COLORADO WILDLIFE CENTER

DECEMBER 2023 CONSERVATION · EDUCATION · PRESERVATION



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The Colorado Wolf and Wildlife Center

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CONTACT US tours@wolfeducation.org PO Box 713 Divide, CO 80814 719.687.9742

SOCIAL MEDIA HAPPENINGS

Stay up to date with the animals at CWWC, wolves and wildlife in the news, and advocacy opportunities.

Subscribe to our YouTube Channel: ColoradoWolf&WildlifeCenter We post videos of the training and enrichment we are providing for our animals, and educational vlogs \bigcirc about wolves.

Follow us on Facebook: Colorado Wolf and Wildlife Center to get updates on new YouTube video postings, read feel good stories from other wolf/wildlife organizations, and learn about new wildlife findings in the research field.

Follow us on Instagram: @cowolfcenter to see pictures of our beautiful animals, stories of what we are doing around the center, and ways you can help wild wolf populations.. Keep your eye on our story for fun videos of the day to day lives of our wolves and keepers.

Follow us on Twitter: @Wolves_at_CWWC to see photos of our animals, read fun facts, and hear about events happening at CWWC.

Follow us on TikTok: @cowolfcenter for the videos you won't see on our other social media pages.

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

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- WOLF NAMING CONTEST -

The Colorado Wolf and Wildlife Center is delighted to announce the Wolf Naming Contest for the first wolves that have returned to their native Colorado landscape. The overall goal of this project is to engage students in the future of wolf recovery in Colorado and encourage more sensitive management of the wolf population through spreading awareness that children care for the fates of each reintroduced animal, as well as those to be born in Colorado. Students encompassing 5th-8th grade in Colorado had the opportunity to participate in this historic endeavor. There were 14 potential names to choose from, and votes were calculated electronically. Over 67 schools with thousands of students participated from all corners of the state! The contest concluded on December 20th, and results will be published no later than January 1st, 2024. The winning names will be announced publicly. You can remain updated by visiting our website and social media channels.





INTERNATIONAL EDITION



TODAY!



Aliza Chasan | CBS News | November 29, 2023

The North American wolverine has been listed as a threatened has been linked to climate change. U.S. Fish and Wildlife species under the Endangered Species Act, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said Wednesday. Officials said climate Species Act. change has threatened the species. Less than 300 wolverines are estimated to live in the contiguous U.S., according to the National Wildlife Federation.

The designation will give the species protection, requiring federal agencies to ensure their actions are unlikely to jeopardize wolverines, according to the agency. The Endangered Species Act, enacted in 1973, establishes protections for fish, wildlife and plants that are listed as threatened or endangered.

"Current and increasing impacts of climate change and associated habitat degradation and fragmentation are imperiling the North American wolverine," Fish and Wildlife Pacific Regional Director Hugh Morrison said. "Based on the best available science, this listing determination will help to stem the long-term impact and enhance the viability of wolverines in the contiguous United States."

Authorities have also described moose, salmon, snowshoe hares, American pikas, sea turtles, puffins, Alaskan caribou, piping plovers, polar bears and crocodiles as being at risk from climate change.

Climate change has been a threat to wolverines in the U.S. for more than a decade; the loss of the wolverine's wintry habitat

officials in 2011 tried to add wolverines to the Endangered

Wolverine populations were decimated in the early 20th century by wide-ranging and aggressive trapping and poisoning campaigns. In the decades since, environmentalists have researched the elusive animals using historical data on wolverine occurrence, analyses of habitat factors, geographic information system mapping, radio-telemetry tracking and genetic studies.

Today, they live within the Northern Rocky Mountains and North Cascade Mountains in the contiguous U.S. and in alpine regions, boreal forests and tundra of Alaska and Canada, officials said. Last year, officials with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources documented what was only the eighth confirmed wolverine sighting in Utah since 1979.

The wolverine population in Alaska is considered stable, the National Park Service said.

Wolverines are in the Mustelidae family, a group of carnivorous mammals, along with weasels, mink, marten and otters, according got the National Park Service. The carnivores are described as powerful, aggressive, territorial and tenacious.

COLORADO WOLF AND WILDLIFE CENTER'S







Five wolves make history as they're released into the Western wild

The animals are part of a 'paws on the ground' reintroduction in Colorado, one supported by voters but opposed by the livestock industry

Karin Brulliard | The Washington Post | December 20, 2023



BOULDER — Colorado's most highly anticipated new residents, five lushly furred gray wolves, arrived this week on a private plane from Oregon and within hours had disappeared into Rocky Mountain woods abundant with elk and other prey.

How the wolves' lives unfold is likely to be the subject of political sparring and scientific research for years to come.

The newcomers are the pioneers of a first-in-the-nation effort to reintroduce an endangered species to the wild at the behest of voters, rather than the government. It came three years after the narrow passage of a ballot measure calling for their return to a state from which wolves had been extirpated nearly a century before.

What followed were protracted stakeholder deliberations, public hearings and objections from ranchers and hunters, as well as last-minute lawsuits from the livestock industry that unsuccessfully sought to delay the release.

But celebration of "paws on the ground" dominated this week, as the two males and three females loped across a frosty field into their new habitat, where advocates hope

they will be the start of a thriving population that one day could complete a chain of canis lupus from the northern Rockies to the Southwest.

"Today, history was made in Colorado," said a statement from Gov. Jared Polis (D), who was there when the wolves were released in Grand County on Monday. "For the first time since the 1940s, the howl of wolves will officially return to western Colorado."

"Western" is a key word and source of contention. The ballot measure, which mandated the state begin reintroducing wolves by the end of 2023, was heavily supported in urban areas east of the Rockies and widely opposed on the rural Western Slope, where the releases are taking place.

That opposition grew in recent years as a few wolves migrated down from Wyoming — where a shoot-on-sight policy had long been an obstacle to significant numbers of the animals making their way south — and took up residence in northern Colorado. Ranchers there began reporting dead cattle, sheep and working dogs.

Some of those wolves crossed back over the border and ended up being hunted, feeding conservationists' arguments that Colorado would need to bring in wolves if it ever hoped to have its own population.

The state ultimately sought and was granted approval by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to manage the animals as a "nonessential experimental population," which allows ranchers to kill wolves attacking livestock. The state also set up a program to compensate livestock producers for up to \$15,000 per animal slain by wolves and said it would devote staff and money to minimizing such conflict.

"This isn't a choice between ranching and wolves or between hunting and wolves," said Matt Barnes, a rangeland scientist with Northern Rockies Conservation Cooperative who sat on an advisory group that made recommendations as the state crafted its plan.

"We are still going to have ranching. We are still going to have elk hunting. And we are going to have a more complete ecosystem at the same time."

Until recently, it was unclear where Colorado would get its first wolves. Montana, Wyoming and Idaho — red states that allow wolf hunts — all declined to donate the predators. Then Oregon, a Democratic-dominated state like Colorado, offered 10 in October.

The five celebrities — two pairs of juvenile siblings from two Oregon packs and an adult from a third pack — were shot with tranquilizers from helicopters Sunday, then crated and flown east. Colorado Parks and Wildlife said its scientists will repeat the process until at least 10 to 15 wolves are in the state by mid-March. The plan is to release 30 to 50 over the next three to five years, "using wolves captured from nearby northern Rockies states



from several different packs," the agency said.

As video of the wolves' release circulated this week, advocates cheered. Colorado is "richer, wilder and more resilient," WildEarth Guardians said. "Living alongside wolves and other wildlife is part of life in the West," Defenders of Wildlife said.

The Colorado Cattlemen's Association and Gunnison County Stockgrowers' Association, in contrast, said after a federal judge rejected their lawsuit Friday that they were disappointed but will examine other legal pathways.

Scientists say Colorado, with the world's largest elk herd and plenty of wilderness, could support many hundreds of wolves, even thousands. Barnes, a former ranch manager, said that is not realistic. But he hopes the new arrivals, now wearing radio collars so that they can be tracked, will find a generally welcoming home in the central Rockies.

"In reality, the number of wolves that can live in Colorado will be determined by how much conflict those wolves get into and how well the state responds to those conflicts," Barnes said. "That's the hardest thing to measure or predict."

Colorado wildlife officials release five gray wolves onto public land in Grand County, which abuts Rocky Mountain National Park, on Monday. (Colorado Parks and Wildlife/AP)



Border killings: How shooters lured historic Colorado wolves to their deaths in Wyoming Hunters took advantage of lax regulations in Wyoming to electronically call in and kill three

of six wolves from a pioneering pack less than a half-mile from the state line.

An electronic call drew the canine in.

The recorded sounds of a pronghorn in distress blared from a point some 600 yards north of the Colorado-Wyoming state line. It was a Saturday in May 2019, and the hunters at first thought they were looking at a coyote.

Then the animal emerged further from the brush. They saw it had a "swooped down tail" and an "oversized head."

The men playing the distress call knew what this was.

Wolf.

When the gray lobo came within 243 yards, a rifle erupted. The shot from the 7 mm Shooting Times Westerner killed the lone male, a member of the first wolf pack documented in the state of Colorado since the 1940s.

"It was no mistaken shooting," the shooter told WyoFile. "We knew what it was. And when we saw it, we wanted it."

The following year three more wolves were shot and killed in Wyoming within two miles of the state line, where the pack set up a home range straddling Moffat and Sweetwater counties. One hunter killed an interstate wolf from that founding pack mere feet from the gate separating the two states.

The trend continued in north-central Colorado, after the second modern-day wolf pack in the Centennial State was documented: At least four wolves from the North Park Pack would die at the hands of hunters after straying north across the state line. In the wake of the predictable public acrimony, Wyoming officials have shut down communications about wolf killings, citing state

Mike Koshmrl | WyoFile | November 27, 2023

statute.

Now, all eyes are on Colorado's impending wolf reintroduction: a voter-initiated biological intervention that will import animals from Oregon before the end of the year. But until now, the details of the killings, which help explain why wolves have not naturally taken hold in Colorado, have not been made public.

WyoFile acquired documents tied to the killings of three wolves from Colorado's first modernday wolf pack through a Freedom of Information Act request that netted U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service law enforcement investigation reports. Through those partly redacted reports WyoFile was able to contact one man, a hunting outfitter, who pulled the trigger on the first wolf and was present when another hunter – his son – shot and killed two others. The man would only be interviewed on the condition of anonymity, fearful he'd be harassed and threatened for speaking publicly about the wolf killings. WyoFile granted that request, believing his account would provide a perspective that our readers couldn't access otherwise; knowing that he is a private citizen who, according to the federal investigation, has committed no crimes and has no obligation to talk; and recognizing that his fear of harassment is not unwarranted.

Paper trail

On that day in May 2019, the northwest Colorado resident was actually hunting black bear, he said. Baiting bears is legal in Wyoming, but not Colorado, so the outfitter had for years chosen to hunt north of the state line in Sweetwater County. The man knew that it was legal to kill any wolf, at any time, by any method without license, tag or

permission in that reach of far southern Wyoming. By killing one lobo, the man learned firsthand that wolves were in the area nine months before Colorado Parks and Wildlife announced – citing DNA evidence from scat - that a wolf pack had traveled into Moffat County. It was the first wolf pack confirmed in Colorado in over 80 years, the state agency declared in a press release. It's unknown where the pack came from.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife officials, who did not respond to an interview request for this story, reminded the public in that 2020 press release that wolves are protected by the Endangered Species Act in the state. Killing one, the agency noted, can result in a \$100,000 fine and a year in prison. One state to the north, the situation is much different. Although wolves are managed as "trophy game" and subject to rules and regulations in far northwestern Wyoming, the remainder of the state is part of the so-called "predator zone." There, no license is necessary and virtually anything goes.

Wyoming's insistence on an unregulated predator zone prompted litigation that slowed the state from gaining jurisdiction over its own wolves. But the controversial management approach prevailed, and it's been blamed for Colorado's lack of a functional wolf population nearly three decades after the native canines were reintroduced to Yellowstone National Park.

After killing the first wolf in May 2019, the outfitter and two of his sons made a concerted effort to pursue wolves north of the state line for the remainder of the year. Five more times that year, he said, they ran electronic predator calls in the area, drawing in mountain lions, bobcats, coyotes and other species – but no more wolves, he said.



The outfitter, who's opposed to wolf

reintroduction, did not put some special emphasis on targeting the pack near the state line because of their historical significance to Colorado. Rather, his interest in wolf hunting the area was more pragmatic, he said.

"We've talked about getting a license up in the Yellowstone area and hunting them there," the man told WyoFile. "When we found them close to home — because we don't make a lot of money — it was a big deal to us to be able to hunt something like that without it costing a fortune."

The following year the family kept on gunning for wolves. Again, the tactics they used for hunting black bears worked.

On May 5, 2020, the outfitter's son was in "almost the exact same spot" where his dad killed a wolf the year before when he drew in a canine with audio of a distressed cow elk. This time, the wolf approached from behind and came within 75 yards. The son fired his 22 Creedmoor rifle, according to interviews conducted by agents investigating whether the reported Wyoming wolf killings hadn't actually happened across the line in Colorado.

Two more wolves down

After a fatal shot rang out, the father and son who were hunting together — heard howling off to the west. They decided to wait until the next day to pursue the others. The federal investigation describes what happened that next day, May 6, 2020.

The outfitter and his son had been trying to lure the wolves in with more electronic calling, but gave up. They were walking from Wyoming back to their side-by-side ATV, which was parked "several hundred yards" into Colorado. While passing through a gate marking the state line, they saw a wolf standing in the road about 200 yards behind them in Wyoming.

"The one fucking wolf was behind us, wondering what we were, walking up the road, so [I] turned around and dumped him," one of the hunters told Fish and Wildlife Service special agents in a telephone interview.

The agents' summary of their investigative interviews shows that the wolf kill wasn't so straightforward. One of the men took an "offhand shot" — a term for a standing shot taken without additional stabilizing support — at the lone canine and missed. They followed, then took a second shot, with one hunter using the other's shoulder



This photo of a person with a black wolf killed near the Wyoming-Colorado border was included in a federal law enforcement investigation report. (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)

According to an interview summary, the man hesitated for "eight seconds." Then he replied: "Umm ... shit, I wish I could remember how far down that road."

of the gate

(Wyoming

side) were

vou?"

Right on the boundary

At another point in an interview, the agent asked one of the hunters if he was sure he was in Wyoming when he shot at the wolf. The man hesitated for "seven seconds," then stated, "I'm pretty sure."

During an interview about the third wolf shooting, near the gate on May 6, 2020, one of the hunters became "agitated and argumentative." He told agents he didn't expect to be grilled over something like shooting across state lines.

As the interview concluded, one of the men told an agent: "All I can say is, expect more wolves to die over there because [name redacted] hasn't shot one and we are going back over there this winter. We are going on the Wyoming side." And they did.

"We actually had a couple other chances, and messed them up," the outfitter told WyoFile. "They were too far away and wouldn't come any closer."

Redaction of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's investigation makes it unclear who killed a fourth wolf on April 11, 2020. That animal, a female, was killed slightly farther into Wyoming, roughly 1.5 miles from the state line, according to maps in the report.

The outfitter who spoke to WyoFile said he was aware of the fourth wolf's demise.

"It was in some cattle," he said.

Federal investigators also received a report on June 11, 2020 of two additional wolves killed in Colorado, allegedly "shot in the guts" near Browns Park National Wildlife Refuge. That September, they acted on a search warrant of a Moffat County residence, but didn't find any wolf-related items. An interview at the time failed to turn up any new information about the alleged Colorado wolf shootings, documents show.

Law enforcement investigators also did not find any evidence of illegal activity related to the outfitter or his son hunting the three wolves near the border in 2019 and 2020.

Cleared of poaching

On June 30, 2020, a Colorado Parks and Wildlife officer and two federal special agents visited all three wolf kill sites in Wyoming. They confirmed their positions, and the reported kill sites, by matching trees with trees they could see in the background of photos one of the wolf hunters posted on Facebook.

The investigation began on a Colorado biologist's suspicion that one of the wolves reportedly killed in Wyoming had actually been killed south of the state line. When the biologist inquired with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, the agency "refused to share" wolf harvest information.

Once the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service got

involved, Wyoming did turn over wolf harvest records for four animals killed near the state line. Although there are few rules and licenses aren't necessary, wolves killed in the predator zone must be reported within 10 days. The outfitter and his son both reported their kills within three days or less.

Game and Fish also obtained DNA samples from the animals, according to large carnivore supervisor Dan Thompson. The samples, however, were not analyzed in a way that provides any insight as to where the short-lived wolf pack in northwest Colorado and southwest Wyoming originated, he said.

The outfitter told WyoFile that a special agent told him the investigation wasn't going anywhere early on in 2020.

"He called me like a week later and said, 'You've been cleared of everything," the man told WyoFile. "He said, 'Don't worry about it."

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, however, didn't formally close the investigation until February 2023, which explains why the documents haven't been made available through the Freedom of Information Act until recently.

The public and media were left to speculate about what exactly happened.

The Denver Post reported on the rumored incidents in September 2020, but at the time Colorado Parks and Wildlife officials drew no connection between the deaths and the pack verified in Moffat County earlier in the year. By September 2021, Colorado Public Radio reported there was probably only one wolf remaining in far northwest Colorado.

What became of the three historic wolves shot down less than a half-mile from the state line?

The outfitter told WyoFile that they were skinned and their hides were tanned. He's held onto the trophies even though, having been killed in the spring, their thick winter coats were "slipping."

They hang in the corner of one of his sons' old bedrooms, used now only for storage.

Spring-loaded 'cyanide bombs' were planted to take out coyotes. They ended up killing thousands of pets

The US Bureau of Land Management has halted the use of spring-loaded traps that disperse cyanide powder to kill coyotes and other livestock predators

Scott Sonner | Independent | November 29, 2023



A coyote in San Francisco. Photo: Wikimedia Commons

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management has halted the use of spring-loaded traps that disperse cyanide powder to kill coyotes and other livestock predators, a practice wildlife advocates have tried to outlaw for decades due to safety concerns.

The M-44 ejector-devices that critics call "cyanide bombs" have unintentionally killed thousands of pets and non-predator wildlife, including endangered species, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services. They have a scented bait and emit a poisonous cloud when triggered by a physical disturbance.

The Bureau of Land Management quietly posted a notice on its website last week that it no longer will use the devices across the 390,625 square miles (1,011,714 square kilometers) it manages nationally — an area twice the size of California — much of it where ranchers graze cattle and sheep.

Other federal agencies — including the National Park Service, and the Fish and Wildlife Service — already prohibit the devices. But the Forest Service and 10 states still use them in some form.

Eight unsuccessful bills have been introduced in Congress since 2008 to ban the traps on federal and/ or state lands. Sponsors of legislation pending in the U.S. House and Senate that would ban them on both say they're optimistic the bureau's new position will help pave the way for broader support.

Brooks Fahy, executive director of the Oregon-based watchdog group Predator Defense, has been working for 40 years to ban the use of sodium cyanide in the traps. He emphasized that it's registered under the Environmental Protection Agency as a Category 1 toxicant, the highest level of toxicity.

"I can't believe they're still being put on the landscape and they continue to harm people," Fahy said. "I've seen M-44s set right on the edge of a trail."

M-44s consist of a stake driven into the ground with



Canyon Mansfield holds the collar of his dog

a spring and canister loaded with the chemical. Marked inconsistently and sometimes not at all, humans have mistaken them for sprinkler heads or survey markers.

Federal agencies rely on Wildlife Services to deal

with problem animals — whether in remote areas or airports across the country — using lethal and non-lethal forces. The change on Bureau of Land Management land came under a recent revision of a memorandum of understanding with Wildlife Services obtained by The Associated Press on Monday.

It's effective immediately but can be canceled by either side with 60 days' notice.

Wildlife Services has used M-44s to control predators, mostly in the West, since the 1930s. The American Sheep Industry Association and National Cattlemen's Beef Association were among 100 industry groups that wrote to Congress this year, stressing the importance of the program. They said predators cause more than \$232 million in livestock losses annually.

About a dozen people have been seriously harmed over the past 25 years by M-44s on federal lands, according to Predator Defense.

Between 2000-16, Wildlife Services reported 246,985 animals killed by M-44s, including at least 1,182 dogs. From 2014-22, the agency said M-44s intentionally killed 88,000 animals and unintentionally killed more than 2,000 animals .

Public outcry over the devices grew after a family dog was killed in 2017 in Pocatello, Idaho, and Canyon Mansfield, then 14, was injured after accidentally triggering a device placed on public land about 400 feet (122 meters) from their home. In 2020, the federal government admitted negligence and agreed to pay the family \$38,500 to resolve a lawsuit.

"We are so happy to finally see one federal government department banning another's reckless and indiscriminate actions," Canyon Mansfield's father, Mark Mansfield, said last week.

Democratic Rep. Jared Huffman, of California, who is the lead sponsor of the bill that would outlaw use of M-44s on all state and federal lands, has named the current version "Canyon's Law," after Mansfield.

"Cyanide bombs are a cruel and indiscriminate device that have proven to be deadly for pets, humans, and wildlife – and they have no business being on our public lands," Huffman said last week in praising the bureau's move.

Democratic Sen. Jeff Merkley, of Oregon, who is the



Canyon Mansfield and dog Kasey playing in the grass.

lead sponsor of companion legislation in the Senate, said he's encouraged the Biden administration is "taking a positive step forward to keep cyanide bombs off of our public lands."

Fahy acknowledged efforts in Congress to ban the use of M-44s have gained little traction over the past 15 years.

But he said publicity over the Mansfield case has changed the political landscape more than anything he's seen since 1982 when President Ronald Reagan revoked an executive order issued by President Richard Nixon in 1972 that had banned use of all poisons by federal agents on federal lands.

Several weeks after Canyon Mansfield was poisoned, Fahy said Wildlife Services agreed to stop using M-44s in Idaho. Two years later, Oregon banned them statewide and a partial ban soon followed in New Mexico where some state agencies can still use them.

Colorado, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Texas, West Virginia and Wyoming also still allow M-44s.

Fahy said the new policy at the Bureau of Land Management — which specifically referenced the Mansfield case last week — "is a big deal" that should help build on the momentum for a nationwide ban.

"This is the most that the needle on the use of federal poisons has moved in over 40 years," he said. "I think M-44s' days are numbered."

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\$40 (12+) · \$20 (8-11) · Reservations Required 719.687.9742 Colorado Wolf & Wildlife Center

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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.

COSMO >>

I am so ready to find a new family and can't wait to meet my furever family! I'm super sweet and playful. I have a crocked tail and it gives me a little more personality! I love snuggles and all things!



LITTLE LADY >>

Little Lady is an 11-month-old mini Aussie with blue eyes. Sweet girl, loves to play with other dogs. Spayed, all vacc's, chipped.



{{ SUGAR BLOSSOM

I'm as sweet as my name implies! I love to meet new people! I may be a little nervous at first but I warm up fast! I have energy to spare and need a family to show me how to use it. I don't know how to walk on this leash yet, but I'm learning with my new friends!



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

{{ CHIANTI & COUCH POTATO

They love to play and can be adopted separately. Spayed/neutered, all vacc's, microchipped. Mom is a 40 pound poodle/terrier. 7 months old. Will be medium sized adults.