

# Cruel secret about BC's wolf kill program revealed

## The BC Government lied about how they use wolves to betray their family packs

(GOLDEN, BC – Dec. 11, 2019) A gruesome detail about BC's wolf-killing program has been revealed in a new government report titled [South Peace Caribou Recovery following Five Years of Experimental Wolf Reduction](#). Individual wolves that are radio-collared to later reveal the location of their pack are exposed to repeated trauma in this highly disturbing practice...over and over again. Despite being [denied by government in previous media enquiries](#), the *Methods* section of the 2019 experimental report describes how the collared wolf is left to watch as it's entire family is gunned down from the air, and **kept alive year after year**, being forced to repeatedly witness the death of any wolf that befriends it.

"Knowing that wolves are highly sentient and dependent on each other for survival makes this practice unbearable to think about, yet we must. Imagine what these collared wolves experience. How many times do they have to suffer?" questions Sadie Parr, executive director of Wolf Awareness.

In 2016 the province reluctantly admitted that it net-guns individual wolves from helicopters to fit them with radio collars so that gunmen can be flown in at a later date to relocate the collared wolf with its family and kill them all. The animals collared in the practice described above are often referred to as "Judas Wolves" to portray a sense of ultimate betrayal; yet Judas made a deliberate choice.

The South Peace wolf-kill program, which encompasses an area larger than half of Vancouver Island, has killed more than 550 wolves and is proposed to continue for an indefinite period; until the landscape can no longer support sufficient elk, moose and deer to feed wolves. Tax- funded wolf kill programs are also underway in areas around Revelstoke and Nelson.

The province recommitted to transparent and fulsome consultation about caribou recovery planning after several heated community meetings elicited outrage in BC's interior. However, the ministry then conducted [a closed consultation in its proposal to expand the wolf kill program underway to three additional areas](#) (Tweedsmuir-Entiako, Hart Ranges, and Itcha-Ilgachuz caribou herd ranges) and pay hunters to kill cougars in the Itcha-Ilgachuz caribou range. The consultation document was finally leaked to conservation groups, who immediately [opposed the plans](#).

Conservation group Wolf Awareness maintains that wolves are being scapegoated for industrial and recreational interests, and that wolves, wildlife and ecosystems deserve better.

Says Parr. "The tax-funded unethical and inhumane wolf kill program coupled with secrecy and pitifully inadequate caribou habitat protection is a stain on the entire country. [Ethical and ecological considerations are being ignored.](#)"

-- 30 --

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WOLF AWARENESS is a conservation organization dedicated to promoting positive attitudes towards carnivores in general, the wolf in particular, and to fostering an appreciation for the environment of which we are all a part.

## 2. Methods

Prior to the implementation of wolf reductions, baseline population data for both caribou and wolves were collected. These data were collected continually over the five-year study period to measure caribou population responses. Caribou population data, including population estimates and calf recruitment rates, were measured annually through aerial surveys. Adult female survival rates were calculated by monitoring a subsample of radio-collared individuals within the population, and cause of mortality was determined through mortality investigations of deceased radio-collared individuals. Wolf pack locations, habitat use, and density estimates were derived through radio-collaring of wolves. Additionally, the response by primary prey species (i.e. moose) to wolf reductions was also measured within and adjacent to the treatment areas through aerial surveys and radio-collaring studies.

The initial treatment area boundary was designed to encompass the majority of the Klinse-Za, Kennedy Siding, and Quintette caribou herd ranges; a wolf reduction zone of approximately 16,500 km<sup>2</sup> (Figure 2). Specifically, the boundary included the core high elevation and low elevation caribou habitat, and adjacent matrix habitat within the caribou ranges. The South Narraway treatment area was included in 2017-2018, with an additional area of approximately 1,600 km<sup>2</sup>. These treatment areas formed the boundaries for intensive reduction of wolves using aerial gunning from helicopters, where the objective was to remove the majority of wolves within or immediately adjacent to the reduction zone and in doing so, reduce wolf densities to below 3 wolves/1000 km<sup>2</sup>. Aerial gunning of wolves was deemed the most effective and humane method of removal, as properly applied shooting techniques results in wolves being quickly dispatched while eliminating the risk of bycatch. The reduction of wolves occurred during the winter months when snow levels facilitated optimal tracking conditions, and concentrated wolves' distribution at lower elevations. Reduction efficiency was increased by deploying radio-collars on individual wolves in all known wolf packs within or immediately adjacent to the treatment area boundary. This facilitated the relocation of the wolf packs and increased the likelihood of removing all wolves from each pack. The individual wolves were captured via helicopter net-gunning, which enabled crews to restrain the individuals and deploy GPS-satellite radio-collars, allowing for remote tracking of movements and locations, and relocation through the use of radio telemetry. **The radio-collared individuals were often left alive following the conclusion of the winter reduction efforts in order to facilitate the location of wolves the following winter.** Wolves that were found immediately adjacent to the reduction zone, or were tracked from within the boundary to adjacent areas were also removed (assuming these wolves had at least partial overlap with the treatment area).

Aerial wolf reduction was delivered primarily by external contractors, with operational oversight from Ministry staff. Overtime, the operational oversight was increased in order to ensure the efficacy and humaneness of the program and internal Ministry staff assisted with the delivery of the field operations as well. Initially, wolf removal crews attempted to retrieve the carcasses of deceased wolves; however, it was quickly determined to be an inefficient use of time, effort, and funds. Subsequently, the locations of accessible wolf carcasses were provided to First Nations and they retrieved those carcasses from the ground. The Province also collaborated with local First Nations to support wolf reduction through ground trapping programs. Although deemed ineffective on its own (Webb et al. 2011), ground trapping was thought to offer an additional source of wolf removal, while providing opportunities to collaborate with local First Nations communities. The ground