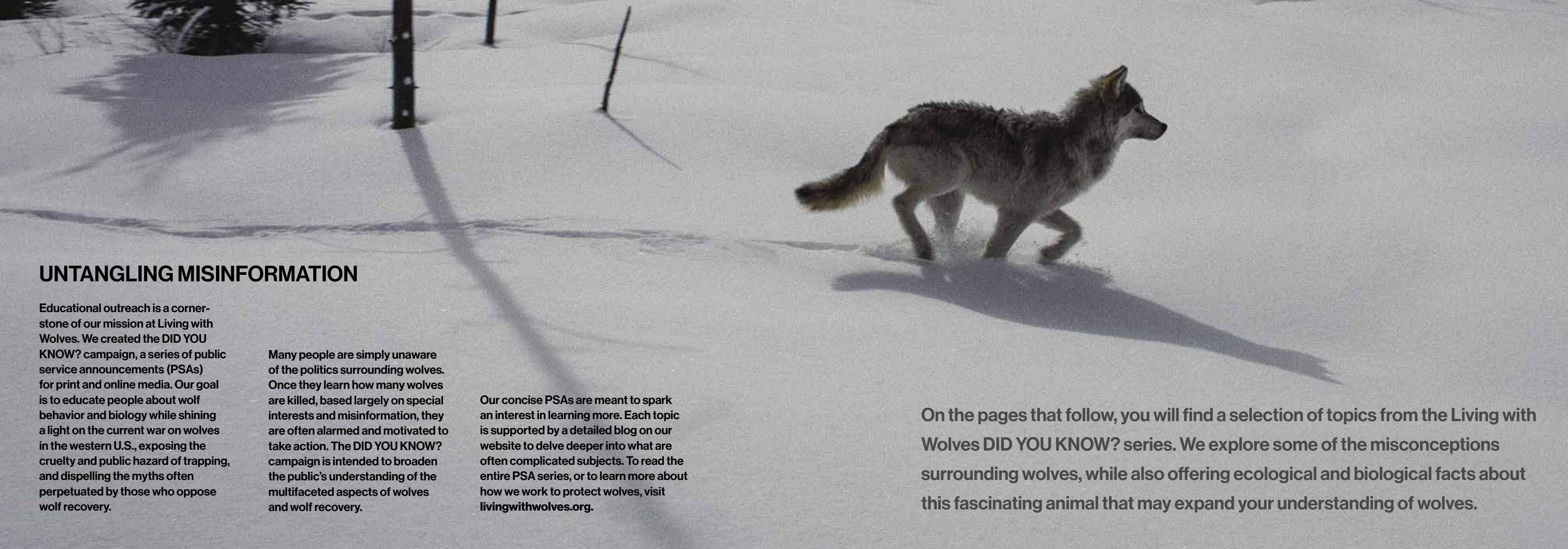


SEVENTH WOLF

Encouraging Coexistence

Living with Wolves



UNTANGLING MISINFORMATION

Educational outreach is a cornerstone of our mission at Living with Wolves. We created the DID YOU KNOW? campaign, a series of public service announcements (PSAs) for print and online media. Our goal is to educate people about wolf behavior and biology while shining a light on the current war on wolves in the western U.S., exposing the cruelty and public hazard of trapping, and dispelling the myths often perpetuated by those who oppose wolf recovery.

Many people are simply unaware of the politics surrounding wolves. Once they learn how many wolves are killed, based largely on special interests and misinformation, they are often alarmed and motivated to take action. The DID YOU KNOW? campaign is intended to broaden the public's understanding of the multifaceted aspects of wolves and wolf recovery.

Our concise PSAs are meant to spark an interest in learning more. Each topic is supported by a detailed blog on our website to delve deeper into what are often complicated subjects. To read the entire PSA series, or to learn more about how we work to protect wolves, visit livingwithwolves.org.

On the pages that follow, you will find a selection of topics from the Living with Wolves DID YOU KNOW? series. We explore some of the misconceptions surrounding wolves, while also offering ecological and biological facts about this fascinating animal that may expand your understanding of wolves.

DID YOU KNOW?

Wolves rarely pose a threat to people.



Contrary to popular belief, wolves pose very little danger to people, especially in North America. They typically fear people and avoid them.

Over the past 120 years, there have been only two cases where wild wolves reportedly killed a person in North America.

In the decades since wolves were reintroduced to the American West, not one wolf from this recovering population has attacked a person.

DID YOU KNOW?

Wolves are an essential keystone species.



In Yellowstone, the return of the wolf helped correct the destructive over-population of elk and coyotes, allowing plants and animals to thrive.

With fewer coyotes, there are more small animals like rabbits and voles that other predators and birds of prey rely on for food.

With fewer elk, the aspens and willows have grown back, revitalizing Yellowstone's landscape, and inviting the return of another ecosystem engineer – the beaver.

DID YOU KNOW?

Wolves do not kill for sport.



A large body of research puts the fallacy to rest that wolves kill for sport. They kill prey to feed themselves. Wolves risk serious injury or death hunting prey like elk, bison, or moose that are many times their size.

While wolves fail to secure a kill in 75% of hunts, they and other carnivores occasionally kill more animals than they can immediately consume, particularly in late winter when prey is weakened.

Often scared away by people, wolves return to these food reserves for weeks or months until they, and a host of other wild animals feeding on their kill, have finished it off. There is no waste or sport.

DID YOU KNOW?

Wolves actually benefit trout.



PHOTO: NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

Wolves keep elk on the move, preventing them from over-browsing streamside cottonwood saplings and willows. These plants fortify stream banks and prevent erosion, keeping the water deep, shaded, and cool.

Willows and cottonwoods provide food for beavers and the materials they need to build dams. Beaver ponds replenish the water table and regulate surges of silty seasonal runoff, keeping the water clear.

Trout are sight feeders and rely on clear, cool, and deep water to thrive. Streams studded with beaver ponds and lined with willows and cottonwoods provide ideal trout habitat.

DID YOU KNOW?

Wolves are intensely social and devoted to family.



PHOTO: BOB POOLE

Only a few other species exhibit these traits so clearly. Similar to elephants, gorillas, and dolphins, wolves live in family groups, educate their young, and take care of their injured and elders.

Typically, there is only one breeding pair in a pack. Killing these leaders has a devastating impact on the family, often causing the entire pack to dissolve, imperiling the survivors.

Wolves form friendships and play together into old age. When they lose a pack member, there is compelling evidence that they suffer and mourn that loss.

DID YOU KNOW?

There are ways to protect livestock without killing wolves.



PHOTO: MATT MOYER

Many producers of beef and lamb graze their livestock on the open range of national forests and other public land where wolves and other carnivores live.

The best way to prevent wolves and other predators from attacking livestock has always been with regular human presence like shepherds and range riders.

Livestock guardian dogs along with the use of tools like electrified fladry, pulsating lights, and noisemakers help to deter predators.

DID YOU KNOW?

Killing wolves has unexpected consequences.



Killing wolves can break up packs. Small packs or individuals have a harder time bringing down large prey. Consequently, these wolves may turn to livestock for food, forced to find prey that is easier to kill.

Like people, wolves pass down learned information through generations. When leaders and elder wolves are killed or die prematurely, precious survival experience is lost before it is learned, potentially destabilizing the pack.

When packs hunt, ideally one or more adult wolves stay behind with the pups. If a small pack cannot afford to leave an adult behind, pups are left alone and are more likely to perish.

DID YOU KNOW?

You can see a lot of wolf in your dog.



Genetics studies reveal that domestic dogs are descended from ancient wolves. The DNA of any dog is nearly the same as that of a wolf.

The wolf passed along to dogs some defining characteristics: devotion to its pack, sociability, and a capacity for play, learning, and communication.

Guarding territory, scent tracking, herding, and moving large grazing animals from place to place are skills that can be traced back to wolf ancestors.

DID YOU KNOW?

Wolves only have one litter of pups per year.



Whatever the size of a wolf pack, typically only the two leaders breed, yielding a single litter in the spring.

Averaging 4-6 pups in a litter, 40-60% of pups die in their first year. Pups like these (pictured above) would be 8-12 weeks old in late June.

The entire pack helps raise the new family members. Some years a pack will have no pups at all, and rarely a second female may have pups.

DID YOU KNOW?

Gray wolves aren't always gray.



A gray wolf's coat can be many shades of gray, brown, rusty red, white or black. Black wolves are found almost exclusively in North America.

Dogs accompanied humans migrating from Asia around 7,000 years ago. Early dogs bred with wolves in the Yukon, introducing a gene for black fur.

In Idaho, black wolves are common. Around half the wolves living in Yellowstone are black, while black wolves are much less common in the Great Lakes region.



THREATS TO WOLVES

Wolf management decisions made by state governments and game agencies continue to threaten wolf recovery. Idaho and Montana have implemented particularly aggressive anti-wolf policies.

In an unprecedented move, the Idaho state legislature passed a sweeping law to broadly expand wolf hunting and trapping, and removed all limits to the number of wolves an individual can kill with the sole intent of reducing their numbers to a bare

minimum. Idaho is home to public lands and wilderness. These wild spaces are prime habitat for wolves and other wildlife.

In Montana, similar legislation resulted in nearly 20% of Yellowstone's world-famous wolves being killed in a single hunting and trapping season. These management practices are not scientifically driven, and they completely ignore the consequences of arbitrarily killing

animals that are highly social and dependent upon intact packs for survival.

The DID YOU KNOW? campaign is needed now more than ever as the war against wolves ramps up once again. The topic of wolf conservation is about far more than just wolves. It is also about protecting biodiversity and preserving wildlife and wild places that are becoming increasingly threatened.

DID YOU KNOW?

Wolf traps capture more than just wolves.



Records from Idaho show that at least 47% of the time, Idaho wolf trappers trap something other than a wolf. These traps kill or maim indiscriminately.

Non-target animals are frequently killed by trappers. These include dogs, cats, deer, eagles, wolverines, otters, cougars, geese, porcupines, elk, and endangered lynx.

The majority of these unintended victims die in the traps, including endangered species and pets. Many others die from their injuries after release.

DID YOU KNOW?

Idaho is expanding animal trapping.



Because traps and snares are cruel, inhumane, indiscriminate, and dangerous, much of the world is leaving animal trapping in the past, but Idaho is encouraging more.

Changes since 2012: The number of wolves a trapper may kill has increased from 5 to no limit whatsoever. The areas in Idaho open to wolf trapping have increased from less than 25% to nearly 100% of the state.

In other parts of the U.S. and around the world, new rules restrict or ban trapping. More than 100 countries have banned steel-jaw traps, including all of the European Union.

DID YOU KNOW?

Predators hunt in different ways.



Wolves lack the brute force and size of a bear, and the stealth and gripping claws of a mountain lion. The strength of wolves is their pack, working together as a well-orchestrated team.

Mountain lions will ambush large prey, while bears quickly overpower them. Both are solitary hunters, relying on explosive, short bursts of energy. In contrast, wolves have great stamina and get the herd to run.

In the chase, each wolf has a specific role. Together, the pack works as one, driving the herd to expose the weaker animals. By selecting the vulnerable, wolves keep herds healthy and strong.

DID YOU KNOW?

Elk are flourishing alongside wolves.



Since wolves were reintroduced in the mid-1990s, elk populations in Idaho, Wyoming, and Montana have increased by 6.8%, 6.5%, and 29.5% respectively. The fear that wolves would decimate elk populations never materialized.

To control expanding elk numbers, these states often resort to selling more elk tags. With such an abundance of elk, hunters continue to experience some of the best elk hunting ever.

By hunting elk, wolves are playing their vital role as top carnivores. Like most predators around the world, wolves typically select vulnerable individuals, keeping herds of prey animals healthy.

DID YOU KNOW?

New laws escalate the war on wolves.



In 2021, legislation was adopted in Idaho and Montana to drastically reduce their recovering wolf populations. In Montana, a hunter can now kill up to 20 wolves, while in Idaho there is no limit.

Other changes include allowing the use of bait to attract wolves and spotlights to hunt at night. Both states now allow for financial compensation (effectively a bounty) to be paid on dead wolves.

State lawmakers view wolves as an inconvenience, ignoring the vital role wolves play in keeping ecosystems vibrant. Meanwhile, the scientific community has condemned the new laws as destructive.

DID YOU KNOW?

Idaho's war on wolves targets wolf pups.



In 2021, at least 17 pups, ranging from only one to eight weeks old, were killed by hunters and Wildlife Services. At one week of age, their eyes would still be closed.

Wildlife Services, a federal agency, is killing helpless wolf pups at their dens in Idaho, on the basis that they could one day pose a threat to livestock.

Idaho Fish and Game records reveal that six of these pups were killed by rifle. The weapons used to kill the remaining 11 were listed as "other" or "unknown."

DID YOU KNOW?

Wolves boost local economies.



Perhaps no other animal captures the interest of more people than the wolf. Yellowstone is among the best places in the world to see wolves, and the popularity of wolf tourism is growing rapidly.

While emphasis is placed on the financial cost when wolves kill a cow, their impact on the regional livestock industry is negligible. In addition to their ecological value, wolves also generate remarkable economic value.

A new study shows that, in the three states bordering Yellowstone, annual spending by people coming to see wolves in the park has increased from \$35.5 million in 2005 to \$82.7 million in 2021.

DID YOU KNOW?

Yellowstone wolves had a devastating year.



Park wolves make brief forays outside Yellowstone's borders, becoming vulnerable to hunters. The park lost nearly 20% of its wolves in 2021-22 due to drastic changes in hunting and trapping rules.

With 25 park wolves killed, this was by far the deadliest hunting season for Yellowstone's wolves. One unsuspecting wolf was shot only 40 meters from the park's invisible protective boundary.

Yellowstone wolves are the most watched and widely loved wolves in the world. They are emblematic of all wolves. If the wolves of our national parks are not safe from hunters and trappers, no wolf is safe.

DID YOU KNOW?

Wolves help to stabilize ecosystems.



After a historic extermination in the early 20th century, wolves are recovering in the American West. For millennia, they have coexisted with their prey, keeping them strong and healthy.

When a top carnivore, such as the wolf, is removed from the ecosystem, prey populations can explode, leading to destructive changes with far-reaching ecological consequences.

Wolves were restored to Yellowstone in the mid-1990's. Since then, elk populations returned to a healthy level, plants and animals rebounded, and the wolf population has stabilized.

DID YOU KNOW?

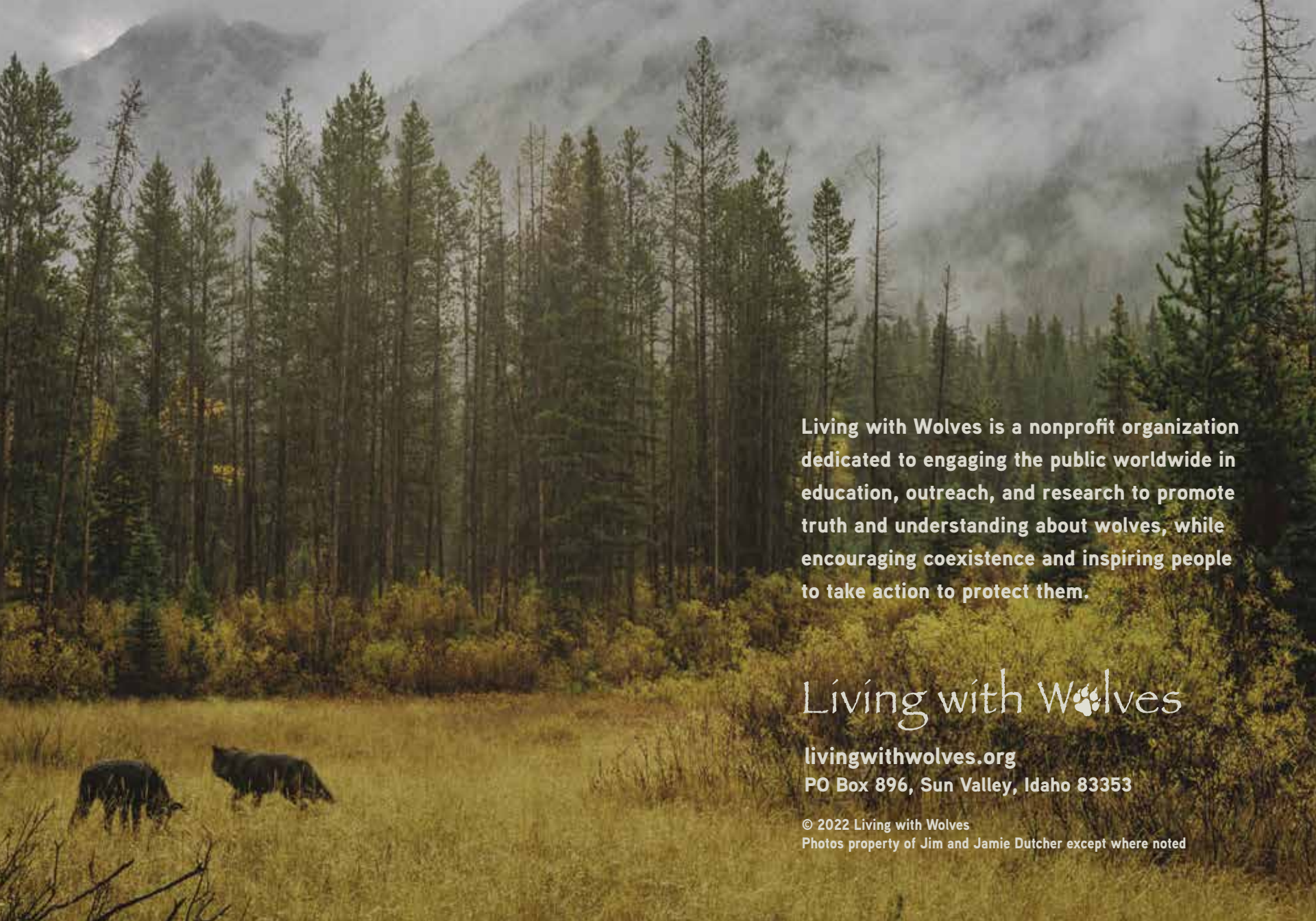
Do you know about Living with Wolves and what we do?



Based in Sun Valley, Idaho, we are a national nonprofit organization working to combat widespread misinformation about wolves, while promoting the benefits they bring to the natural world.

The intimate knowledge gained living with a pack of wolves and our partnership with National Geographic uniquely position us to inform you and to fight the unjust persecution of wolves.

Working with preeminent biologists to reveal the latest research, we share the truth about wolves through our books, films, presentations, exhibits, website, and social media.



Living with Wolves is a nonprofit organization dedicated to engaging the public worldwide in education, outreach, and research to promote truth and understanding about wolves, while encouraging coexistence and inspiring people to take action to protect them.

Living with Wolves

livingwithwolves.org

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