

Living with Wolves

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

FIELD NOTES

When I joined Jim at Wolf Camp in the winter of 1993, he would tell me many stories about his early years with the Sawtooth Pack. One account that stands out was how a mountain lion killed the omega wolf and how the pack reacted to this loss.

He said that he didn't fully comprehend how deeply the wolves cherished the omega wolf, Motaki, until she was gone. The project was only in its first year and the behavior he had witnessed until then had always simply appeared as "wolf behavior." He told me that he couldn't quite grasp at first that within all of their interactions—the eye contact, the gentle games, the pressing of shoulders while walking—there were countless expressions of affection and devotion. He only came to understand these things so fully and completely when faced with their absence.

When Motaki died, Jim told me something began to change in him. Until then, Jim had thought of himself as a wildlife filmmaker. He had always assumed that after the wolf project, he would begin a new film on a new animal subject. But seeing the wolves grieve and struggle with their loss, he realized he wasn't just a filmmaker anymore. His work, and all the energy and passion he put into it, would be dedicated to wolves, inspiring me to join the team at wolf camp.

From this seed grew our nonprofit, Living with Wolves. Today, more than 25 years later, we continue to share the social, emotional and family-based nature of wolves.

Jimie



Wolf Camp in Idaho's Sawtooth Mountains



Motaki, the wolf that was killed by a mountain lion



The pack mourned their loss of the omega wolf for more than six weeks



Jim and Jamie Dutcher



Jimie
Founders, Living with Wolves

TAYAKA - LONE WOLF

by Cheryl Alexander
Follow me on Instagram @cher_wildawake



Top left: Cheryl watching Tayaka from her Zodiac

Above: Tayaka looks out across the channel to the suburbs of Victoria

www.wildawake.com

In April of this year, I invited Living with Wolves co-founder Jamie Dutcher to my home in Victoria, Canada to share an amazing experience. Just offshore from the city, surrounded by huge oil tankers, freighters and other boat traffic, a wolf had chosen to live alone amidst a small group of uninhabited islands.

It is likely the wolf dispersed from a pack living farther north on Vancouver Island. On May 4, 2012, there was a report of a wolf loping

across a rural area near the city, jumping six-foot-high fences and moving through back yards. Two weeks later, a wolf was again reported by kayakers on an offshore island, part of a marine park adjacent to Victoria. As it's an area that I have been exploring for the past 40 years, I was intrigued and wanted to film this visitor.

I'm Cheryl Alexander, an environmentalist and conservation photographer. I called Jamie, who had observed wolf social behavior

firsthand while living with the famous Sawtooth Pack in Idaho. I wanted to interview Jamie for my documentary, *Tayaka: Lone Wolf*, that aired this fall in Canada on *The Nature of Things*. There was so much that I wanted to ask her. Why would a family animal like a wolf swim nearly three miles out in the open ocean to those tiny islands and choose to live alone?

In the months after the wolf was seen, the marine park was closed in attempts to trap him. Parks authorities feared negative

encounters with visitors. They even debated shooting him. There are no deer or other small terrestrial mammals living on the islands, so it was believed that he wouldn't survive. The islands also lack a year-round fresh water source.

The wolf has proved the experts wrong. He is healthy and has survived amongst these small islands for more than seven years, feeding primarily on seal and other marine mammals such as river otter and mink. He also eats goose eggs and gunnel fish.

Over the years, to better understand the patterns of his life, I set up trail cameras to document his life through still photos and film, observing him primarily from my small boat. From finding that first paw print on the beach, to hearing his lonesome howls from the island's forest, I have come to know him well and I believe that he also knows me.

Follow Living with Wolves on Facebook to check when Cheryl's film will be scheduled to air in the U.S.



Cheryl was actually able to show Jamie the wolf living on the small island.

TRAPPING

Only a few places in Idaho remain protected from state-sanctioned wolf trapping. Early this year, Living with Wolves learned of a state proposal being fast-tracked that would bring wolf trapping and snaring to Sun Valley's Wood River Valley, a top destination for outdoor recreation and tourism in Idaho. The public, never warned, was unaware of this proposal. Just three weeks remained before the Idaho Department of Fish and Game would ratify their plan. We had to act with great speed.

Living with Wolves organized a campaign to alert and mobilize the public, generating a groundswell of activism and public outcry, and giving voice to broad-based disapproval. We ran large, striking, full-color ads in local and state newspapers, framing the issue and providing readers with contact information for officials who needed to hear from them. We contacted city and county officials and local state representatives, equipping them with details of the proposal, and sharing our concerns of (in addition to animal cruelty) the risks to people, their children, pets, and other wildlife that wolf trapping and snaring would bring.

Most people do not realize that modern-day wolf traps cannot be removed without employing specialized metal bars to pry open the jaws to free the victim. And baited wire snare traps are designed to kill, cutting off blood flow to the brain. Snares often maim or kill unwary animals they are not intended for, putting at risk other living beings, including children, hikers, endangered species and pets. Viewed by many as archaic and inhumane, the trapping and snaring of wolves or other animals is either highly restricted or banned in many countries, including many parts of America.

The good news? Our efforts proved effective. City, county and state officials communicated the concerns of their constituents to the governor and state officials, while schoolchildren, and residents around the state took action. And they were heard! In the end, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game withdrew its proposal.

The lesson is clear. If wildlife and wildlands in your area are facing ill-advised proposals, take action! Writing strongly worded, factual letters, and making phone calls can compel appointed officials like the Commissioners of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game to deal with citizen action. They need to know they're being watched. And, your elected representatives want to hear from each of you, so they can communicate your interests and influence decisions such as this one. Your efforts CAN pay off!

BEWARE OF TRAPS!
KEEP YOUR PETS AND FAMILY SAFE



Don't allow sweeping new wolf trapping and snaring expansions on your Idaho lands!

URGENT! SPEAK OUT BY MARCH 12

In order to satisfy the demands of a small population of trappers, Idaho Fish and Game wants to expand wolf trapping statewide. If this isn't stopped, here are some details of a new reality coming to your favorite parts of Idaho, including the Boise area.

- Wolf traps and snares pose terrible unnecessary danger to residents, children, visitors and pets, working animals and other "non-target" wildlife.
- You need specialized equipment - two large metal bars - to release the enormous tension and pry open the spring-loaded steel jaws of many of the modern leg-hold wolf traps. How many hikers and dog walkers carry metal bars?
- Snares, lethal hair-trigger wire lassos set at neck height, tighten as the victim struggles, cutting off blood flow to the brain.
- Traps and snares can be set just 10 feet from trails. They are baited with strong-smelling bait, easily luring animals including dogs into them.

If these proposals are approved by Fish and Game, wolf trapping will be allowed nearly everywhere across Idaho. In the popular Boise foothills, only the first few miles of trails are off limits. In the Bogus area, both traps and snares will be allowed, and the trapping season will extend for six months of the year. These expanded wolf trapping proposals impact public and/or private land in the open spaces surrounding Boise.

Much of the world has already outlawed trapping. Is this what we, the people of Idaho, want in our forests, mountains and deserts, right next to our trails? Is this the reputation we want for our state?

Living with Wolves

Email: info@livingwithwolves.org • livingwithwolves.org

WOLF TRAPPING PROPOSAL STOPPED

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO RALLIED, defending our wolves and other wildlife, our families and pets, the safe recreational enjoyment of our valley, and our local economy that depends on it. As a result, the proposal to allow fur trappers to use traps and snares to target wolves in the Wood River Valley has been withdrawn. To everyone who spoke out, this proposal was, in large part, overturned by YOU, including the fifth graders who marched in Hailey to deliver their message to the county commissioners!



ALSO THANK the Idaho Fish and Game Commissioners for listening to our community's concerns, and the state, county and city officials who worked to communicate their constituents' concerns. Together we prevented unnecessary danger from the Wood River Valley.



WARNING: Unfortunately, statewide plans to expand wolf trapping and snaring continue nearby, as close as the other side of Galena and Trail Creek Summits, south of highway 20 and "the blinking light" and beyond.

NO RESIDENTS, WE NEED TO MAKE OUR VOICES HEARD
We Thank You!

Living with Wolves

info@livingwithwolves.org • livingwithwolves.org

YOU CAN WRITE AND/OR CALL the officials on this list to express your concerns and opinions. And please COME SPEAK BEFORE THE FISH AND GAME COMMISSIONERS AT THE PUBLIC HEARING on March 12 at 7pm at: Washington Group - Main Auditorium 720 East Park Blvd., Boise ID 83712. If you sign up at the door, you will be allowed to speak for just three minutes.

GOVERNOR BRAD LITTLE
Tel: (208) 334-2100 - Email: governor@gov.idaho.gov
SAM EATON, Policy Director for Governor Little
Tel: (208) 334-2100 - Email: sam.eaton@gov.idaho.gov
The Boise area is part of Idaho Fish and Game's Southwest Region.
ED SCHRIEVER, Idaho Fish and Game Director
Tel: (208) 334-3771 - Email: ed.schriever@idfg.idaho.gov
TIM MURPHY, Southwest Region Commissioner
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A group of fifth-graders rally to protest wolf trapping plans, marching through the town of Hailey, Idaho to the Old Blaine County Courthouse, carrying signs and chanting slogans. There, they delivered a petition to Commissioner Dick Fosbury, who shared it with the other commissioners, who were equally supportive of their trapping concerns.



Wyakin, mid-ranking female
of the Sawtooth Pack

WOLF NEWS 2019

by Garrick Dutcher

FEDS PUSH TO STRIP PROTECTIONS FOR WOLVES

In March, the Federal Government announced a proposal to strip **Endangered Species Act** (ESA) protections from gray wolves **nationwide**, with the exception of the critically endangered Mexican wolves of Arizona and New Mexico. This premature “delisting” would be a tremendous setback for wolf recovery as wolves have not yet returned to much of their former range. The states of California and Washington expressed concern and disapproval over the proposal, with fewer than 140 wolves between them. 1.8 million Americans submitted an overwhelming and resounding rejection of the plan during the public comment period. That may or may not influence the Department of Interior’s decision. Stay tuned.


Wolves living in the Northern Rockies have already lost ESA protections (via an act of Congress), directly resulting in a wholesale slaughter of wolves. Ultra-aggressive wolf management policies are the norm in Montana and Idaho, where state wildlife managers bend to pressure from livestock producers who benefit from the extremely cheap use of National Forests and other publicly-owned lands to raise their privately-owned livestock. Aiming to drastically reduce the regional population of approximately 1,800 wolves through a combination of hunters, trappers and Wildlife Services agents working for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the two states have killed 5,900 wolves since 2009. Wyoming is on a similar course, but only gained management control a few years ago.

Given the removal of federal protections, other states could easily follow a similar trajectory, bending to political pressure from the livestock industry and embracing aggressive wolf-killing policies. The entire population in the lower 48 states is around 6,000 wolves. It is counterintuitive and counterproductive for an animal to recover enough to have endangered species protections lifted, only to be immediately and aggressively killed when management changes hands.

Should privately-owned livestock be given preference on our public lands at the expense of native wildlife? Or should livestock owners be expected to try to coexist with native wildlife on public lands? This question should be for the American public to answer.


POACHING AND MEXICAN WOLVES


The illegal killing of wolves continues. Perpetrators, when convicted, are often given lenient sentences. With a remaining population of 131 Mexican wolves in the wild, illegal poaching accounts for more than half of the Mexican wolf mortalities over the past two decades. At least 13 Mexican wolf deaths in **Arizona** and **New Mexico** in the past year are currently under investigation.


 Reports of wolf poaching in the past year also came from **Washington, Michigan** and Grand Teton National Park, **Wyoming**, but the vast majority of poaching likely goes undiscovered. The sudden surprise disappearance of the Shasta pack, **California’s** first wolf pack since the animal’s return to the state, is one of many suspicious and alarming situations.

IDAHO “ALL IN” ON WOLF KILLING

Originally scheduled to end in 2019, **Idaho’s** Wolf Control Board was permanently reauthorized, and provided with a \$200,000 annual budget to kill wolves.

 An organization funded in part by the Idaho Fish and Game Commission and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation pays a “reimbursement” bounty of up to \$1,000 for every wolf killed in Idaho.

 Idaho Fish and Game doubled the number of tags an individual can buy to kill wolves in the majority of the state.


 New wolf-trapping seasons were created across the state, with existing trapping seasons extended by 5-9 weeks.

RED WOLF, *CANIS RUFUS*

Genetic research confirms that the red wolf is a distinct and unique species, different than gray wolves, though only 35 red wolves remain in the wild, confined to just a few counties of northeast **North Carolina**.

RECOVERY SETBACKS IN EUROPE

After an absence of 140 years, three wolves (one male and two females) were thought to have settled in **The Netherlands** and produced a litter, but all are now missing and feared dead. Poaching is suspected.

 Missing since spring when she was known to be pregnant, Naya was the first wolf to return to **Belgium** in 100 years. She is now believed to be dead along with her pups. Poaching is suspected and there is a €30,000 reward for information about her presumed death.

WOLF NEWS

WHAT HAPPENED IN BANFF

Are wolves dangerous? Rarely. Normally, wolves are afraid of people and try to avoid them. That is why what happened last August is so unusual. At a campground in Banff National Park, Canada, a family of four was confronted by a wolf that bit down on the arm of a man through the wall of their tent and attempted to drag him from the tent. Responding to the commotion, a neighboring camper kicked the wolf, the wolf released the man's arm and the two men drove it off by shouting and throwing stones.

While traumatized, the man suffered only minor injuries - puncture wounds and cuts on his arms and one hand. Alone, old and emaciated, the wolf was tracked and killed by park officials. Tests confirmed that the wolf didn't have rabies, but was in poor health with old, rounded teeth, and likely nearing the end of its life. The animal's poor condition likely led to this unusual behavior and exceedingly rare incident.

WILL WOLVES RETURN TO THE SOUTHERN ROCKIES?

In early summer, a gray wolf was spotted in Colorado, the first in four years. If wolves reach Colorado, they would almost certainly come from the Northern Rockies and would need to cross a death zone of Wyoming. Treated as kill-at-will vermin in 85% of Wyoming, wolves are killed indiscriminately, year-round and without a license by almost any means, including traps, snares, and explosives or purposefully running them over with vehicles like snowmobiles. This hostile policy makes the open and unforested landscape of southern Wyoming nearly impossible to cross. Like the few wolves that have reached Colorado before him, this wolf is believed to be alone. In the 25 years since wolves were



Banff National Park, Canada

reintroduced to Yellowstone and Idaho, only a handful of individuals have reached Colorado, never to find a mate. This lone male is testament to the fact that for wolves to return, they will likely require human assistance.

A statewide movement to bring wolves back to Colorado continues build support and momentum, and work is under way to collect the 200,000 signatures needed to place the choice before voters on the 2020 Colorado ballot. If it's successful, the state will bring wolves back. For the past several years, the Rocky Mountain Wolf Project coalition has been working to inform Coloradans about wolves and the possibility of bringing them back. As a contributor, Living with Wolves holds speaking and book signing events around the state, while our educational photography exhibit, designed for the Colorado public, has been touring the state since 2017. In 2019, this informative exhibit has been on display at the Boulder Museum, the Rawlings Library in Pueblo, and is now on display at Colorado Springs' Cheyenne Mountain Zoo.

GOVERNOR STANDS UP FOR WOLVES

In October, **Washington** Governor Jay Inslee wrote a letter to the state's Department of Fish and Wildlife acknowledging that their wolf management plan has been failing in a small region of northeast Washington. On the Colville National Forest, nearly every year since 2012, the state has repeatedly killed wolves for attacks on the livestock of one ranch. The Department correctly pointed out that 90% of the state's wolf packs have no conflict with livestock. However, of the 30 wolves that have been killed in Washington since 2012, 26 (or

87%) of those killings have all been done for the benefit of the same livestock operation. These statistics support frequent substantiated claims that the ranch does not adequately work to avoid conflicts with wolves. Citing "public concern and outrage," the governor's letter requests an update in response to his letter by December 1.

RESTORING WOLVES TO ISLE ROYALE

Efforts continue to restore wolves to **Isle Royale, Michigan** in Lake Superior. After the number of wolves on the island fell from 50 to two due to disease and inbreeding (while the moose population skyrocketed), the National Park Service decided to bring new wolves to the island. Relocating wild animals comes with risks and three of the wolves brought to the island have died. But, on the whole, the program continues to succeed with 17 wolves and 2,060 moose now living on the island.

ONGOING RESEARCH

In July, Living with Wolves invited **Dr. Douglas Smith**, leader of the Yellowstone Wolf Project, to Sun Valley to speak. At a standing-room-only crowd at our public library, and at our Board of Directors' meeting, Dr. Smith, the Principal Investigator of research at the park, reported on important studies his team of biologists is undertaking in Yellowstone, Grand Teton and Denali National Parks and Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve. The heart of the study is to determine the impact humans have on wolf packs when they kill these family-oriented animals that leave the parks, following migrating elk or caribou. Doug's groundbreaking work is funded in part by Living with Wolves.









Doug Smith, Senior Wildlife Biologist at Yellowstone National Park

"Every year I sit alone with a wolf. The wolf doesn't agree to this, as I catch it as part of a research program on wolves in Yellowstone National Park. The wolf is sedated, but we still sit together, alone, looking out at the great park. I cherish these moments. I strain to understand what this life might be like."

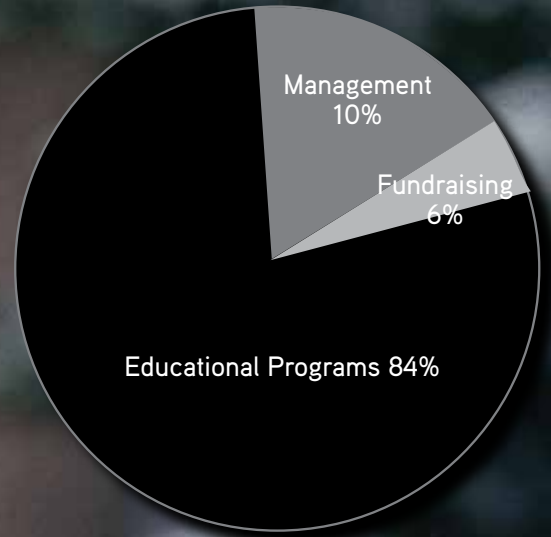
~ Doug Smith, *Washington Post*, 2019

OTHER 2019 LIVING WITH WOLVES NEWS – GETTING OUR MESSAGE OUT!

-  *National Geographic* has sold more than 100,000 copies of our books
-  *The Hidden Life of Wolves* is now in print in seven languages
-  *The Wisdom of Wolves* is now available as an audio book
-  Presentations in wolf country; Stanley, Idaho and Kelly, Wyoming
-  Our Colorado exhibit of larger-than-life photographs and informational panels has traveled to three new venues this year, totaling five venues since 2017
-  Another copy of our exhibit was displayed for the first time in our home state of Idaho



HOW YOUR CONTRIBUTION WORKS FOR WOLVES



2018 Living with Wolves
Expense Distribution

Above: Wahots, mid-ranking male of the Sawtooth Pack

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Garrick Dutcher,
Program and Research
Director, Living with Wolves

Garrick Dutcher is the author of the WOLF NEWS and TRAPPING sections of this report. Garrick has been involved with Living with Wolves since its conception. From the age of eight, he has worked on all of his father's wildlife films, earning his prominent and invaluable position as Program and Research Director of the nonprofit organization. When the time comes to take the lead at Living with Wolves, Garrick will be there to carry the torch.

Living with Wolves

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