

**British Columbia seeks public input on caribou as wolf killing expands in western provinces.**

*Caribou continue to decline, and BC not revealing the number of wolves killed last year*

**June 13, 2018 (GOLDEN, BC)** -- Both British Columbia and Alberta governments have confirmed expansion of wolf kill programs this past winter.

A BC FOIP request has been further delayed that would reveal the number of wolves killed during this past fiscal, despite the province emphasizing their commitment to transparency in the provincial caribou recovery discussion paper currently open to public comment. Until June 15<sup>th</sup> at 4:00pm PST, [the BC government is accepting public comments](#) on plans including a future of tax-funded wolf killing for many years to come, as well as the killing of moose, elk and deer under the guise of caribou conservation.

Government records acquired through Freedom of Information process in Alberta have revealed that over the past fiscal year, at least 306 wolves were gunned down from helicopters on behalf of caribou, and that strychnine poison was used to kill 12 wolves.

Despite thousands of dead wolves, no increase in caribou numbers have been documented in either BC or Alberta. Indeed, the South Selkirk caribou herd in BC has become functionally extinct in the last year despite four years of wolf gunning.

In the face of criticism from scientists on ecological and ethical grounds of wolf killing, helicopter gunning is spreading in western Canada, alongside new proposals for increased commercial recreation and new permit applications for resource extraction that will further degrade and destroy the land that caribou require to survive. Successive provincial governments have habitually favoured the destruction of wolves over any consequential protection, enhancement, or restoration of caribou habitat recommended by scientists since the 1970s. As caribou declines accelerate in Canada, wolves are once again being scapegoated in attempts to protect oil and gas, mining, forestry, and recreational activities.

“Years of ‘talk and log’ consultations have turned into ‘talk and kill’, as industry continues unchecked,” notes Sadie Parr, Executive Director.

The organization is urging provincial and federal political parties, politicians, and all special interest groups who support wolf kill programs under the guise of caribou conservation to review the ethics behind this outdated practice, and to consider the ecological consequences of exploiting apex carnivores.

Last year scientists involved in caribou recovery planning in BC admitted in a planning document that “there are no humane methods to directly reduce wolf numbers....”. Nonetheless, the program expanded from South Peace and South Selkirks to include Revelstoke. This past year, in the 4<sup>th</sup> of a planned 5 years of experimental wolf control, the killing expanded to the Narraway caribou herd, a transboundary group animals numbering fewer than 100 individuals.

In Alberta, aerial gunning of wolves, which began in the Little Smoky caribou range northeast of Jasper National Park in 2005, has now spread to 4 other caribou ranges in the province, including Narraway.

Aside from habitat destruction and disturbance, additional factors that contribute to ungulate declines include weather, nutrition and food availability, other predators, gene flow, population size, stress induced by humans and infrastructure, and perhaps most importantly the carrying capacity of the remaining habitat.<sup>1</sup>

For these reasons and more, many experts and non-government organizations are working together to remove wolf killing from the toolbox of options as new recovery plans are developed for caribou.

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Photos of wolves, caribou and habitat available upon request.

**About Wolf Awareness Inc**

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<sup>1</sup> National Research Council, 1997. *Wolves, bears, and their prey in Alaska: biological and social challenges in wildlife management*. National Academies Press.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Wolf Awareness is a team of conservationists and scientists whose primary goal is to foster awareness and appreciation of wolves, wolf ecology, conservation and co-existence.

Websites: <http://wolfawarenessinc.org/> AND <https://www.wehowl.ca/poisonfree>

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**Key Information:**

Wolf Awareness Predator Kill Action Page <http://wolfawarenessinc.org/engage-take-action/>

British Columbia Caribou Recovery Engagement and Discussion Paper: <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/caribou/>

British Columbia Caribou Recovery Planning Document “Next Steps” admission of inhumane practice of wolf cull and continued destruction of critical caribou habitat in Planning Unit 3A document – [http://wolfawarenessinc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/WEB-Next-steps\\_Revelstoke-Recovery-plan-2016\\_Oct12.pdf](http://wolfawarenessinc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/WEB-Next-steps_Revelstoke-Recovery-plan-2016_Oct12.pdf)

media coverage: <https://www.nationalobserver.com/2017/02/01/news/bc-government-scientists-admit-wolf-cull-inhumane-then-propose-expand-it>

New industrial permits under development or review in areas identified as caribou habitat:

Columbia Range <https://www.imperialmetals.com/projects/ruddock-creek/overview>

Purcell Range <https://arfd.gov.bc.ca/ApplicationPosting/viewpost.jsp?PostID=54966>

Copy of Alberta FOIP E18-G-0655 response received June 12, 2018

FOIP Reference Number: E18-G-0655

| Number of Wolves Removed |  |   |                                 |
|--------------------------|--|---|---------------------------------|
|                          | West-Central Ranges<br>(LS, ALP, RRCP, NARR) |   | North-East Ranges<br>(ESAR, CL) |
| Year                     | Aerial Program                               | Toxicant Program<br>(only delivered in<br>LS and part of the<br>ALP winter range) | Aerial Program                  |
| 2017-2018                | 166  | 12  | 140                             |

- Number of wolves removed through trapping by Registered Fur Management Area holders and by Indigenous people is not currently available.
- Non-target wildlife species removed in 2017/2018 through toxicant use in the LS and ALP ranges = 2 ravens

In the Little Smoky range where caribou habitat is 96% disturbed by oil, gas, logging, and forest fires, approximately 1,300 wolves have been killed since 2005. Strychnine is currently used to kill wolves in 2 caribou ranges in Alberta, despite being condemned by experts as an irresponsible and inhumane practice. Strychnine causes uncontrollable convulsions and a violent and painful death to all animals that ingest it. This dangerous toxin travels through all levels of the food chain due to secondary poisoning of scavengers that consume poisoned carcasses. Being water soluble, it is extremely dangerous to humans as well if it enters into water bodies. Currently, the Alberta government strychnine bait sites are arranged along river basins.

A new 5-year permit to use Strychnine to kill wolves was recently provided to the province of Alberta by the *Pest Management Regulatory Agency*, a sector of Health Canada, foretelling a highly dangerous and toxic landscape until at least 2022.