



# COLORADO WOLF & WILDLIFE CENTER

FEBRUARY 2023 · CONSERVATION · EDUCATION · PRESERVATION



**Red-Tailed Hawk**  
Photo Taken by Bernadette Sonfield

CERTIFIED BY



**The Colorado Wolf and Wildlife Center** is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization certified by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA). Look for this logo whenever you visit a zoo or aquarium as your assurance that you are supporting a facility dedicated to providing excellent care for animals, a great experience for you, and a better future for all living things.

The contents of the material we include in our newsletter does not necessarily reflect the views of CWWC. We collect information from other organizations, the web, news feeds, and/or other sources. We choose articles that are in the related field of education and conservation.



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## | 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 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!*



It all started in 1993...

...actually it all started in 1962 when I was born and was considered to be of the human species. However, I just wanted to live with dogs, horses and coyotes. All my life I wanted to rescue animals and help them anyway that I could. The turning point was when I was in the 4th grade and a dog strayed onto the playground. I saw some boys run over to the dog and started kicking him until he was crying from fear and pain. I ran over to and shielded the dog with my body as the boys continued to kick. I screamed for the teacher and the viciousness finally ceased. I whispered in the dogs' ear that someday I would create a place to rescue animals and I would be a voice for him.

I moved to Colorado in '93. I started doing volunteer work at the Divide animal shelter when it was a "kill shelter". My job was to take dogs down to PetSmart for adoption. The animals I worked with were those with only one day left to live.

I gathered 4 dogs, loaded them in my SUV, and went back in to get a water bowl. I opened the door to the isolation room where supplies were kept and in one of the kennels was this beautiful silver gray female wolf dog by the name of Chinook. She was 2 years old with no prior convictions, just guilty of her breed.

Not aware that wolf dogs were not available for adoption, I got her leash and decided to take her with me for adoption. The animal control officer stopped me and advised me that she could not go with me and that she was scheduled for euthanasia.

My heart sank. I asked if I could adopt her and he said that if she was still there when I returned from PetSmart, then I could have her.

When I returned, the animal control officer looked down at his watch and told me that if I wanted the animal I would have to take her at that moment. I felt lucky that he surrendered her to me so I was sure not to offer any information as to where I lived - which was a 1-room studio cabin that I was renting with my husband. I had 2 dogs already and if the landlord were to catch me with this wolf, he would give me less than two weeks to find her a home or face eviction.

I found a home on 8.5 acres in Lake George, CO, fenced off 5 acres and decided I was going to be a "rescue center". My first week, I rescued 17 animals... I lived there for 10 years before moving to the location in Florissant where CWWC was born.

- Darlene Kobobel

## History of Colorado Wolf and Wildlife Center

Darlene Kobobel, in Lake George, Colorado, rescued a wolf dog by the name of Chinook in 1993. Chinook was two years of age and was going to be put to death at the local animal shelter because of her "wolf-hybrid" label. Once Darlene learned of the fate of this beautiful animal, in spite of her childhood fear of wolves, she took Chinook home and learned of the issues and controversies regarding wolf-dogs and wolf-dog breeders throughout the country.

Determined to provide a safe haven for unwanted wolf-dogs, Darlene created the Wolf Hybrid Rescue Center. During the first year of operation, the Center was inundated with 15 - 20 phone calls every day from around the country from people who wanted to surrender their beloved wolves. This is when it was realized that the role of providing education was necessary.

After nearly 10 years of rescuing unwanted animals, it was time to consider relocation due to residential housing developments springing up within a quarter mile of the Center. It was also time to evolve into providing more widespread education and get away from "rescue." WRC staff and volunteers learned that it was physically and financially impossible to save every animal that needed to be rescued. If the emphasis was placed on education, even more animals' lives could be saved. It was Kobobel's dream for WRC to evolve into the Colorado Wolf and Wildlife Center.

In the search for new property to relocate to, the Center met a woman who was willing to allow the WRC to move onto her private ranch just six miles east of the Center's location. An agreement was made for WRC to relocate to a 35-acre parcel of this ranch on a long-term lease. A week after the lease signing, on June 11, 2002, WRC endured the Hayman fire.

With only three hours to evacuate, volunteers were called upon to help move all of the wolves along with domestic cats, dogs, horses and a chicken. The evacuation destination was a horse barn on the Wandering Star Ranch. This horse barn became home to the WRC's 12 wolves for the next five weeks.

The sudden evacuation prompted the accelerated construction and development of the Colorado Wolf and Wildlife Center (CWWC).



"Co-Founder" Chinook

The total cost for fencing materials alone for the new sanctuary cost the Center a lump sum of \$25,000 from its "Project Wolf " account. This was a special account intended specifically for spaying/neutering, miscellaneous veterinary bills and the future (and gradual) expansion of the Center. Thanks to the energetic, hard work of countless volunteers and supporters, six one-acre wolf enclosures were completed within 5 weekend's time. With much emotion shown by the volunteers, the wolves were finally released into their new homes.

Over the next few months an education/visitor's center was constructed and the Center was ready to officially open for business again. On June 28, 2003 Colorado Wolf and Wildlife Center introduced itself by hosting a Grand Opening Celebration to officially inaugurate the new sanctuary. Local support was great, with over 250 people in attendance to celebrate the Center's recovery from the Hayman fire.

After only 3.5 years and some monumental events, including the death of our beloved Chinook, the owner of the property suddenly decided to terminate our lease. We began a frantic search to find property that could be ours. Amazingly, Darlene found a wonderful 35 acre property better than any previous location.

Darlene, with several volunteers, began the arduous task of clearing, trenching, fencing and building another set of enclosures, a visitor center and a real home with conference/education facilities. This work was completed by countless hours of back-breaking labor by dedicated volunteers and staff. ON JULY 7, 2007 WE HELD OUR OFFICIAL GRAND OPENING OF THE FOREVER HOME OF CWWC.

Shortly after this, we were given the opportunity to expand the Center into one of our goal mission areas -Conservation. In March 2007 we received our AZA certification. CWWC is the only AZA certified sanctuary in Colorado and one of only 20 in the nation. We are proud and honored to be a part of a group who plays a major part in conservation. With this certification, we now house Endangered Canids such as; two Mexican Grey wolves that we acquired from the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo in Colorado Springs, CO and five Swift Fox acquired from the Lee Richardson Zoo in Hutchinson, KS and the Riverside Discovery Center in Scottsbluff, NE, which are also endangered. We feel that this is such a wonderful opportunity to be able to have endangered species to teach the public about and we look forward to expanding our conservation education.



Conditional Use Permit Approved

As of 2017, we have expanded. Some new buildings have been added: a 2000 square foot barn for storage, a hay barn, a meat room that can hold five thousand pounds of food for the wolves, a vet room, an amphitheater for education purposes, expanded enclosures, walking trails, and a new entrance sign. CWWC bought the adjoining property to make twenty acres of sanctuary and wildlife buffer zones.

Today, the 501(c)3 non-profit organization is directed by Darlene Kobobel. CWWC conducts guided educational tours and programs that focus on dispelling myths about wolves and wild canids and helping people to appreciate the roles wolves play in their ecosystems. Tours cover topics such as pack hierarchy, territory, communication, prey impact, and conservation. What is unique about the tour is that people also learn about the history of each wolf, coyote, and fox at the center.

Although some of our animals have been rescued from college dorms, roadside zoos, photo farms, and the fur industry, we also have adopted ones from other educational organizations as well.



Darlene & Wolf Center Signage

Shortly after this, we were given the opportunity to expand the Center into one of our goal/mission areas - Conservation. In

The history of the animals compels visitors to walk away with a compassionate respect to honor the fact that "wild means wild." Just as importantly, CWWC serves as a voice for ALL animals. The Center focuses on responsible domestic pet ownership and stresses the importance of spaying and neutering.

CWWC is now gaining more world-wide recognition and is reaching nearly 40,000 people annually; due not only to the education provided but also because of the unique and natural setting CWWC provides for its animals. All enclosures are "above and beyond" the requirements of USDA (U.S. Department of Agriculture). CWWC currently provides some of the largest enclosures in the U.S. per two animal ratios, complete with lush aspen groves, large rock formations, shady pine trees, and dens. CWWC has become known for not only providing sanctuary for animals, but for people as well. Thanks to the inspiration of a wolf named Chinook, we are promoting stewardship, dedicated to educating the world about wolves...if only one person at a time.

The wolf angels are in the stars shining on us and we will ALWAYS fight for what we believe it! And we will never let the howl go silent!!



## Our Mission



EDUCATION · CONSERVATION · PRESERVATION

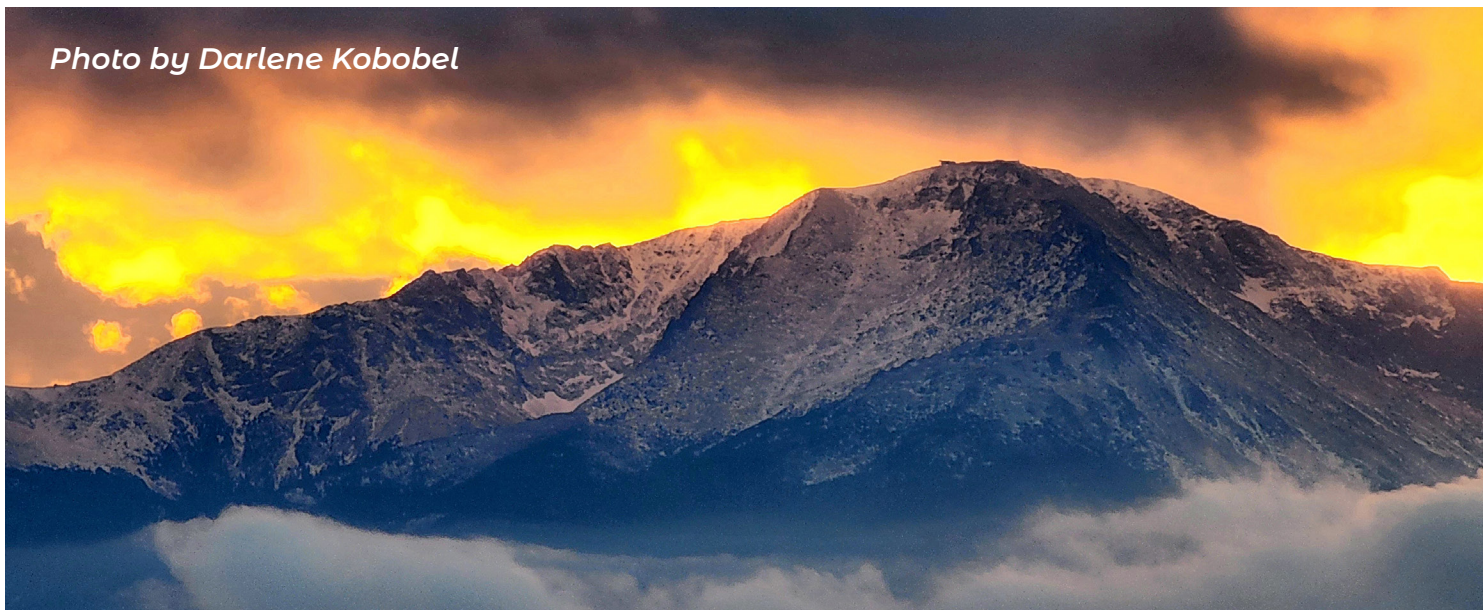
### It is the Mission of the Colorado Wolf and Wildlife Center to:

- Educate the public through tours and programs about the importance of wolves, coyotes, and foxes in our ecosystem.
- Educate the public about the importance of Preservation and Conservation of the forests, land, and water that supports wildlife, flora, and fauna for future generations to enjoy.
- Provide natural habitats and exceptional lives for the animals entrusted to our care since they cannot live in the wild.

### Our Mission in Action:

The Colorado Wolf and Wildlife Center is one of very few sanctuaries in the United States which has been certified by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). With this title we are able to go beyond education and into application. CWWC actively participates in the Species Survival Plan by providing a home to Mexican wolves, the American Red wolf, and Swift foxes.

Photo by Darlene Kobobel



## HIGHLY-RATED COLORADO DESTINATION UP FOR 'BEST SAFARI PARK' AWARD

Spencer McKee | Out There Colorado | February 23, 2023



*Rayne, a one year old female wolf originally from Texas, peers into the wolf pup enclosure at the Colorado Wolf and Wildlife Center in Divide on Wednesday. When she was first introduced to the puppies, Rayne instinctively regurgitated her food like she would in the wild. Photo: John Stember, The Gazette.*

Another Colorado attraction is in the running for a USA Today 10Best Readers' Choice award and whether or not the spot wins depends on how the public votes.

Located in Divide, Colorado, the Colorado Wolf and Wildlife Center is featured on a list of 20 American nominees in the 'Best Safari Park' category.

"Safari and wildlife parks allow visitors to get up close and personal with some of the world's most exotic and endangered animals. The best safari parks aim to educate visitors about the animals and the threats their natural populations face and encourage conservation efforts," reads the USA Today description of the 'Safari Park' category.

The Colorado Wolf and Wildlife Center is home to a number of species, including wolves, coyotes, and foxes. It's a highly-rated tourist destination, with 4.8 of 5 stars on Google Reviews.

The Colorado Wolf and Wildlife Center currently ranks 6th on the 'Best Safari Park' leaderboard, with votes accepted until noon on March 6. In 2022, the destination ended up with a rank of 3rd in the same category.

**VOTE HERE:**  
[tinyurl.com/cwwc-best-safari](https://tinyurl.com/cwwc-best-safari)

# IDAHO FISH AND GAME WANTS TO REDUCE THE WOLF POPULATION BY 60%

Boise State Public Radio News  
Rachel Cohen | January 27, 2023



In this Jan. 14, 1995 file photo, a wolf leaps across a road into the wilds of Central Idaho. Idaho Gov. Brad Little has signed into law a measure that could lead to the killing of 90% of the state's 1,500 wolves. The Republican governor signed the bill on Thursday, May 6, 2021, that had passed the Senate and House with enough votes to overcome a veto. (AP Photo/Douglas Pizac, File)

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game wants the state's wolf population to be reduced by approximately 60% from 2021 numbers. That's according to an initial overview of a new statewide wolf management plan presented by department staff to the Fish and Game Commission Thursday.

On average, there have been about 1,270 wolves in Idaho in 2019, 2020 and 2021, though the population fluctuates over the course of the year. The Department wants that number closer to 500 within six years.

Idaho's wolf management plan was passed in 2002.

The reason the state agency is proposing a new one now is twofold: according to new data presented Thursday, staff believe Idaho's wolf population declined in 2022, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is still mulling whether gray wolves in the Rocky Mountains should be relisted under the Endangered Species Act.

"We thought it would be an appropriate time to release a draft wolf management plan to frame the future direction of management," said Jon Rachael, the Fish and Game wildlife bureau chief.

The agency has used August numbers as a benchmark for wolf population abundance since 2019 when it began a new count method involving analyzing photos from hundreds of remote cameras. That year through 2021, the population was thought to be stable at around

1,550 wolves. But in August of 2022, there were around 1,340, said Shane Roberts, wildlife research manager.

The decline comes about a year after the law that greatly expanded opportunities to hunt and trap wolves in Idaho went into effect.

Agency officials did not thoroughly discuss the reasons for the dip in 2022 on Thursday, and the number of wolves killed by humans has varied but has largely been around 500 for the past few years.

On Thursday, Rachael presented an overview of the management plan, which would be in place from 2023-2028.

The goals include managing a population that fluctuates around 500 wolves, continuing to monitor the wolf numbers annually, reducing wolf depredations on livestock and reducing predation on deer and elk.

The 500 benchmark is what the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recommended as a target population for Idaho when it delisted Rocky Mountain wolves in 2009.

Fish and Game officials emphasized during the meeting they don't want the population to get to the bare minimum of 150 wolves, which would trigger federal management, though that is what SB 1211 allows for.

"This plan is not a 'reduce the wolf population by 90%' plan," Rachael said. "That was thrown around a whole lot in the media following legislative action a couple of years

ago. And the accusation was that the Department was going to reduce wolf numbers by 90%. That's not this."

The Idaho Fish and Game Commission opposed the bill.

Garrick Dutcher, the program and research director at the nonprofit Living with Wolves, said the agency could be feeling pressure from the legislature.

"I think that we do not need to be targeting a population of 500 wolves, though I do believe there are members of the Senate that want that and more," he said.

Still, some advocates like Patrick Kelly with the Western Watersheds Project continue to question Idaho Fish and Game's population estimate method - which it developed with biologists at the University of Montana - suggesting that the wolf population could already be lower than the state data show and that management actions built around it could risk dropping the population lower than the state is anticipating.

Under the new plan, the agency would continue using hunting and trapping as its primary management tool. It would also continue incentivizing and paying private contractors to kill wolves.

The proposed plan will be available to review on the state Fish and Game website next week. After that, people will have 30 days to submit comments.

# WHAT A DIFFERENCE LARGE CARNIVORES MAKE

**ECOSYSTEM SERVICES (NATURE SERVICES) = "THE BENEFITS THAT ECOSYSTEMS PROVIDE TO PEOPLE"**

There are four main groups of ecosystem services: provisioning, regulating, supporting and cultural. Ecosystems need to be healthy in order to maintain the health of all living things within and around them, including humans.



## THE ROLE OF LARGE CARNIVORES IN AN ECOSYSTEM

Large carnivores need massive areas of intact and uninterrupted habitat. Sustainably managing these habitats for carnivores also preserves the habitats of many other species.



ALL OF THESE PROCESSES HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO OCCUR IN SOME ENVIRONMENTS, BUT THEIR IMPORTANCE WILL VARY OVER TIME AND DEPENDING ON THE CONTEXT.

**LARGE CARNIVORES AFFECT ECOSYSTEMS MAINLY BY HAVING AN IMPACT ON THE NUMBER OF PREY AND SMALLER PREDATORS, IN ADDITION TO OTHER ECOLOGICAL INTERACTIONS**

**IMPACT ON PREY**

1. Large carnivores can reduce the number of prey and affect prey behaviour because the prey chooses different habitats, its food source, group size and activity periods, and reduces the amount of time used for feeding.
2. Large carnivores help maintain healthier prey populations, as they can selectively cull weak members of ungulate herds and prevent the proliferation of infectious diseases among prey populations.

**IMPACT ON SMALLER PREDATORS AND SCAVENGERS**

1. Large carnivores may reduce the number of medium-sized predators like foxes, jackals, etc. and therefore the community structure of smaller prey.
2. Large carnivores can provide food for scavengers that take advantage of the increase in food left by large predators in the form of carrion.

**OTHER ECOLOGICAL INTERACTIONS**

1. The impact of predators on nutrient cycling is ubiquitous, and it has to do with direct nutrient excretion, egestion or translocation within and across ecosystem boundaries after prey consumption.
2. Changes in vegetation and trophic cascades occur, as large carnivores are animals that survive by preying on other organisms, they can send ripples throughout the food web, regulating the effects other animals have on that ecosystem. One of the clearest examples of trophic cascades occurs when wolves prey on ungulates, which potentially keeps the ungulates moving around and their populations at lower numbers and more spread-out. This limits the impacts ungulates have on plant biomass - thus more trees, bushes, and grass can grow - which then preserves or creates habitat for many other species, from insects and reptiles to beavers and birds, especially around riparian areas (streams or rivers), preventing soil erosion at the same time.

(Zoom in to Magnify)

# Mexican wolf didn't have to be captured

Greta Anderson | Albuquerque Journal | January 29, 2023

Western Watersheds Project and other conservationists had been celebrating the travels of Asha, a.k.a. Mexican gray wolf #f2754, the young female disperser from the Rocky Prairie Pack of Arizona. She had made it all the way to Taos, breaking records with her movements north of Interstate 40, east of Interstate 25, and outside of the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area of southern New Mexico and Arizona. She was on a journey whose logic was inscrutable to us two-legged types. She headed away from her birthplace, beyond the territories of any of her reintroduced kin, and into parts unoccupied by her species for decades.



Members of the Mexican gray wolf recovery team preparing to load a wolf into a helicopter in Reserve, N.M., so it can be released after being processed during an annual survey on Jan. 30, 2020. An endangered Mexican gray wolf has roamed beyond the species' recovery area into the more northern reaches of New Mexico. U.S. wildlife managers have been tracking the female wolf and while they say it's not a threat to human health or public safety, they have notified ranchers in the area. (AP Photo/Susan Montoya Bryan, File)

Then she was stopped in her tracks by the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service who can't seem to allow for the "wild" part of "wildlife." The justification for her capture was that she needed to be kept safe from reckless hunters and careless drivers, brought back into the area she had already left, and put in queue for whelping pups.

The reintroduction project's boundary of Interstate 40 is an arbitrary line that resulted from a political compromise between the federal government and the states of Arizona and New Mexico at the outset of the program. The boundary is not based on suitable habitat or prey densities. The political opposition to letting wolves roam free has trumped the best available science in setting the policies of the recovery program. In fact, leading scientists have concluded that Mexican wolves need additional populations outside of the current recovery area to support the species' long-term survival, including in the very areas that Asha was traipsing through. Asha

showed us the folly of trying to keep wild animals confined by lines on a map.

Moreover, Asha didn't need to be rounded up and contribute offspring this year in order to be valuable to the recovery project. That reflects a very narrow view. She was already contributing quite a bit. She was showing us where unbound wolves will wander. Her scent trails will beckon the expanding wolf population into places well-suited for the species to survive in a changing climate paradigm. She doesn't need to breed to be a leader, we only need to let her choose her own fate and to learn from her path.

Asha is young yet, and she might have figured it out on her own if the agencies hadn't thwarted her unknowable ambitions. She may have kept on running and continued to stay out of conflict with livestock and people. She might have missed her extended family and headed south again. We don't know what she would have done, but it's clear that those in charge couldn't stand to just wait and see.

## Colorado Parks and Wildlife locates, collars two wolves in North Park

Travis Duncan | Colorado Parks & Wildlife | February 3, 2023



WALDEN, Colo. - Colorado Parks and Wildlife placed GPS collars on two wolves in North Park, Colorado on Thursday, Feb. 2. The male wolf 2101 was recaptured two years after his initial capture. The other wolf collared was male 2301, presumably one of six pups produced by female wolf 1084 and male wolf 2101 in 2021.

"Both animals were caught together in an area of North Park where we have been receiving reports from the public in the past couple of weeks," CPW Species Conservation Program Manager Eric Odell said. Odell was part of the capture team working to collar wolves in North Park this week along with CPW Wildlife Research Scientist Ellen Brandell and CPW Wildlife Veterinarian Pauline Nol. "We would like to thank the public for sending in their wolf sightings."

CPW's team was doing wolf capture and collaring work in conjunction with elk and moose capture efforts for ongoing research studies in the area.

"2101's collar had failed and we could see it was damaged. Wolves are rough on collars and that's to be expected that in time collars will fail," said Odell.

"Refitting 2101 and having a second GPS collar will allow our biologists and wildlife managers to continue learning about the behavior of these wolves," said CPW Acting Director Heather Disney Dugan.

During the collaring effort, a CPW-contracted company safely darted the animal with a tranquilizer from a helicopter, allowing the collar to be fitted by field staff on the ground.

"Both animals were given a health exam during the collaring process and appear to be in good health," said

Odell.

It is worth noting that, while collars provide valuable information, they only provide a snapshot and are not monitored in real time. The primary tools used by wildlife officers are field observations of physical evidence such as wolf prints and scat during field investigations to verify the presence of wolves on the landscape.

CPW also encourages the public to use its wolf sighting form if they see a suspected wolf. Any personal observations, photos or videos taken can help inform CPW staff and fill in the gaps as to wolf activity in the state.

These collaring efforts occurred on the known wolves in Jackson County that naturally migrated to the state and are not the result of wolf reintroduction efforts. No wolves have been reintroduced under Proposition 114 - now state statute 33-2-105.8.



# THE WILD ANIMAL SANCTUARY ACQUIRES 22,450 ACRES OF LAND FOR NEWLY FORMED WILD HORSE REFUGE PROPERTY

The Wild Animal Sanctuary | PRNewswire | January 26, 2023



**CRAIG, Colo.,** -- The Wild Animal Sanctuary, A Colorado Non-Profit Corporation, announces the recent acquisition of a large parcel of land located in northwest Colorado not far from the historic town of Steamboat Springs. With more than 22,450 acres of land spanning across 29 square miles, this contiguous parcel of land represents a landmass larger than Manhattan Island.

The Wild Animal Sanctuary purchased the land for its newly created Wild Horse Refuge, which will serve to rescue and protect hundreds of Colorado's native wild horses, which are also known as Mustangs. The Refuge is being created in response to the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) wild horse round up operations which began in early 2022 and were done within Colorado's Sand Wash Basin and Piceance-East Douglas Herd Management Areas (HMA).

The land, which consists of rolling hills and canyons covered in native grasses, sagebrush, and juniper trees, and features Lay Creek meandering through a large portion of the property, will be the perfect habitat for wild Mustangs to live and roam freely.

Due to its vast size, the newly formed Refuge is already home to an array of native wildlife, such as varmints, mountain lions, bobcats, deer, elk, pronghorn, dove, sage grouse, geese, duck, golden and bald eagles. The land was formerly operated as a large cattle ranch and breeding operation but will now be dedicated entirely to saving Colorado's native wild horses.

Formerly known as the Rio Ro Mo Ranch, The Wild Animal Sanctuary plans to carry on the tradition of being an excellent land steward as it becomes one of the largest free roaming wild horse sanctuaries in the United States. As the Refuge moves forward in the coming months, there are plans to rescue and provide a life-long home to as many as 500 head of wild Mustangs.

The Wild Animal Sanctuary has been rescuing captive wildlife, horses, and many other species of animals for more than 43 years and currently operates three other facilities for rescued animals. With a 1,214-acre facility located near Denver, CO, as well as a second 10,000-acre facility located in southeast Colorado near the town of Springfield, and a third facility located just west of Fort Worth, TX; total acreage for the organization now amounts to more than 33,000-acres.

Denver is located 4.5 hours southeast of the newly formed Wild Horse Refuge, while Salt Lake City, UT is 4 hours to the west. For more information about The Wild Animal Sanctuary or its Wild Horse Refuge, visit [WildAnimalSanctuary.org](http://WildAnimalSanctuary.org) or [WildHorseRefuge.org](http://WildHorseRefuge.org).

## Wolf expert exonerates wolves in the death of dozens of cattle in Colorado

**MEEKER, Colo. (Feb. 14, 2023)** — A wildlife expert who examined photos of dead cows obtained by the Humane Society of the United States in an open records request has concluded that wolves are not to blame for the deaths of 41 cattle whose bodies were found near Meeker, Colorado in 2022.

The examination of the photos comes after Colorado Parks and Wildlife stated in an October press release, "Colorado Parks and Wildlife is investigating a report of dead domestic cow calves on White River National Forest lands near Meeker that show damage consistent with wolf depredation." In November, the CPW's Northwest regional manager testified before the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission that some of the cattle he viewed had injuries that appeared to come from wolves. The comment is found at 4:53 on the video. Then in a Feb. 7, 2023, press release, CPW stated that their investigation could not determine the cause of death for the cattle but indicated attacks by "large canines."

According to the Humane Society of the United States, the state's assessment led to anti-wolf hysteria among the certain stakeholders on the West Slope. Several stakeholders involved in the wolf restoration process testified that they opposed wolves and would take matters into their own hands, invoking the threat of wolf poaching (See for instance, the CPW Commission's Gunnison wolf hearing at the 5:03 timestamp).

In December, the Humane Society of the United States submitted a Colorado Open Records Act request seeking extensive documents related to the 41 dead cattle in Meeker. The HSUS received the CPW's documents and photos in February.

The HSUS shared those documents with Carter Niemeyer, a wolf-predation expert. After reviewing the documents, including dozens of photographs, he stated, "I did not see any evidence of predation by wolves," and, "I don't really see any evidence of dog bites either." Instead, he suggested some of the livestock losses in Meeker were a result of brisket disease, a common high-altitude, cattle ailment. In this instance, the cattle were at 9,200 feet and dozens of them appear to have died suddenly but showed no evidence of experiencing wolf attacks. Furthermore, CPW's remote trail cameras in the area found no evidence of wolves in the area.

Niemeyer is a former U.S. Department of Agriculture-Wildlife Services district supervisor and a retired U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service conflict specialist, as well as a current member of CPW's Technical Working Group on wolf restoration.

"We are grateful that Carter Niemeyer could review CPW's evidence to conclude it was highly unlikely that wolves were responsible for the deaths of these cattle," said Wendy Keefover, senior strategist for native carnivore protection for the Humane Society of the United States. "The truth is that less than one percent of cattle inventories die as a result of predation, and Carter's report exonerates wolves. CPW should show some love for wolves, an iconic species beloved by most Coloradans. We hope in the future that thorough investigations are conducted before releasing inconclusive evidence blaming wolves or bears and mountain lions for livestock losses. The timing of this misinformation couldn't have been worse, as the situation in Meeker unnecessarily alarmed many in the livestock industry in the midst of the state's wolf-planning process."

Colorado Parks and Wildlife is wrapping up their public hearing processes on their forthcoming wolf management plan for their restoration in Colorado. The last two public hearings on the state's wolf plan are scheduled for Feb. 16 via Zoom, from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. and on Feb. 22 and at CPW's headquarters, Hunter Education Building at 6060 Broadway, Denver on Feb. 22, from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. The HSUS is urging Colorado residents to speak up on behalf of the wolves.



# 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](http://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

Representative: Outdoor Recreation and Utilization of Parks; Glenwood Springs, CO  
Email Address: [carrie.hauser@state.co.us](mailto:carrie.hauser@state.co.us)  
Term Expires: July 2023

### Taishya Adams

Representative: Outdoor Recreation and Utilization of Parks Resources; Boulder, CO  
Email Address: [Taishya.Adams@state.co.us](mailto:Taishya.Adams@state.co.us)  
Term Expires: July 2023

### Dallas May, Vice Chair

Representative: Agriculture; Lamar, CO  
Email Address: [Dallas.May@state.co.us](mailto:Dallas.May@state.co.us)

### Karen Michelle Bailey

Representative: Member at Large; Boulder, CO  
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## WAYS TO CO-EXIST WITH WOLVES

[www.woodriverwolfproject.org/tools](http://www.woodriverwolfproject.org/tools)



<https://tinyurl.com/RestoreWolfProtection>



**New research shows how humans are a substantial source of mortality for wolves that live predominantly in national parks — and more importantly, that human-caused mortality triggers instability in wolf packs in national parks.**

Published today in *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*, the study was led by Kira Cassidy, a research associate at Yellowstone National Park, and included co-authors at five national parks and University of Minnesota Voyageurs Wolf Project researchers Thomas Gable, Joseph Bump and Austin Homkes.

"For gray wolves, the biological unit is the pack or the family. We wanted to focus on the impacts of human-caused mortality to the pack, a finer-scale measure than population size or growth rate," said Cassidy. "We found the odds a pack persists and reproduces drops with more human-caused mortalities."

While many studies have looked at how humans impact wolf populations, this study took a different approach and examined how human-caused mortality affects individual wolf packs. To do this, Cassidy and her team contrasted what happened to wolf packs after at least one pack member was killed by human-causes with packs where no members died of human-causes.

The researchers found that the chance a pack stayed together to the end of the year decreased by 27% when a pack member died of human causes, and whether or not that pack reproduced the next year decreased by 22%. When a pack leader died, the impact was more substantial, with the chance of the pack making it to the end of the year decreasing by 73% and reproduction by 49%.

Although the researchers did not examine whether human-caused mortality alters the size of wolf populations in national parks, this work shows that people are clearly altering certain aspects of wolf ecology in national parks even if they are not impacting overall population size.

One reason for this is that humans are a disproportionate cause of mortality for wolves that live predominantly in national parks. In other words, wolves die more often of human-causes than would be expected for the amount of time wolves spend outside of park boundaries.

Of all national parks in the study, wolves in Voyageurs National Park spent the most time outside of park boundaries. In fact, wolves that had territories in or overlapping Voyageurs spent 46%

of their time outside of the park. The result: 50% of all mortalities for these wolves came at the hands of people, with poaching being the most common cause of death.

"The unique shape of Voyageurs means that there are very few wolf packs that live entirely within the boundaries of the park. Instead, many wolf pack territories straddle the park border and when wolves leave the park, they are at an increased risk of being killed by people," said Gable, a post-doctoral associate in the University of Minnesota's College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences and project lead of the Voyageurs Wolf Project, which studies wolves in and around Voyageurs National Park.

However, Voyageurs was hardly unique as this pattern was similar across the other national parks in the study -- Denali National Park and Preserve, Yellowstone National Park, Grand Teton National Park, and Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve -- with human-caused mortality accounting for 36% of collared wolf mortality across all five parks.

Legal hunting and trapping of wolves outside of national park boundaries accounted for 53% of all human-caused mortality for wolves from national parks during hunting and trapping seasons.

These findings highlight why collaboration between different state and federal agencies is key when conserving and managing wildlife that go in and out of protected areas such as national parks.

"Wildlife populations that cross hard boundaries from federal to state ownership are a challenge to manage. Wolves don't know the park boundary lines," said Bump, an associate professor in the U of M's College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences.

The Voyageurs Wolf Project is funded by the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund as recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR).

# MEET A WOLF DAY!

Sunday, March 19th | 4PM - 6PM



**Colorado Wolf & Wildlife Center**

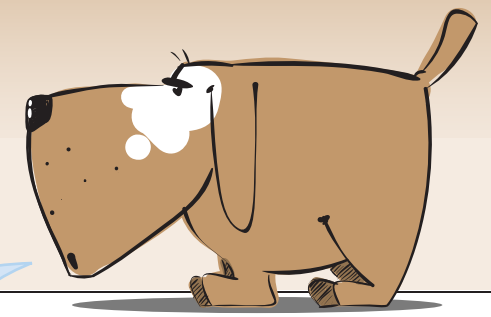
# Adoption corner

## 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. ]**

### THEIA »

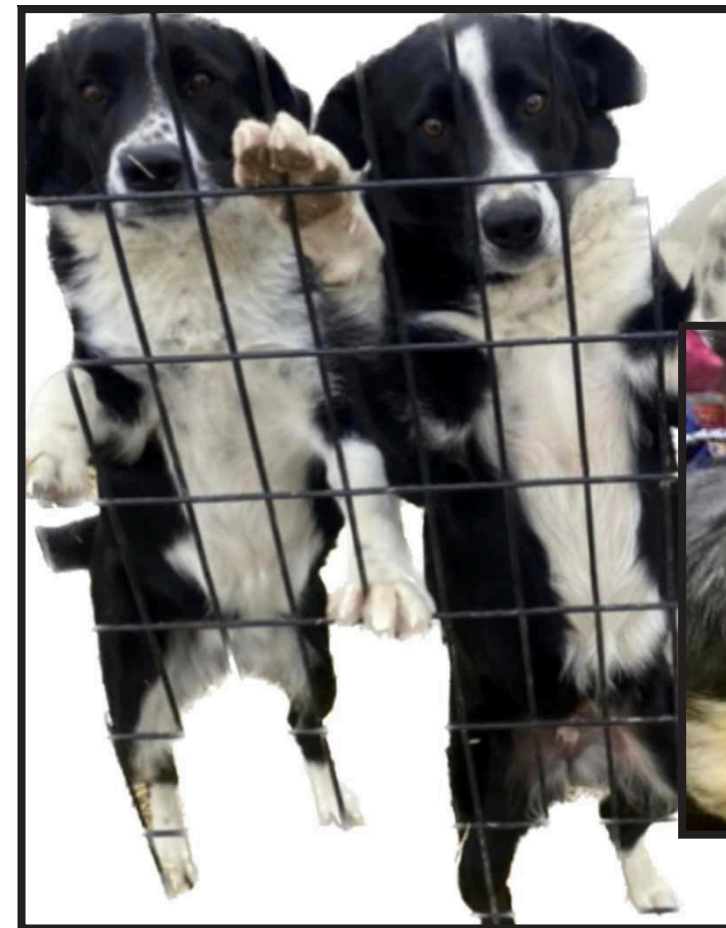
Hi there friends! My name is Theia! I am the sweetest pup you'll ever meet. I love attention and will be the best couch potato. I love everyone I meet and hate being alone. If you want a velcro dog, I am the one for you!



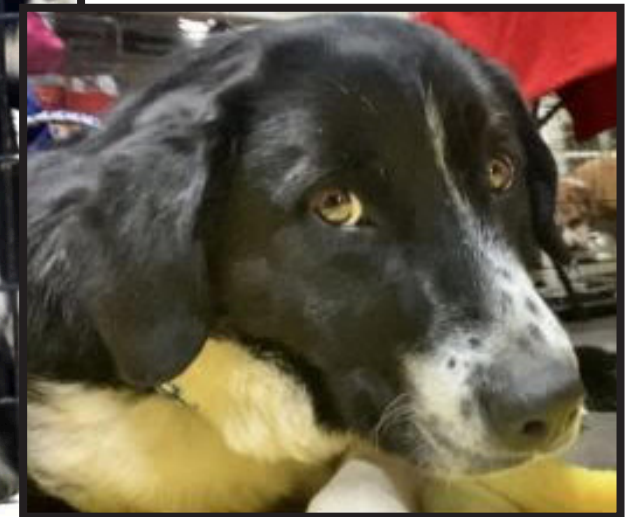
### « DANIEL

Hello, my name is Daniel!  
I'm a little on the shy side but once I warm up to you I enjoy spending quality time with you. I'm an easy-going guy looking for a quieter home possibly with another feline friend. I love looking out the window and chirp at birds as they fly by and soaking up the sunshine

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



### CHARLIE & CHILI



Charlie (girl) would love to cuddle with you on the couch. She and her sister Chili, similar in appearance, are mellow, affectionate border collies. They love belly rubs and attention. Running and playing with other dogs makes the funnest day for them. As border collies, they need lots of mental and physical stimulation. 3 years old, spayed, all vacc's, microchipped. Their owner died. They have been around cattle.