



COLORADO WOLF & WILDLIFE CENTER

NOVEMBER 2022 • CONSERVATION • EDUCATION • PRESERVATION



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and Wildlife Center

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We hope to give you something to look forward to every day!



Photos by Bernadette Sonefeld
in Roxborough State Park



Colorado Parks and Wildlife can't find any evidence of a mystery wolf pack killing cattle near Meeker



A wolf from a pack spotted near the North Park basin in central Colorado. Photo Credit: Colorado Parks and Wildlife

Sam Brasch | CPR News | November 17, 2022

It appears there may not be a mystery pack of wolves living in northwestern Colorado and killing local livestock after all.

Last month, Colorado Parks and Wildlife officials dispatched a news release acknowledging it was investigating the possibility that wolves were responsible for killing cattle in the White River National Forest.

The news immediately set off speculation that Colorado could have its second known wolf pack. State wildlife officers are tracking a wolf family living in Jackson County, but the animals' territory was more than 100 miles from the site of the livestock deaths near Meeker.

In testimony before the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission Thursday, Travis Black, the agency's northwest regional manager, said the cattle belonged to rancher Lenny Klinglesmith, who reported 18 dead calves to the agency in early October.

Black said initial investigations revealed some cattle had injuries consistent with wolf attacks, which prompted his agency to search for evidence of a pack in the area. Those efforts included flyovers in aircraft, camera traps and howling surveys, where wildlife officers mimic wolf howls to try to elicit a response, Black said.

None of those efforts turned up any evidence of wolves in the area.

"We're scratching our heads a little bit. We really don't know what has occurred up there," Black said.

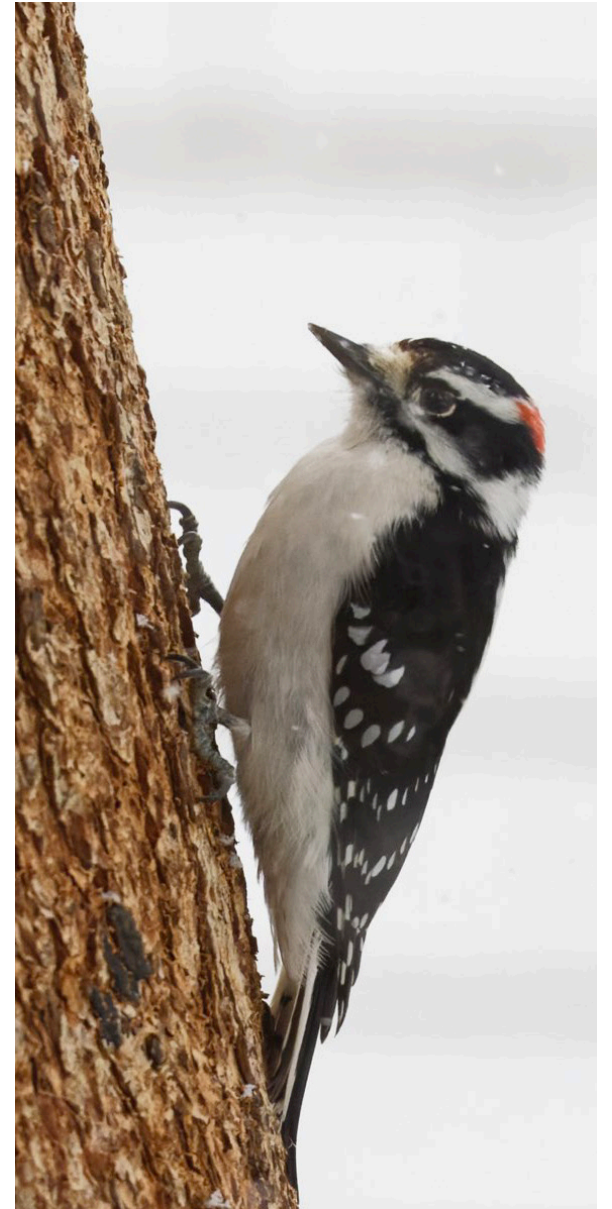
Complicating matters, Klinglesmith has found additional dead livestock in recent weeks. Black told commissioners the rancher had lost at least 40 cattle in total, but only "a handful" had any injuries that might have indicated wolves as the possible cause. Klinglesmith did not immediately return CPR News' request for comment.

It's unclear what's killing the animals. Black said a veterinarian working with the rancher raised the possibility of clostridial bacteria, which can infect and kill cattle within hours. Another potential cause could be livestock-protection dogs.

Black assured commissioners that wildlife officers would continue to monitor the area but said his agency could use the help of veterinarians or other experts to determine what's killing the cattle.



Photos by Bernadette Sonefeld
in Littleton, CO



Members of Colorado’s only known wolf pack may have been killed in Wyoming

Sam Brasch | CPR News | October 27, 2022



Colorado wildlife staff watch over a gray wolf that was tranquilized in 2021 and fitted with a GPS collar after it was spotted in north-central Colorado. Photo: Colorado Parks and Wildlife

Colorado wildlife officers are working with their Wyoming counterparts to follow up on a report of wolves killed near the state border. The inquiry appears focused on a heavily monitored wolf pack living in Colorado's North Park region. On Wednesday, The Coloradoan of Fort Collins published a story saying it had received reports of three wolves being shot “just over the border in Wyoming.” No source was cited by the paper. Travis Duncan, a spokesperson for Colorado Parks and Wildlife, confirmed his agency had received information indicating three black, adolescent female wolves were legally killed in Wyoming. While Colorado wildlife officers can't confirm the identity of the wolves, Duncan said "we believe it may have been part of the North Park pack."

"It's not uncommon for the North Park pack to

travel into and out of Wyoming," Duncan said. "Until such a time where CPW can observe this pack in Colorado, no confirmation is possible." Wyoming officials did not respond to a request for comment.

If the wolves were killed in Wyoming, it’s unlikely anyone broke the law

The predators enjoy vastly different protections on either side of the Colorado-Wyoming border. In Colorado, the animals are protected under state law and the federal Endangered Species Act. Killing a wolf can result in a \$100,000 fine, up to a year in prison and the potential loss of hunting privileges. Federal protections don't apply in Wyoming. The state has designated about 85 percent of its territory as a "predator zone," where wolves can be

killed at any time without a hunting permit. The area includes the entire region along its southern border

This isn’t the first time questions have swirled around wolves living near the border. In 2020, Colorado Parks and Wildlife announced a separate pack had arrived in the state’s far northwest corner, marking the state’s first known wolf family since hunters and trappers eradicated the species in the 1940s.

But the so-called Pioneer pack dwindled in the months following the announcement. Colorado Parks and Wildlife later learned the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was investigating reports of three wolves killed near the border. Neither agency ever released a conclusion about the possible killings, but independent biologists working in the region could only find a single wolf by the following summer.

While the Pioneer pack disappeared, the North Park pack proved more resilient

In 2019, wildlife officers announced a black wolf wearing a telemetry collar appeared to have taken up residence in Jackson County. Colorado Parks and Wildlife later identified it as F1084 — a former member of the well-monitored Snake River pack living near Teton National Park.

Last year, Colorado Parks and Wildlife announced the female wolf had not only found a mate, it had given birth to the state's first known litter of wolf pups in more than 80 years. Governor Jared Polis celebrated the news in a Facebook post, dubbing the new couple "John and Jane wolf."

Gray Wolves in Colorado

Wolves are finding their way back to Colorado after an 80-year absence. At the same time, state wildlife officers are carrying out a voter-approved initiative to reintroduce the predators by the end of 2023.

- A test of ‘ballot box biology’: Colorado’s 2020 reintroduction initiative marked the first time voters, not wildlife managers, ordered the return of an endangered species. **More Info:** tinyurl.com/bb-biology
- Wolves have returned to Colorado without human help. One pack has migrated into Jackson County and started breeding. Another mysteriously disappeared in Moffat County. **Breeding Pack Info:** tinyurl.com/pups-found | **Moffat Co. Disappearances:** tinyurl.com/moffat-co
- Are wolves even endangered? The predators remain protected under state law, but their status as a federal endangered species remains locked in complex court battles. **More Info:** tinyurl.com/gray-wolves-co
- Colorado ranchers are getting ready: Livestock producers are worried about losing animals. One has tried to protect his cattle with guard donkeys. **More Info:** tinyurl.com/guard-donkeys

The pack has continued to make headlines since then. Wildlife officers confirmed the wolves likely killed both cattle and dogs in the region. Don Gittleston, the rancher hit hardest by the depredations, has even employed guard donkeys to help protect his livestock.

While the wolves have been recognized as Colorado's only known pack, their territory extended into southern Wyoming. The animals lived so close to the border that Colorado wildlife officers chased one of the predators across the state line to attach a tracking collar in 2021.

The loss of those wolves would be a setback as Colorado tries to become a safe haven for gray wolves. Colorado Parks and Wildlife plans to boost those efforts by reintroducing wolves on the Western Slope by the end of 2023, following through on ballot initiatives narrowly approved by Colorado voters.

Mike Phillips, the executive director of the Turner Endangered Species Fund and a wolf biologist who supported the ballot initiative, said any wolf losses only boost arguments for an aggressive reintroduction program.

“Regardless of details, the current state of affairs illustrates that when wolf numbers are low, unexpected events can prevent population growth. The best way to certainly and cost-effectively restore the species to Colorado is to release several dozen wolves over a relatively short period of time,” Phillips said.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife plans to release a draft plan for wolf management and reintroduction in December.



Environmentalists challenge Montana wolf regulations in state court

Amanda Eggert | Montana Free Press | November 1, 2022

state's population of gray wolves "seemed relatively stable" between 2011, when federal Endangered Species Act protections for gray wolves were lifted and 2020. That say that changed in 2021 when the Republican-controlled Montana Legislature passed four aggressive wolf management bills that collectively directed the commission to authorize reimbursement for wolf hunters and trappers, increase the season length for trapping, increase bag limits, and permit formerly banned hunting methods such as neck snares, use of bait and hunting at night with spotlights.

The wolf hunting regulations the commission adopted for the 2022-23 season put a 6-wolf quota on the area north of Yellowstone and established a statewide quota of 450 wolves.

"Montana's politically-motivated wolf slaughter is illegal and completely unmoored from scientifically sound wildlife management," WildEarth Guardians' carnivore coexistence advocate Lizzy Pennock said in an emailed release about the lawsuit. "Trophy hunting for wolves does not put food on anyone's table, make elk populations healthier, or protect livestock. Montana's pile of wolf carcasses stacks higher everyday, and we are done waiting for somebody else to act."

A spokesperson for FWP said in a Thursday afternoon email that the department had not yet been served the lawsuit and typically does not comment on active litigation.

The plaintiffs take particular issue with the number of wolves killed near Yellowstone National Park's northern boundary last season.

"Montana hunters killed 21 wolves that park biologists identified as Yellowstone wolves, including the entirety of the beloved Phantom Lake Wolf Pack, representing roughly one-fifth of the Yellowstone wolf population," the plaintiffs write in their suit. "When wolves that occupy territory within the national parks are killed in accordance with state hunting laws because they travel outside park borders, the ecosystems of the national parks are directly and negatively impacted. Killing national park wolves, therefore, harms federal interests."

The plaintiffs argue that the new state laws and hunting regulations "are so extreme in their promotion of killing wildlife on federal lands" that they interfere with federal policy for managing public lands.

The plaintiffs also say the FWP has failed to update the Wolf Conservation and Management Plan that it adopted in anticipation of delisting in 2002, despite language in the plan directing FWP to "undertake a thorough formal review after the first five years" post-delisting and to conduct a subsequent review "at least every five years." This, they argue, amounts to a violation of a "mandatory, non-discretionary duty."

Plaintiffs also take issue with a population assessment tool FWP has used to estimate the state's wolf population, which was used by the commission as it set this year's regulations. The improved Patch Occupancy Model, or iPOM, puts the state's wolf population at 1,160.

Plaintiffs argue this is likely a significant overcount of the actual population and the tool itself "was not subject to peer review, open to public review or comment, or analyzed as an amendment to the wolf population estimate methodologies authorized by the 2002 Wolf Plan" before FWP used it in its modeling for the 2022-2023 hunting regulations.

FWP's failure to take comment on iPOM amount to a violation of the Montana Constitution and Montana Administrative Procedure Act directing agencies to issue notice of a rule and allow for public comment, they argue.

The plaintiffs are asking the court to toss out the 2022 wolf hunting regulations, invalidate any hunting licenses that have already been issued for this season, and direct FWP to update the 2002 wolf plan. They're also asking the court to declare the wolf management laws the Legislature passed in 2021 unconstitutional.

The lawsuit comes in the midst of a review the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is conducting to weigh reinstating federal Endangered Species Act protections for gray wolves in the western U.S. The federal agency announced it would be exploring relisting in September 2021 after finding "substantial, credible information indicating that a listing action may be warranted" in an initial assessment. The agency is overdue in issuing that review, which was supposed to be completed within a year.

Environmental groups WildEarth Guardians and Project Coyote are asking a Lewis and Clark County District Court judge to toss out Montana's current wolf-hunting regulations and declare four hunting laws passed by last year's Montana Legislature unconstitutional.

In a lawsuit filed Oct. 27, the groups argue that four bills the Legislature passed in 2021 and the Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission-set wolf quotas for the 2022-2023 hunting season violate the Public Trust Doctrine, "an ancient doctrine recognizing the principle that certain natural and cultural resources belong to the people, and that the government must protect and maintain these resources for future generations."

Attorneys for the groups assert that the



Wolves Killed in Wyoming May Be First Pups Born in Colorado for 80 Years

Robyn White | Newsweek | November 2, 2022

Wolves found dead in Wyoming may be the same pups that were born just last year, and the first to be born in the wild in Colorado for 80 years.

The three female wolves were found dead about 10 miles into Wyoming and are believed to be members of Colorado's only known wolf pack, The Coloradoan reported.

There is only one known wolf pack in Colorado, known as the North Park pack. It roams across Jackson County, which lies to the North of the state right next to the Wyoming border.

The wolves regularly pass through the border into Wyoming, where it is legal to hunt the species anytime without a hunting permit. In Colorado, however wolves are a protected species and hunting them is illegal. Hunting the species in Colorado could result in a \$100,000 fine.

The three dead wolves match the age and color of pups that were born into the North Park pack in Spring 2021, The Coloradoan reported. They were the first wild wolf pups to be born in Colorado since the 1940s.

"Wolves used to be plentiful throughout the Western U.S., all the way from Mexico to Alaska. They were mostly wiped out at the behest of the livestock industry throughout their range and are only now being restored to places where they used to roam free. The biggest threat to wolves is humans, through both illegal poaching and legal trophy hunting," Chris Smith, Southwest Wildlife Advocate at conservation organization WildEarth Guardians told Newsweek.

"In order to restore wolves to Colorado—which is required by law and the righting of a historical wrong—wolves need to be protected, especially when the population is so small. Three wolves killed represents a major hit to Colorado's nascent wolf population. Wolves are social creatures and a lack of protection disrupts pack dynamics and the viability of a tiny population."

Reintroducing wolves to Colorado has been a long process and was not always popular. The state voted to reintroduce the species in November 2020.

Some farmers were concerned about the wolves taking their livestock, but biologists have said the species reintroduction is vital for the state's ecosystem, as it will restore predator-prey balance in the area.

"Colorado's effort to restore wolves represents the opportunity to get wolf restoration right and avoid the catastrophic war on wolves in the Northern Rockies. But misinformation and fear-based rhetoric will lead to dead wolves, further entrenchment, and possibly more livestock losses," Smith said.

Biologists from Colorado Parks and Wildlife told The Coloradoan that two other members of the North Park pack were sighted on October 28 but it is not clear how many of the pack remain.

Newsweek has contacted the Wyoming Fish and Game department and Colorado Parks and Wildlife for a comment.



Montana woman cited for shooting, skinning husky she thought was a wolf

Andy Bink | Nexstar Media Wire | October 31, 2022

A Montana woman has been cited for animal cruelty after authorities say she shot and killed a young husky, skinned it, and posted photos of herself with it online.

In late September, the Flathead County Sheriff's Office said it was notified about several husky and shepherd mix dogs left near Doris Creek in the Flathead National Forest. Several were located and taken in by Animal Control.

The Sheriff's Office added that the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks notified them that one of the dogs may have been shot.

Through their investigation, authorities were able to identify the woman, who told them she had mistaken the husky for a wolf pup, a local outlet reports.

In a social media post that has since been deleted but was obtained by TMZ, the woman bragged about killing a young wolf. In a separate post, she admitted to making a mistake and said she believed it "was a hybrid wolf pup." She added that the dog was aggressive and "coming directly for" her.



According to the Associated Press, the woman has been cited with a misdemeanor rather than a felony because authorities believe they can prove negligence but not intent. The woman pleaded not guilty last week.

SAY NO TO RECREATIONAL KILLING AND TROPHY HUNTING OF COLORADO'S WOLVES

You can express your thoughts and make comments to your CPW commissioners about recreational killing and trophy hunting that may be a future topic for Colorado wolves. These are the decision makers and your comments do matter. You can also go to cpw.state.co.us SOC-Wolves for more information.

In early January and February 2023 there will be a chance to speak at public meetings to the commissioners. We will provide dates and locations in the upcoming months.

Remember that YOUR VOICE can make a difference and if you want to see wolves living free and protected, they need you.

EXPRESS YOUR CONCERNS TO THE FOLLOWING:

Carrie Besnette Hauser, Chair

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Taishya Adams

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Term Expires: July 2023

Dallas May, Vice Chair

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Karen Michelle Bailey

Representative: Member at Large; Boulder, CO
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Marie Haskett, Secretary

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Term Expires: July 2025

Richard Reading

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Term Expires: July 2023

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Dan Gibbs

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TINYURL.COM/WOLFTROPHYHUNT



WAYS TO CO-EXIST WITH WOLVES

www.woodriverwolfproject.org/tools



<https://tinyurl.com/RestoreWolfProtection>

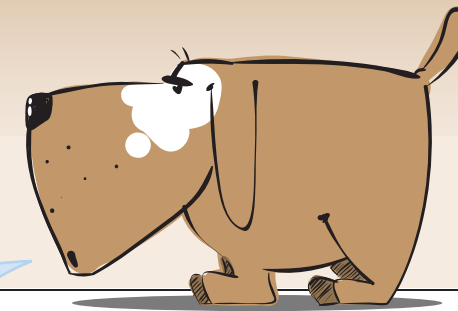
Adoption corner

TCRAS

Teller County Regional Animal Shelter
tcrascolorado.org · 719.686.7707

SLVAWS

San Luis Valley Animal Welfare Society
slvaws.org · 719.587.woof (9663)



[NOTE - Our shelter is still open for adoptions, but we are asking that you call ahead and make an appointment before coming in to the shelter - 719-686-7707.]

OLLIE »

This beautiful lady was brought back to a shelter because her family had to move. She loves and seeks attention, so if you are looking for a lap cat, she is your lady. She also keeps her environment tidy and clean. She is the PURRRFECT cat.



« KANE

Hi, I'm Kane! I'm full of energy and love to meet new people. I like to meet new dogs too, but sometimes I have too much energy for the other dogs. I have some hip issues so I prefer short bursts of energy, and shorter walks. I love a good squeaky toy to play fetch with, but after that I'd love to get some cuddles and just take it easy. I love a good squeaky toy to play fetch with, but after that I'd love to get some cuddles and just take it easy.

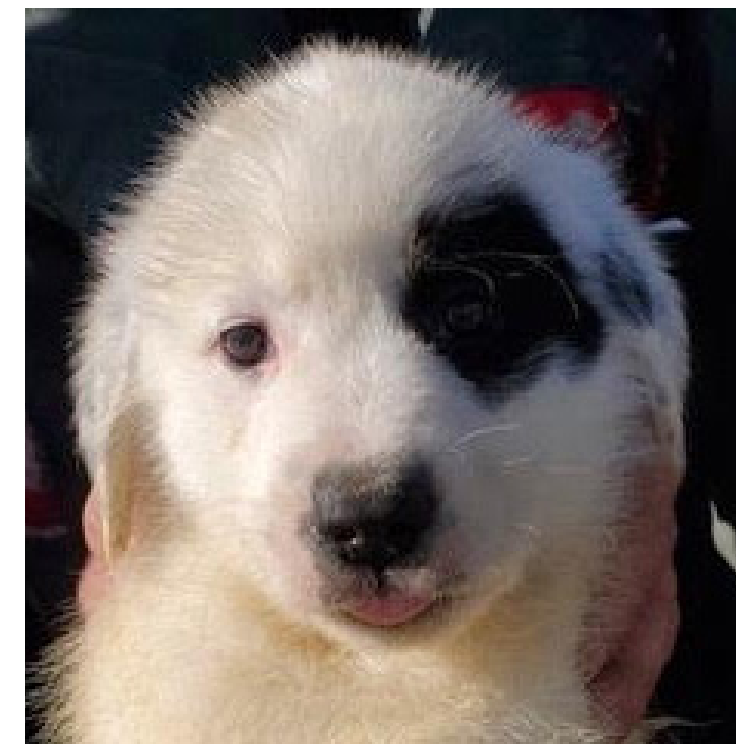


SIX PUPS



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JIMMI



Jimmi has a Great Pyrenees mix mom. He is 3 months old, but will be a medium sized adult. Neutered, all vac's, microchipped.

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