



# COLORADO WOLF & WILDLIFE CENTER

AUGUST 2024 • CONSERVATION • EDUCATION • PRESERVATION







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[tours@wolfeducation.org](mailto:tours@wolfeducation.org)  
PO Box 713 Divide, CO  
80814 719.687.9742

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

# NAME THAT LIZARD!



## HINT:

He was found at the Center, in the mountains at over 9,000' elevation.

They are only 2-3.5 inches long fully-grown.



↑ We love beautiful Tiger Lillies that dress our visitor center.

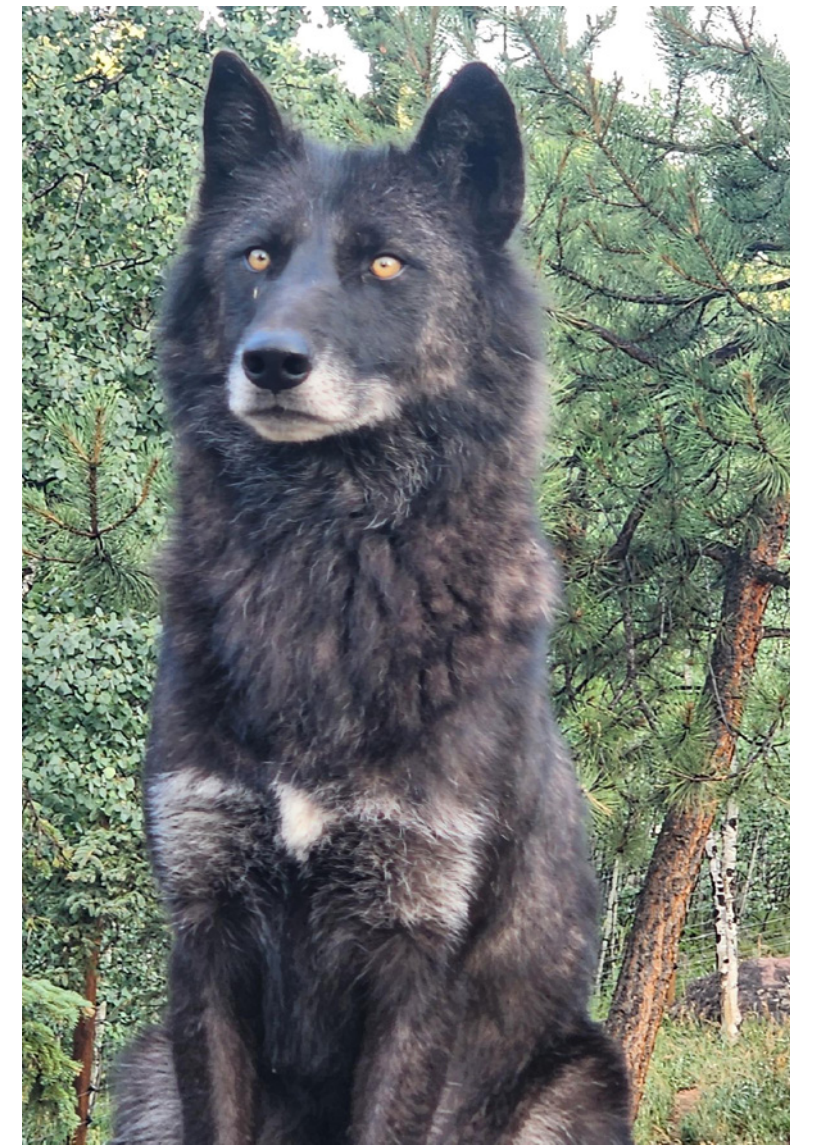


## Around THE Center



↑ Our first raspberry in 7 years. It was delicious!

← Shamba on his throne ↓ The beautiful Raven





# Conservation Groups Say Project 2025 Would Gut Wildlife and Public Land Protections

Here's a look at how the far right plan would impact environmental regulations and conservation efforts

Lindsey Botts | SierraClub.org  
August 20, 2024

You may have heard of Project 2025, the Far Right plan to gut the federal government. But did you know the plan would be a bonanza for the oil and gas industry? This blueprint for right-wing governance is a veritable wish list for any industry seeking to privatize public lands and ignore wildlife protections. According to the authors of Project 2025, a.k.a. Mandate for Leadership: The Conservative Promise, our public lands are for resource extraction—not people, not conservation, and certainly not for climate change mitigation.

Project 2025's chapter on the Department of the Interior—which manages most public lands and wildlife—was written by William Perry Pendley, the same person who once opined that all public land in the West should be sold off to private investors. And the orchestrators of the document include a who's who of associates at the Heritage Foundation, the Koch-backed think tank that advocates for the expansion of oil and gas above all else.

"Given the dire adverse national impact of Biden's war on fossil fuels, no other initiative is as important for the DOI under a conservative president than the restoration of the department's historic role managing the nation's vast storehouse of hydrocarbons," reads Pendley's chapter. "[M]uch of which is yet to be discovered."



Brooks Range in summer, Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Alaska. Photo: Cathy Hart/Design Pics via Getty Images

Consequently, conservation groups, environmentalists, and public land advocates are appalled. Project 2025 "is like [an oil-lobbyist] fever dream when it comes to public lands ... and it's really a 19th-century approach," Athan Manuel, the director of the Sierra Club's Lands Protection Program, said.

What's most concerning to environmentalists is how a possible authoritarian presidential administration could achieve this vision. Here's a rundown of some of the most egregious policies in Project 2025 that could allow a future Far Right president to steal public land, undermine wildlife conservation, and hoodwink Americans into thinking privatization is what's best for our shared natural landscape.

## War on wildlife

Animals have been a unifying force in the US for decades. After all, it's hard to resist the majesty of

a buffalo, the wildness of a lynx, or the patriotic symbolism of a bald eagle. Project 2025 sets the stage to undermine decades of conservation efforts that have helped these species because, according to Pendley, "The act's success rate ... is dismal." His proposed fix means that an untold number of "species specialists," the people at the US Fish and Wildlife Service who know the most about wildlife, could be fired. And the entire Biological Resources Division of the US Geological Survey could be abolished.

Many provisions of the Endangered Species Act, signed into law by a Republican president, could be eliminated. Federal wildlife managers could have to include cost in listing decisions, something the original authors of the law expressly forbade. And wildlife managers at USFWS could be forbidden from reintroducing species to suitable habitats outside an animal's current range, a crucial measure in the Anthropocene as habitats change. Critical habitat designations could also be weakened, hampering recovery efforts by allowing politically motivated interior secretaries to skirt the creation of what many species need most—a place to live.

"The Endangered Species Act has been so popular and has done such a good job of protecting species that we have not lost to extinction hundreds of species," said Kristen Boyles, a managing attorney at Earthjustice. "Almost all species that are put on the list are actually protected and still with us here on Earth."

Despite this, protections for grizzlies and wolves could be unilaterally wiped out with no scientific process. Politicians in some conservative states have argued that both species have recovered because they've met population targets. However, most researchers and legal experts say that recovery is much more than numbers. "A little island population and another island population in another state ... that's not going to be recovery," Boyles said. "Recovery is a complex biological question—it's numbers of breeding pairs; it's the health of the habitat; it's continuing threats and harms." Western states could also become the arbiters of sage grouse recovery plans, even though the species

has nose-dived under state management, with populations declining on average by nearly 3 percent annually since the 1960s.

One of President Biden's signature conservation policies, the America the Beautiful Campaign, could also be canned under Project 2025. The campaign is part of a global effort to conserve 30 percent of nature by 2030—also known by the shorthand 30x30. Pendley seems to be under the impression that this policy removes "productive uses" of public land. Jenny Rowland-Shea, the director of public lands at the Center for American Progress, says this assumption is based on misconception.

"30x30 is not just a federal land initiative. It is easements, looking at private lands. It is working with state lands," Rowland-Shea said. "I think a lot of people think of public lands as being places where they can go hike, that are set aside for future generations, that are there to help protect clean air and water ... but really, this document sees them only as a resource to be extracted and sold off to the highest bidder.

## Public land turned private

One specific clause directs a future president to review national monument designations with the intent of downsizing them. Specifically, the plan calls for reducing the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument in Oregon and the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument in Maine. The ultimate objective of the plan is to abolish the Antiquities Act of 1906, the law that gives presidents the authority to designate monuments. Since President Theodore Roosevelt, nearly every president has used it to expand recreation, protect sacred sites, and enhance conservation.

Protections across cultural sites and sensitive ecosystems would also be revoked. Some high-priority areas include the Thompson Divide of the White River National Forest in Colorado, the 10-mile buffer around Chaco Culture National Historical Park in New Mexico, and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in northern Minnesota.

In Alaska, where oil and gas companies are eager to expand drilling, Pendley would like to see a complete revocation of President Biden's National Petroleum Reserve protections, which seek to set aside roughly half of the Western Arctic for conservation. Under the Far Right plan, the federal government would be required to hold oil and gas sales in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, one of America's last great wildernesses. And the Ambler Road project, which the Biden administration recently ruled would be

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too destructive, would move forward. The 211-mile road would cleave through a portion of the Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve and allow a mining company to tear through wildlife habitat and tribal areas. Lastly, millions of acres in the Tongass National Forest could be opened up for road building and logging.

Rewriting the rules

The plan also calls for amending the National Environmental Policy Act to favor big business. Among other provisions, NEPA requires the federal government to include the public in federal land decisions. Project 2025 directs a future administration to set page limits and arbitrary deadlines for environmental analysis, which experts say would undermine the ability to assess impacts thoroughly. The plan also encourages a future interior secretary to urge Congress to do away

with judicial reviews, a key tool to hold appointees accountable. These are just a sampling of the ideas in the public land chapter. In total, it includes dozens of actions, ranging from specific to sweeping, that a future president could take to cripple climate action, remove wildlife protections, and curtail outdoor recreation. “Some of those suggestions are just completely unrealistic: Repealing the Antiquities Act is unlikely to go anywhere in Congress,” said Jeff Ruch, the executive director at the Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility. “The Alaskan [provisions] were the more egregious in the sense that they were more doable than a lot of the other ones, but my overall impression is that it was sort of a clueless take.”



MEET GARISSA!

My passion for wolves began when I first visited Yellowstone as a child and was able to view these beautiful animals in the wild. I wanted to share my passion for wildlife with others, and I later volunteered as a zookeeper assistant. Now, I feel blessed to be part of the pack at the Colorado Wolf and Wildlife Center.

I love teaching others about wolves so they can better appreciate them, and I love working with the animals. Choosing favorites is hard, but I especially enjoy working with the young wolf Zarah as well as Coco, the New Guinea Singing Dog.

Scientists Have more evidence to explain why billions of crabs vanished around Alaska

Rachel Ramirez | CNN | August 24, 2024

Fishermen and scientists were alarmed when billions of crabs vanished from the Bering Sea near Alaska in 2022. It wasn’t overfishing, scientists explained — it was likely the shockingly warm water that sent the crabs’ metabolism into overdrive and starved them to death. But their horrific demise appears to be just one impact of the massive transition unfolding in the region, scientists reported in a new study released Wednesday: Parts of the Bering Sea are literally becoming less Arctic.

The research from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration found warmer, ice-free conditions in the southeast Bering Sea — the kind of conditions found in sub-Arctic regions — are roughly 200 times more likely now than before humans began burning planet-warming fossil fuels.

The study underlines “how much this Bering Sea ecosystem has already changed from what it was even within the lifetime of one snow crab fisherman,” said Michael Litzow, lead author of the study and the director for Alaska’s Kodiak lab for NOAA Fisheries.

It also suggests “we should anticipate many more [very warm] years,” he said, while truly Arctic conditions — cold, icy, treacherous — will be few and far between.

Snow crabs, a cold-water Arctic species, thrive overwhelmingly in areas where water temperatures are below 2 degrees Celsius, though they can physically function in waters up to 12 degrees Celsius.

A marine heat wave in 2018 and 2019 was especially deadly for the crabs. Warmer water caused the crabs’ metabolism to increase, but there wasn’t enough food to keep pace.

Billions of crabs ultimately starved to death, devastating Alaska’s fishing industry in the years that followed.

Snow crabs are a commercially valuable species, worth up to \$227 million a year, according to Wednesday’s study. Litzow said the industry needs to adapt, and fast.

“How are we going to do business differently as this process gets worse and worse for the snow crab fishery?” he said, noting that while he’s “hopeful” to get a recovery over a short period, since the region has been so far cold and new young snow crabs have spawned, he warned “the odds are for continued poor conditions” in the coming years.

The decline of the Alaskan snow crab signals a wider ecosystem change in the Arctic, as oceans warm and sea ice disappears. The ocean around Alaska is now becoming inhospitable for several marine species,



Molts and shells from snow crab sit on a table in June at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center in Kodiak, Alaska. Photo: Joshua A. Bickel/AP

including red king crab and sea lions, experts say. A warmer Bering Sea is also ushering in new species, threatening those that have long lived in its treacherous, cold waters like the snow crab.

Normally, there is a temperature barrier in the ocean that prevents species like Pacific cod from reaching the crabs’ extremely cold habitat. But during the 2018-2019 heat wave, Pacific cod were able to go to these warmer-than-usual waters and ate a portion of what was left of the snow crab population.

“We have observed species shifts in distribution and mismatches in prey and predators, which have contributed to declines in some species like Pacific cod in the Gulf of Alaska,” Robert Foy, director of the Alaska Fisheries Science Center, told CNN.

Foy, who is not involved with the study, said these vast ecosystem changes are posing “new challenges and opportunities for fisheries science and management,” noting that fishery managers are now working to incorporate new technologies like drones and artificial intelligence to “more rapidly detect and respond to environmental changes and ecological responses.”

The Arctic region has warmed four times faster than the rest of the planet, scientists have reported. Litzow called what’s happening in the Bering Sea a “bellwether” of what’s to come.

“All of us need to recognize the impacts of climate change,” he said. “We pay a lot of attention to this for good reason — because people’s livelihoods depend on them.”



# When Scriveners Cry Wolf

In Colorado, it's not just lobos, wildlife officials, conservationists and ranchers being placed in the spotlight. In his latest "New West" column, Todd Wilkinson says scrutiny ought to be directed at media outlets too



I've been an environmental journalist covering the American West for nearly 40 years. There are expectations, internal and external, that come with our profession. One is endeavoring to leave readers smarter and better informed if they choose to indulge us with their time.

Regarding the First Amendment of the US Constitution and the eminency given to freedom of the press, some say the pen is mightier than the sword in maintaining a functional representative democracy, where people in power are held to account.

What happens, though, when the news media, be it your local newspaper or national TV network or cable station, spews pure ecological nonsense that, under the normal tenets of journalistic fact-finding, cannot stand up to serious, rigorous scrutiny?

Who calls out the media?

Today in our beloved West there's a huge problem with how some environmental issues are reported. It involves the inability of reporters to seemingly differentiate between fact and fiction. This includes

untangling pernicious mythology that still informs both public attitudes and related frontier-era public policies.

If news media condones and gets by with circulating distortions, then how will the public ever know what the truth really is?

Consider how some members of the media continue to portray wolves. **A telling example is a recent editorial published** by the *Colorado Springs Gazette* editorial board. Founded in 1872, the Gazette declares with pride that it has won a couple of Pulitzer Prizes over the years. The irony of the Gazette's recent editorial—on the 2023 reintroduction of gray wolves to the state—is evidence of ecological ignorance within the Fourth Estate.

The *Gazette's* editorial writers declare in the second sentence of their op-ed: " Since introduction, wolves have killed at (sic) nearly two dozen heads (sic) of livestock this year — not including undocumented kills —and Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) seeks more wolves."

Two dozen cows or calves, maybe a few more.

Yes, that's right, *just* two dozen cattle in a state with close to three million cows being raised on tens of millions of acres of private and public land—the vast majority for human consumption as beef on our dinner table.

When considered in context, the depredation figure is a mere blip statistically speaking, and it is even more so were the editorial writers to actually provide their readers with an answer in response to this question: Two dozen livestock losses, in comparison to what?

The number of cattle taken by wolves, were it 100 or 200 by year's end, would still be nominal, given that tens of thousands in recent years have perished by a variety of other means—be it weather-related, disease, injury, eating poisonous plants, or calves taken by coyotes and free-roaming domestic dogs.

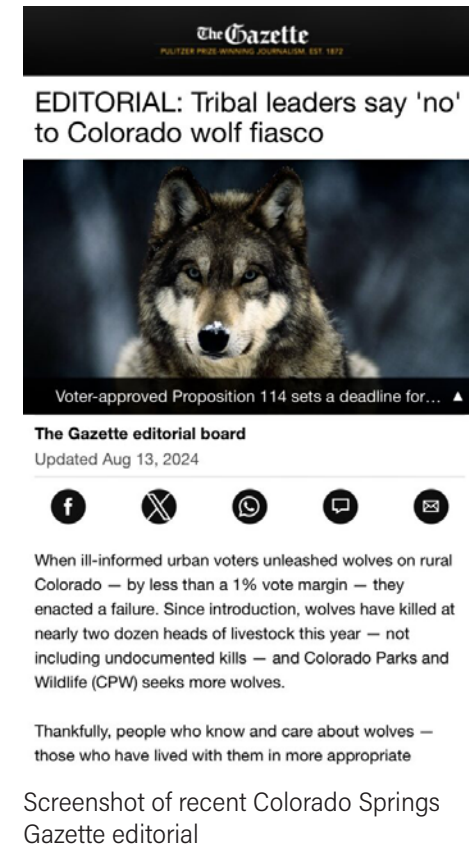
At this very moment, however, the livestock industry in Colorado and its rural elected officials, obviously playing to the base instincts of their constituents, have worked themselves into a lather about wolves. Wolves have become the catalyst for heated rallies, intimidation tactics directed at wildlife officials and conservationists, and, quite frankly, a fulcrum for specious exaggeration.

One wonders about the opportunity cost of time and energy lost to howling about wolves that might have been applied to addressing real threats to ranchers and farmers.

On top of it, there's legislation introduced by US Rep. Lauren Boebert of Colorado called the "Trust the Science Act." Indeed, it would be an insightful exercise for an aspiring journalist to examine how much of what the Congresswoman says about the science of wildlife management and environmental laws is trustworthy. Boebert recently said while attending the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee that if Donald Trump is elected president for a second term, he ought to nominate her as the next US Secretary of the Interior.

We as journalists in the Northern Rockies have contended with this kind of hysteria before and it's disappointing to see it play out as a re-run in the Centennial State.

Based on a sampling of wolf-related reporting that's happened in Colorado so far, it's obvious some members of the media have not bothered to consider the actual impacts of wolf restoration



perhaps, even the urban editorial writers of the *Colorado Springs Gazette* can understand: Living with wolves is really not that big of a deal for “the livestock industry”—not only in the Northern Rockies but in Minnesota where there are 3,000 wolves inhabiting a part of the Upper Midwest with 12,000 farms.

Some three decades ago, the ranching and outfitting industry up here predicted that wolves in the Northern Rockies would wipe the landscape of cattle, sheep, elk and other big game species before then preying on people. That obviously didn't happen; far from it. Wolves do not pose an imminent daily menace to the safety of ranch kids waiting at rural bus stops, nor to vulnerable grandmas and grandpas sitting on the front porch, nor to 99.9 percent of pets who have responsible human caretakers.

Yet the *Colorado Springs Gazette*, **in its editorial**, penned this:

“Though a slim majority of voters romanticize wolves roaming the countryside — away from their children and pets — few had studied the issue to know whether Colorado was a proper environment for doing this. It is not. There are too many people settled on the Western Slope — a region increasingly attractive to developers and urban newcomers. That

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within a bigger picture, nor have they delved much into what we journalists in the Northern Rockies know to be true. Our perspective is shaped by writing about the largest wolf population in the West and examining data that has accumulated over the last 30 years since wolves were reintroduced to Greater Yellowstone and central Idaho.

To put it in simple terms that,





Yellowstone is considered the premier nature preserve in the world for watching wild wolves. Millions of people each year travel to the national park with the hope of seeing wolves or hearing them howl, be it along the roadside or in the remote backcountry. According to famed retired park naturalist and best-selling author Rick McIntyre, the experience is life-changing for many. Of the 100 million tourist visits notched in Yellowststone since wolves were reintroduced in 1995, how many people have been attacked by lobos or fled from the wilderness fearing for their lives and screaming in terror? Answer: zero. Such truth does not fit with the narrative spun recently by editorial writers with the Colorado Springs Gazette newspaper and what wolves in that state allegedly mean for public safety. Photos courtesy Jacob W. Frank/NPS



means too many likely conflicts between wolves, livestock, pets and — God forbid — human beings enjoying the wilderness.”

Yes, God forbid. God forbid the Pulitzer-Prize-winning *Colorado Springs Gazette* would have the courage to ground-truth such absurd fear-mongering rather than pandering to a mentality that undermines Colorado’s image as a state where wild nature and beauty are treasured, and, certainly, has been monetized *ad nauseum*.

To put the alleged danger of wolves in context, Yellowstone not far from where I live will likely notch more than 4.8-million human visits this year in a national park with around 125 wolves and a few hundred grizzly bears. More than 100 million visits to the park have happened since wolves were brought back in the mid 1990s. Using the *Gazette*’s logic, you might assume Yellowstone would be a very scary place for loyal readers of Little Red Riding Hood to wander.

Perhaps the *Gazette* could inform us now how many park visitors, especially wilderness backpackers, have been eaten or terrorized by lobos? Perhaps the news paper could also tell us how many farmers and ranchers in the Northern Rockies have been driven out of business by wolves.

It wouldn’t take more than a phone call for an enterprising rookie *Gazette* reporter to get an answer but zero is a rather inconvenient fact that contradicts the titillating tone of the paper’s editorial writers.

Another problematic fact is that Colorado, which has the largest elk population of any state in the US, is dealing with some angry ranchers who want wapiti numbers reduced because they compete with cattle for grass and sometimes break fences. Colorado also has a growing Chronic Wasting Disease problem and wolves, scientists say, can help with both. They can help regulate elk numbers and be allies in controlling the spread of CWD, an always-fatal disease in members of the cervid family that includes elk and deer.

Another question the *Gazette* might ask is how elk populations and hunter

success rates are doing these days in Wyoming, Montana and Idaho since wolf reintroduction? Here, again, the editorial writers might not wish to learn the answer. There are actually more elk in these states today than 140 years ago, with wapiti numbers considered near, at or above population objectives in most hunting districts. On their websites, outfitters and guides sell hunts to clients for thousands of dollars and boast of success.

In 2020, voters in Colorado went to the polls and by a slim 51 to 49 percent margin approved Proposition 114, a first of its kind in the nation ballot measure that instructed the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission to reintroduce wolves, some 80 years after they were eradicated to make the state safe for cattle and sheep.

The vast majority of “yes” voters live along the front range of the Colorado Rockies while most “nay” voters reside in the western third of the state. Just because a person is a rural Coloradan or an urban one, however, does not guarantee that a person is more ecologically literate or ignorant.

In December 2023, Colorado released the first of 10 transplanted wild wolves that had been captured in Oregon and there are tentative plans to add another 15 more. The *Gazette* characterizes the effort as a “predictably disastrous reintroduction scheme.” Once again, context is lacking and the paper is rendering its judgment based *on what and compared to what?*

Two dozen cattle and/or sheep lost—or even ten times that number in a total cattle population of millions— is hardly tantamount to a crisis or natural disaster, certainly not one warranting a grandstanding editorial in one of Colorado’s major newspapers. A single winter or spring blizzard in Colorado can take out that many animals in a matter of hours. And, just as most ranchers take precautions to better protect their livestock against exposure to weather, there are things they can do to markedly reduce the threat that wolves pose to cattle and sheep, especially during calving and lambing time. (FYI: for a few decades I was

an environmental reporter correspondent for *The Denver Post* and my editors there were sticklers for facts. Had I written stories using the same assertions made by *Gazette* editorial writers, my editors would have compelled me to prove their veracity and I wouldn’t have been able to).

According to Terry Matlock with the US Department of Agriculture, Colorado has 69,000 farmers and ranchers. “Of the total land area of 66.3 million acres, 31.8 million acres were used by the 38,893 farms and ranches throughout the state, according to the 2017 Census of Agriculture,” Matlock wrote. “The state’s market value of agriculture products sold was \$7.49 billion. Although very diverse, livestock is the No.1 commodity accounting for \$5.3 billion or 70 percent of total value. The inventory for cattle and calves makes Colorado 10th in the nation with 2.8 million head; Colorado places fifth in the U.S. with 1 million cattle on feed.”

True, wolves have impacts. It’s important to note that a few individual livestock producers, relatively speaking, are likely to be impacted by wolves, but their losses should not be embellished, in a flourish of rhetorical extrapolation, to suggest wolf-related predation is widespread—or that wolves lurk as bogeymen in the shadows of every forest ready to pounce. Read this [Yellowstonian story about a retired government depredation expert](#) who says livestock losses were routinely inflated. Carter Niemeyer, who is highlighted in that story, says there are provisions to lethally remove wolves that become habituated to people or which chronically prey on livestock, as that is common sense.

Moreover, as part of the state’s strategy that laid the groundwork for reintroduction, ranchers are handsomely reimbursed for their losses and there are plenty of added services available to help them better protect their livestock. Learn more about how the state of Colorado deals with livestock depredation by [clicking here](#). Let us not forget that many millions of dollars, in the form of taxpayer subsidies, are already

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being spent to aid ranchers in lethal predator control of coyotes, black bears, mountain lions and eagles; offering disaster relief for weather/climate events that kill livestock and crops; and below-cost grazing fees that ranchers pay for the privilege of fattening up their private cattle and sheep on public land grass.

On the face of things, the outcry from some members of the ranching industry in Colorado is more than just disproportionate to the facts, but suggests wolves are being used as symbolic surrogates in order to vent larger cultural and perhaps ideological frustrations. That phenomenon is actually great fodder for a story.

It’s damned hard work, after all, to make one’s living on the land. Long hours, stress related to weather, fluctuating market conditions, kids not wanting to carry on the family business and rising costs of production are existential threats, but losses of cattle to wolves do not rank high among them. If you talk with ranchers off the record, as I often do in the Northern Rockies, they admit that’s the case but few will publicly acknowledge it because they fear becoming alienated from their own ranching community which uses wolves as a convenient scapegoat. Where one stands on wolves is a test of loyalty to other members of their community.

The polemical atmosphere isn’t helped when a newspaper enters into the fray, motivated by an obvious intent of inflaming divisions rather than presenting information that can actually help defuse conflict based on fairy tales. Here, the Gazette missed a golden opportunity to educate its readers and be a newspaper that is truly Pulitzer worthy.

The idea that no rancher ought to incur impact from public wildlife is as absurd as believing that no public fishable streams will escape impacts from livestock grazing or that water diversion from public streams to grow alfalfa in order to feed livestock will not damage aquatic life. Ranching comes with inherent risks and losing animals to carnivores in big open spaces of the West is part of the cost of doing business.

Congresswoman Lauren Boebert lambasts “out-of-touch Denver and Boulder leftists” for voting to bring wolves back but she doesn’t apparently grasp that those same people each year, through their tax dollars, help underwrite subsidies and

reimbursement programs to keep ranchers in business.

Although zero loss of livestock to carnivores was an objective brutally executed when annihilation campaigns aimed at wolves, grizzlies and mountain lions were carried out successfully on millions of acres of land at the end of the 19th century and into the first half of the 20th century, that kind of special use dominance no longer flies. The public values wildlife.

For comparison, in a state like Montana, the longer that residents live with wolves on the landscape and become more accustomed to them being there, the more that tolerance rises. However, in neighboring Wyoming where it’s still legal for people to run down wolves to their deaths with snowmobiles, and where wolves in 85 percent of the state can be killed by almost any means, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, using killing methods that most modern humans would find unspeakable if carried out against their dogs, modern values of decency have been slower to arrive.

If the *Gazette* is truly interested in looking out for the welfare of rural Coloradans, then it’s not focusing on the real threats to the survival of legacy ranching families. Those threats are: rural sprawl and residential subdivisions making it harder for livestock producers in some areas to operate at scale; rising costs of production, losses owed to diseases, foul weather, livestock eating poisonous plants and losses to coyotes, and, the big one, the drying out of the West owed to climate change.

The *Gazette* also asserted in its editorial: “Colorado’s wolf reintroduction is such a bad idea that Idaho, Montana and Wyoming have also refused to provide wolves.” The fact that the states of Wyoming, Montana and Idaho, along with the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Indian Reservation, are not willing to provide wolves for further augmentation of the wolf population in Colorado is not based on any compelling scientific reasoning. Rather, it’s political maneuvering that, at least on the part of the states, demonstrates they still hold a grudge against such things as wolf and grizzly recovery. Ironically, bringing back both species has fueled a nature-tourism economy in the Northern Rockies, anchored by wildlife watching, worth billions of dollars. A recent study noted that wolf watching, by itself,

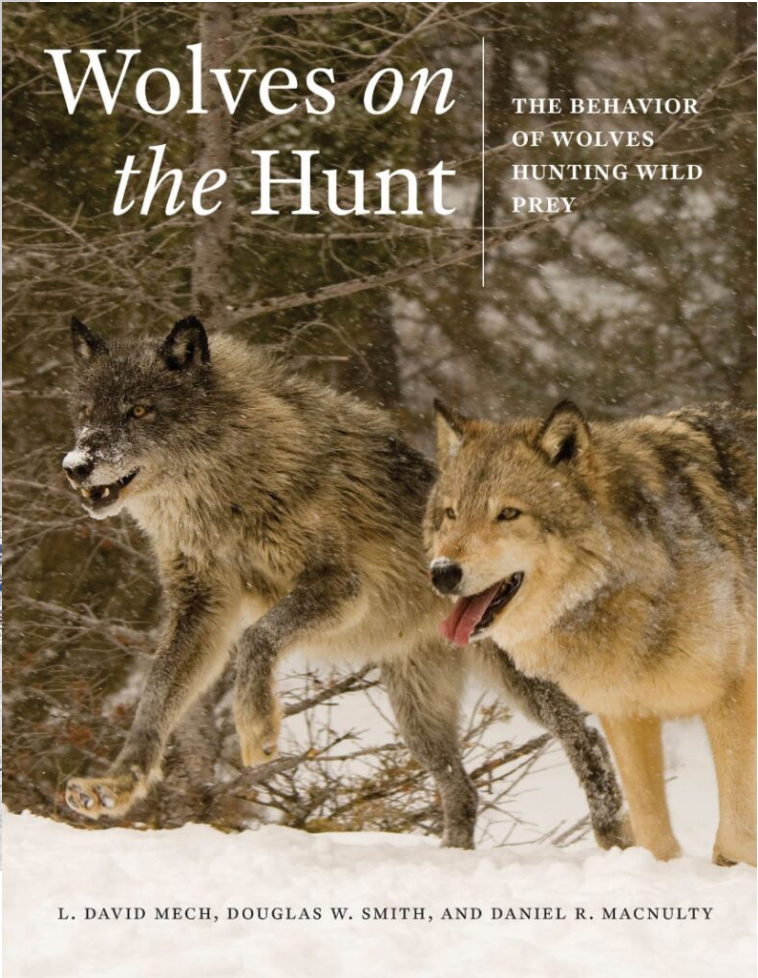
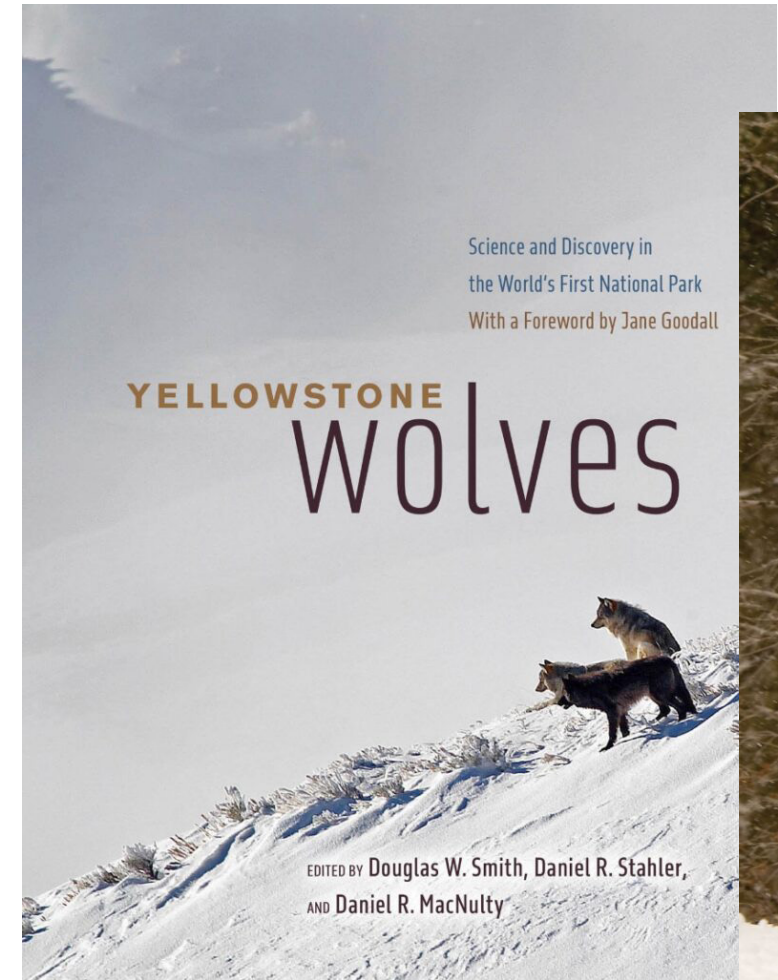
generates almost \$83 million annually in economic activity for communities around Yellowstone. One could easily see something similar happening in Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado and, if it does, the amount of dollars generated from wolf watchers to the state economy will far exceed wolf-related costs.

The *Colorado Springs Gazette* is not the only media outlet that prints hyperbole it knows is beyond the pale of legitimacy. Not long ago, the *Cowboy State Daily* in Wyoming published a piece in which it allowed a rancher in Colorado to claim that “Oregon wolves”—which were transplanted to Colorado—are somehow bolder than normal wolves and today are sowing hardship and terror on livestock producers. Similar assertions in the Northern Rockies were made about “Canadian wolves” reintroduced to Yellowstone and those claims have been and can be, readily debunked.

Still, the *Colorado Springs Gazette* wrote: “The Colville Tribes — along with authorities in Idaho, Montana and Wyoming — deserve accolades for acting in the best interests of American Indians and other rural Coloradans for declining to help with a program that jeopardizes people, pets, livestock and wolves. Given the level of rural anxiety regarding this failed project, wolves face the grave danger of rural residents killing them in sheer anger and frustration.”

Right now, the best way to tamp down “sheer anger” is for newspapers of record to stop publishing assertions that validate mythology and encourage anti-wolf vigilantism. That is true journalism in the public interest and it’s badly needed, now more than ever.

Note to readers and fact-seeking journalists. Here are a couple of authoritative, science-based books on the real behavior of wild wolves:





# BLM wins two lawsuits, clearing way for elimination of two Wyoming wild horse herds

Mike Koshmrl | Oil City News | August 18, 2023



Wild horses are herded by a helicopter pilot toward a trap on the morning of Aug. 15, 2024 in the White Mountain area of southwest Wyoming. Photo: Mike Koshmrl/WyoFile

WHITE MOUNTAIN, Wyo. — “That’s a lot of horses,” lamented Cheyenne resident Robyn Smith from a high-desert ridgeline. It wasn’t her first exasperated exclamation.



Black Hawk, Colorado resident Bill Carter documents a wild horse roundup in the Bureau of Land Management’s White Mountain Horse Management Area. Some 144 animals were gathered on the first day of the operation, which seeks to remove 586 horses from the area, a mix of federal and private land. Photo: Mike Koshmrl/WyoFile

“Argh, oh crap,” was her immediate reaction to learning a federal judge had given the Bureau of Land Management the OK to proceed with plans to fully remove two wild horse herds from the landscape in southwest Wyoming.

A retired architect donning a “Return to Freedom” ball cap that featured a bucking mustang, Smith proudly described herself as a wild horse advocate. On this crisp Thursday morning in the hill country north of Interstate 80, she was doing one of her favorite things: Watching mustangs.

Smith’s interest in the equines — an icon of the West, albeit a nonnative one — had evolved organically into activism, stemming from a wildlife photography hobby. “We started doing more horse photography,” she said, “and then we started [wondering], ‘Well, what do you mean you’re going to round them up?’”

Soon, Smith was invested enough that she was sitting through wild horse-related legal proceedings and traveling to observe roundups

— government run wild-horse gathers exactly like what was happening in the distance.

While Smith and a dozen or so others watched on for hours, a helicopter commissioned by the Bureau of Land Management herded one band of horses, then another, toward a trap. Once inside, they were sorted and trucked away.

The animals were members of what the BLM considers the White Mountain Herd. It’s vastly overpopulated, at least going by what the federal agency considers an “appropriate” number for this landscape. By day’s end, 144 animals — 52 stallions, 63 mares and 29 foals — had been removed, which meant the crews were almost exactly a quarter of the way to their goal of taking 586 mustangs off the range over the next couple weeks.



Wild horses graze roadside along the Pilot Butte Wild Horses Scenic Loop, a tourist attraction just north of Rock Springs, in June 2023. Photo: Mike Koshmrl/WyoFile

The White Mountain Herd’s horses are well known enough that they’re being allowed to persist. The BLM even advertises a scenic drive that winds through the heart of the herd management area. The plan is to maintain in the neighborhood of 205 to 300 horses in this region, which reaches from Rock Springs northwest to Seedskaadee National Wildlife Refuge.

The Adobe Town Herd, in the Red Desert, is also being allowed to persist: BLM plans call for 225-450 horses here.

The neighboring Salt Wells and Great Divide Basin herds, meanwhile, are slated for elimination.

Wild horses compete with sheep, cattle and native wildlife for forage and other resources. That fact is particularly problematic in the eyes

of some, and a prime driver of horse policy in this “checkerboard” swath of southwest Wyoming where private and federal land interchange in square-mile blocks that meet at the corners. The cattle and sheep-centric Rock Springs Grazing Association owns and leases about 1.1 million acres of private land in the checkerboard — and for decades fought the BLM over wild horses.

## Litigation and more litigation

A year ago, the association sued, asking a court to compel federal land managers to remove free-ranging mustangs from their unfenced land.

After the BLM finalized an environmental impact statement calling for trimming the two herds and eliminating two others in spring 2023, a coalition of 11 wild-horse advocates came together to file a suit of their own challenging the decision.

U.S. District Court of Wyoming Judge Kelly Rankin, a Biden administration appointee, ruled in the BLM’s favor in both lawsuits on Wednesday.

“The Court agrees that ... wild horses are improperly maintained on private lands,” the federal judge wrote in his decision on the Rock Springs Grazing Association’s complaint. “However, this maintenance, although ‘improper,’ does not necessarily require an immediate remedy.”



Wild horses that had been dwelling on the White Mountain Herd Management Area northwest of Rock Springs are trailed away to a temporary holding facility. Photo: Mike Koshmrl/WyoFile

Rankin again sided with the government on each of the “litany” of claims brought by wild horse advocates, who argued the BLM arbitrarily and capriciously violated the Wild Free-Roaming



Horses and Burros Act of 1971 and several other federal laws.

“Ultimately, however, the Court finds that each contention fails for either conflating the [BLM’s Resource Management Plan amendment] with a removal decision, misconstruing BLM’s obligations, or [because it is] contradicted by the record,” the judge wrote.

Lyons, Colorado resident Carol Walker was one of the plaintiffs. The day after Rankin’s ruling, she joined Smith on the ridgeline observing the roundup.

“I don’t do it because I like it,” Walker said. “It’s because I know the contractors will treat the horses better if there’s public here.”



Carol Walker, of Lyons, Colorado, was a co-plaintiff in a lawsuit challenging the Bureau of Land Management’s decision to eliminate wild horses from several herd management areas in southwest Wyoming. On Aug. 14, 2024, a judge ruled in the federal government’s favor. Photo: Mike Koshmrl/WyoFile

Walker joined an appeal filed Friday in the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals.

“My concern is the BLM is going to try to zero out these herds as fast as they can,” she said, “before our appeal even gets here.”

Represented by Eubanks and Associates, a similar coalition of wild horse advocates, environmental groups and individuals joined the appeal.

“We expected this case to be decided by a higher court, and we are returning to the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals, where we have already twice prevailed in defending the Red Desert’s wild horses from this special-interest-driven eradication plan,” Suzanne Roy, executive director

of American Wild Horse Conservation, said in a statement.

A phone call to the Rock Springs Grazing Association went unreturned.



About a dozen members of the public gathered for the Bureau of Land Management’s Aug. 15 wild horse roundup in White Mountain Herd Management Area. Some 144 mustangs — 52 stallions, 63 mares and 29 foals — were rounded off rangeland that day in an area where federal land is intermixed with private land in a checkerboard pattern. Photo: Mike Koshmrl/WyoFile

Because of the protracted legal battle that’s likely to be extended further yet, it’s unlikely that BLM will immediately remove the entire Salt Wells and Great Divide Basin herds, said Brad Purdy, the agency’s deputy state director for communications. Although the agency completed a revision to its Resource Management Plan for wild horses — and Rankin upheld that plan — there’s still a requirement to study the action of eliminating a herd under the National Environmental Policy Act.

**Roundups could continue**

BLM-Wyoming started that NEPA study process in June, proposing to remove roughly 5,000 mustangs from three of the four horse management areas in the Rock Springs Field Office — including the two complete herd eliminations. With the appeal expected, though, it’s unlikely that the required environmental assessment will be completed anytime soon, Purdy said.

That’s not to say federal contractors will stop rounding up horses in the checkerboard anytime soon.

Nationally, BLM is aiming to take 20,000 wild horses off the landscape in 2024. Numbers have come down from the high point, but the current population of about 74,000 horses and wild burros nationwide is still nearly three times the “appropriate” management level — a dynamic that holds true in southwest Wyoming, where there are thousands more horses than the agency and many residents desire.

“Could BLM do a gather to bring those [herds] back down to the [target population]? I think we could,” Purdy said. “But I don’t think we could zero out the herd, because that’s under litigation.” Essentially, intensive roundups throughout the region could continue — and if they do, it’ll put BLM in a better position to complete the whole herd removals, if or when the litigation wraps up.

For horse advocates, those roundups aren’t especially fun. Descriptions like “unspeakable” and “cruel” were common among the observers. Cheyenne resident Barry Smith — Robyn Smith’s husband — wouldn’t even watch.

“I get too emotional,” he explained from the cab of his SUV, where he waited out the roundup.



A half dozen feral horses gallop through the sagebrush while being herded by a helicopter in August 2024. Photo: Mike Koshmrl/WyoFile



Jay D’Ewart, the wild horse and burro specialist for the Bureau of Land Management’s Rock Springs Field Office, addresses observers before a gather operation in August 2024. Photo: Mike Koshmrl/WyoFile

“Some of the pilots are better than others,” Barry Smith said. “Some are pretty good, and if the horses slow down, they kind of hold back and stay higher. Others overrun them, I think.”

Jay D’Ewart, the BLM Rock Springs Field Office’s wild horse and burro specialist, was the man in charge Thursday. While taking lunch in his pickup, he professed to having something in common with the wild horse advocates who kept an eye on his operation.

“I’m just like them, I love horses,” D’Ewart said, “I own them, I use them, I ride them — I just like it.”

He loved seven previously rounded-up mustangs so much, in fact, that he took them home. Some of those horses came from herds in line to be eliminated.

D’Ewart hadn’t yet caught up on the court ruling, having been tied up prepping for the weeks-long roundup. But it’s a decision that could make him a busy man.



# Bleak photo of polar bear with plastic in its jaws in the remote Arctic shows pollution's 'pervasive grip'

Image of polar bear with plastic hanging from its mouth shortlisted for Ocean Photographer of the Year 2024 award.

Hannah Osborne | Live Science | August 15, 2024



The shortlisted image of the polar bear was captured on the remote Kiepert Island in the Svalbard archipelago. Photo: Celia Kujala

An image capturing a polar bear with plastic hanging from its jaws has been shortlisted for the Ocean Photographer of the Year 2024 award. The image, taken on Kiepert Island in the Svalbard archipelago off Norway, by photonaturalist Celia Kujala serves as a "a stark reminder that even the uninhabited reaches of the Arctic are not exempt from the pervasive grip of plastic pollution," competition representatives wrote in a statement emailed to Live Science.

The photograph is shortlisted in the Ocean Conservation Photographer of the Year (Impact) category, which also includes a photo of a dead fin whale waiting to be butchered at a facility in Iceland, shark fins drying on a roof in Indonesia and a gannet, a large white seabird with a yellowish head, trapped in discarded fishing gear hanging from a cliff.

The polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*) photograph highlights the scale of plastic pollution in the Arctic and the impact it has on regional species. Considered vulnerable by the

International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species, polar bears face multiple threats. A 2016 study predicts their numbers will fall by 30% by the middle of the century.

Climate change is the primary threat, reducing the sea ice on which they hunt. However, plastic is compounding the problem. Polar bears are increasingly turning to landfills for food. An analysis of polar bear stomach contents from the population in the Southern Beaufort Sea off Alaska and Canada found 28% contained plastic. Half of the bears that had eaten plastic also had acute gastritis, potentially leading to painful blockages in their digestive system.

"There are not enough data to get a clear picture, but it is probable that bears are more likely to ingest plastic when they find human trash as they seek food on shore," John Whiteman, chief research scientist at Polar Bears International and assistant professor of biology at Old Dominion University in Virginia, told Live Science in an email.

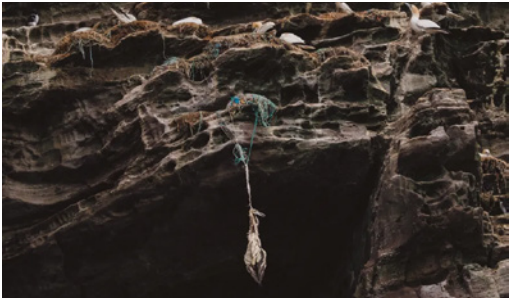
"Sea ice loss, and the resulting increase in time spent on land, is making it ever more important to find safe, long-term ways to manage trash — an issue that multiple Arctic communities have tackled with success," he added.

The winners of the Ocean Photographer of the Year 2024,

presented by Oceanographic Magazine and Blancpain, will be announced on Sept. 12. Shortlisted images for the Ocean Conservation Photographer of the Year (Impact) category can be seen below.



Freedivers from the Papahānaumokuākea Marine Debris Project work to remove a large ghost net from waters of the uninhabited Pearl and Hermes Atoll, Hawaii (Image credit: Andrew Sullivan-Haskins)



A gannet, entangled in discarded fishing gear, hangs off a cliff. Isle of Noss, Shetland Islands (Image credit: Rebecca Douglas)



A transshipment takes place at sea where boats transfer their catch onto other boats for transport to Myanmar's mainland. Myeik Archipelago, Myanmar (Image credit: Sirachai Arunrugstichai)



The second biggest whale, the fin whale, lies waiting for its turn to be butchered at a whaling plant in Iceland before getting sent to Japan. Iceland (Image credit: Frederik Brogaard)



A critically endangered smoothnose wedgefish demonstrates the cost of bycatch. Aceh, Indonesia (Image credit: Francesca Page)



Shark fins dry on a roof. Myeik Archipelago, Myanmar (Image credit: Sirachai Arunrugstichai)



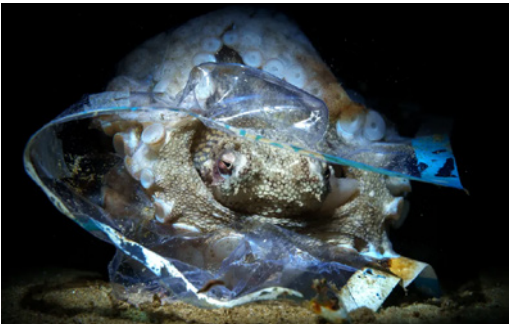
A bleached coral reef during an episode of stress in 2024. A loss of colour, biodiversity and biomass is evident. Mayotte Island (Image credit: Gabriel Barathieu)



The impact of rising sea levels: Fisherman Abdul Latief (62) sits in his flooded home. Demak Regency, Indonesia (Image credit: Giacomo d'Orlando)



A polar bear plays with a piece of plastic. Kiepert Island, Svalbard (Image credit: Celia Kujala)



A coconut octopus found a hideout spot inside a plastic sandwich bag. Philippines (Image credit: Pietro Formis)



A pregnant stingray is trapped in an aquaculture frame, highlighting the issue of bycatch. Portugal (Image credit: João Rodrigues)



A melting ice shelf in the Arctic creates numerous waterfalls. Barents Sea, Arctic (Image credit: Scot Portelli)



# — COLORADO WILDLIFE —

along the South Platte River & from Roxborough State Park — Littleton, CO



Photos by Carol Vogel

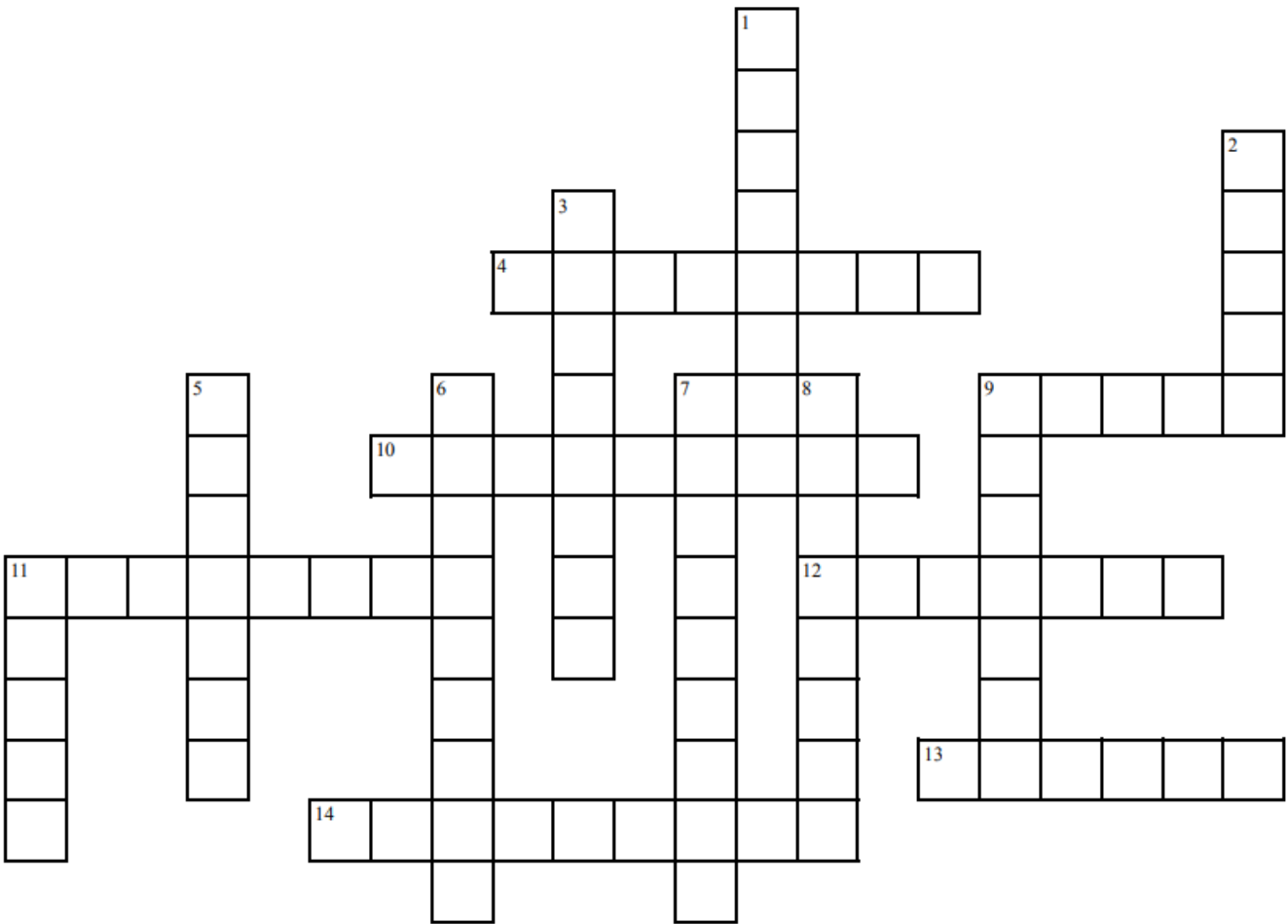


**KELLY GIVING  
THE WOLVES A  
VERY SPECIAL  
TREAT**



## Wildlife Detectives Crossword Puzzle

Grades  
4 – 5



### Across

4. the classification of organisms
9. a grinding tooth at the back of a mammal's mouth
10. the art and science of preparing, stuffing and mounting the skins of animals with lifelike effect
11. an individual animal, plant or artifact used as an example of its species or type for scientific study or display
12. a narrow-edged tooth at the front of the mouth adapted for cutting
13. a taxonomic category that ranks above genus and below order, usually ending in -idae (ex: canidae = dogs/canines)
14. each of the series of small bones forming the backbone

### Down

1. relating to dogs or the family canidae, also a pointed tooth between the incisors and premolars of a mammal, often greatly enlarged in carnivores
2. the bone of the thigh or upper hind limb, moving at the hip and the knee
3. the lower jawbone in mammals and fishes
5. a nutrient that is found in most plants and animals and is especially important in people for strong healthy bones
6. an animal that feeds primarily on animal matter
7. an animal that feeds primary on plant matter
8. an animal that feeds on both animal and plant matter
9. the upper jawbone in most vertebrates
11. skeleton of a person's or animal's head



Answers in Next Newsletter

[dupageforest.org/things-to-do/school-programs](https://dupageforest.org/things-to-do/school-programs)



# 25 FANTASTIC FOX FACTS

1. Foxes are officially members of the dog family
2. A female fox is called a vixen and a male fox is called a dog fox or a tod
3. A group of foxes is known as a leash or a skulk
4. A fox can retract its claws in the same way as a cat - they are the only member of the dog family able to do this!
5. Foxes can live in most climates, including the cold arctic
6. Foxes are officially members of the dog family
7. A female fox is called a vixen and a male fox is called a dog fox or a tod



8. A group of foxes is known as a leash or a skulk
9. A fox can retract its claws in the same way as a cat - they are the only member of the dog family able to do this!
10. Foxes can live in most climates, including the cold arctic
11. The clever fox will often hide food in a safe place for a later meal
12. With amazing hearing, a fox can hear a watch ticking 40 yards away



13. A fox can run up to a speed of 30 miles an hour
14. Foxes can use 28 different calls to communicate with others
15. Apart from raising their young, foxes are solitary animals who hunt and sleep alone
16. A fox will use the magnetic field of the earth to catch their prey, using the shadow and sound of the hunted to know when it's time to strike
17. A fox will usually live for up to 14 years
18. The Fennec fox is the smallest breed, weighing under 3 pounds



19. A vixen is only pregnant for 53 days
20. Foxes are usually monogamous, having the same mate throughout their life
21. A fox is often found in folklore and story tales, usually depicted as cunning and sometimes with magical powers
22. There are 12 species which are considered to be a 'true fox'



23. The hearing of a fox is so good that it can hear rodents underground
24. A fox will compete with a badger for food, but they will sometimes live together in a badger sett
25. A fox is an omnivore and will eat almost anything, from berries and worms to small animals and rubbish

## SOURCES

<https://www.peta.org.uk/blog/10-fascinating-facts-about-foxes>

<https://foxproject.org.uk/foxy-facts-for-children/>

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/animals/mammals/fox/>

# Trampoline Fun





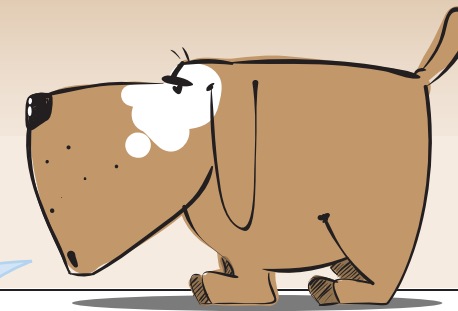
# Adoption corner

## 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. ]**

### CATIER »

Hello. No my name is not a typo, I'm my own designer kitty! Sounds like "Cartier" but I made it my own! I'm a shy girl, very sweet but need my own time to open up. I'd love a quiet home that is all my own where I can be spoiled with all designer kitty accessories!



### « ANGELICA

Meet Angelica! This beautiful girl was brought to TCRAS when she was only 3 weeks old. Angelica is smart and eager to please. She walks well on a leash and is eager to sit when she knows that treats are around! In her foster home she played nicely with other dogs and tried to play with the cats. Angelica would love an owner who can continue her training and socialization so she can be the best girl she can be!

**SLVAWS  
ADOPTION FAIR**  
Every Saturday at Petsmart  
7680 N. Academy Blvd.  
11:00am - 3:00pm

### LOBO & LUCY

Lobo & Lucy, loving bonded brother & sister, 4 years old, neutered, spayed, all vacc's, chipped. Running loose in a small southern Colorado village in danger of being hit by vehicles or shot. VERY LOW adoption fee. They would love a home together in the mountains or with lots of space.

