region.

In the 1970s, when studies by IDFG Biologist Mike Schlegel revealed that predation - not declining habitat - was limiting elk recruitment in the Clearwater, his peers ignored all such research. Like lemmings blindly following each other to drown, they insisted elk are always density dependent and that killing more elk will always produce more replacement calves.

To "correct" low bull-to-cow elk ratios, they issued hundreds of extra antlerless elk permits each year and drove the Clearwater elk even deeper into the predator pit. IDFG Biologist Pete Zager has spent his career and several million sportsmen dollars unsuccessfully attempting to prove the cliché, "It's lack of habitat, stupid!"

Last November Nadeau told the F&G Commission IDFG lacked sufficient evidence to prove that wolves were severely impacting elk numbers. He and his fellow biologists continued to blame declining habitat for the elk decline even after they filed their "justification" for reducing the number of wolves in the Lolo Zone.

According to a September 25, 2006 news story, FWS Boise Field Supervisor Jeff Foss admitted that wolves were having an impact on elk recovery in the Lolo Zone but said IDFG data did not prove they were the primary cause or that their impact was unacceptable. The fact that wolves are killing 3-4 times as many female elk as hunters in the entire state was reportedly not even discussed. F&G biologists have repeated the habitat excuse so often that facts and logic are ignored.

Commission Questions IDFG – IFWF Relationship

By George Dovel

When formation of the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Inc. was proposed by IDFG Administrative Chief Steve Barton and Director Jerry Conley, it was presented to the F&G Commission as a way to provide funding for non-game education and other non-game activities. The idea was promoted by the (then) *International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (IAFWA)* based in Washington, D.C., of which Conley was President.

Its first major project was funding the MK Nature Center in Boise with the Commission agreeing to provide one or more full-time or part-time F&G employees to staff the nongame interpretive center. Since then various Commissioners have described the Foundation as a way to accomplish things neither IDFG nor the Commission can because of legal constraints.

Former F&G Commissioners Richard Hansen and Wesley Rose serve on the IFWF Board of Directors and Steve Barton has been its Treasurer since its formation in 1990. Ex-officio Board members include the current IDFG Director and one current F&G Commissioner.

Expansion of IFWF Brings Criticism

The expansion of IFWF activities from partially funding small non-game education or habitat improvement projects to putting together million-dollar purchases of land or buildings to be “lease-purchased” by IDFG was briefly described on Page 12 of the June-July 2006 *Outdoorsman*.

On Aug. 6, 2006 the Commission received a letter from Concerned Sportsmen of Idaho (CSI) President Pete Ellsworth calling the dual role of IFWF Treasurer/IDFG Advisor Steve Barton “a solid Webster’s definition of a ‘conflict of interest’.” The letter recommended that the Fish and Game Commission formally investigate the relationship existing between the Foundation and the Department and make the results available to the hunting, angling and trapping public.

IFWF Purchase Approval Delayed

The F&G Commission met on August 24, 2006 to consider final approval of the purchase of 2,860 acres of critical bighorn sheep habitat by the IFWF, IDFG and unnamed funding sources. But instead of approving the purchase by the agreed upon closing date, it decided to delay the purchase until after a special Commission meeting scheduled for October 4, 2006.

The Commission voted to give the private sellers a counter offer agreeing to the terms of the already signed purchase agreement, but extending the purchase date to November 6, 2006. The Commission said it wanted more time to formalize the relationship between IFWF and IDFG and to consider alternative funding sources that are also available.

Acquisition of the property located in Redbird and Short Canyons with frontage on the Snake River below Hells Canyon was not contested by anyone including the County Commission and CSI. But new questions about the propriety of the IDFG association with IFWF were raised by a January 19, 2004 Association Agreement signed by IDFG Director Steve Huffaker and IFWF President Gary Mumford (which was reportedly never approved or even seen by the Commission until now).

Free Use of F&G Facilities, Equipment and Personnel

That agreement says IDFG will provide the following to IFWF at no charge: an Executive Director who shall be the funding coordinator for IDFG and who shall utilize Department staff; a Treasurer who shall utilize IDFG staff; office space, office equipment, software and services, and physical facilities utilized by Department employees, including Funding Coordinator, Foundation Treasurer and support staff regardless of whether such facilities are owned or leased by the Department.

The Agreement provides that the Foundation records must be audited at least bi-annually by “a CPA” but shall remain confidential. The Department agrees that the Foundation is the most effective way to achieve some of its objectives and the value provided “exceeds the cost of the personnel, services and facilities provided by the Department.”

Because sportsmen license dollars fund the majority of the Administration and Communications Bureaus, there is no way to determine how much it is costing hunters and fishermen to support the non-game agenda of this questionable entity. The exploding cost of the Department’s non-hunting and non-fishing activities far exceeds its meager income from nongame funds – including the state wildlife grant program that requires about a \$1 million match every year.

The proposed three-story Boise headquarters building is not needed to accommodate management of fish and game species. Yet F&G is already preparing to threaten sportsmen with massive cutbacks in hunting and fishing programs if they don’t agree to the latest fee increase proposal.

The environmental monster that Jerry Conley created is costing sportsmen more and more to get less and less wild game and fish to harvest. Giving Mr. Barton continued authority to wheel and deal with sportsmen’s money behind closed doors is unacceptable.

The Commission has the option of acquiring the Redbird property using another funding source rather than attempt to legitimize continuation of this relationship. The October 4, 2006 meeting offers the opportunity to improve the Commission’s credibility.

“Shooter-Bull” Operations

Editor, The Outdoorsman:

I’ve read with interest many letters to the editor and articles about “Shooter-bull” operations and the outcry of “fowl” from many “sportsmen”, hunting groups and state officials.

What is the difference, really, between hunting confined domesticated elk and the hunting of domesticated pheasants “planted” by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game on the wildlife segments throughout southern Idaho?

The private game preserves charge to hunt confined elk. The IDF&G charges a fee to hunt weekly and twice weekly released game farm-raised pheasants.

In my opinion, the practice of hunting tame pheasants isn’t very sporting.

I would think the IDF&G, all the “outraged sportsmen” and the state officials would or should be as concerned about the spread of disease and the diluting of the “gene pool” in the wild pheasant population as they are about the state’s elk herd.

The concern of the private hunting preserves’ ability to keep their animals confined and the ability of IDF&G to control the location of planted pheasants have some interesting parallels.

A friend of mine had some interesting observations about private hunting clubs. He thinks it would be in the best interest of Idaho elk hunters to have the rich out-of-state hunters harvest “shooter-bull” trophy elk and leave the wild state herd for Idaho hunters.

Ray Christensen
Neighbor to IDFG
Sterling Wildlife Management Area

Watched Deer Herd Decrease

Editor, The Outdoorsman:

I have watched the deer herd decrease in this area for the past 28 years. Winter starvation and shooting all the breeding size bucks. Quite a few does but no bucks to breed them.

I came to this area in 1972 – cutting poles and posts. I had a camp on the mountain and enjoyed the deer coming into camp. I no longer see any deer in this area.

The Fish and Game is after the dollar and don’t care about increasing the deer herd. This area should be closed to deer hunting until there are some breeding size bucks.

If the elk and deer were fed the road and railroad kill would decrease significantly.

Thanks. I enjoy your newsletter.

Vern Beck
Montpelier

Thank you for you donation. – ED

If you prefer reading facts to the “canned” news in the local media, why not share your copy with a friend or family member. But first I urge you to re-read the articles by Jim Beers and Charles Kay. Both are respected by legitimate wildlife scientists and both tell it like it is.

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Thank you. - ED

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