

Daily Camera

Opinion: Julie Marshall: We must make a meaningful effort to coexist with predators

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By Julie Marshall

The Persecution Era of wild predators is experiencing something of a Grand Ol' Revival.

We're experiencing the same harsh, unrelenting and uncompromising climate of hatred for predators circa 1630 when colonists sought to eliminate wolves, and that's not good for anyone, especially wildlife and especially Colorado.

News that a male gray wolf, the father of the Copper Creek Pack with pups, died from a gunshot wound with injuries to his right hind leg, as well as having suffered from being severely underweight, is the sorrowful sound of our wakeup call to change course.

But we need some brave adults in the room to do so and fast, because the criminal and cruel shooting is just one spark of hatred among so many that have reignited a full-on attack on wildlife in full public view.

Big Ag with big money and big power is demanding our wildlife commissioners vote to pass an anti-wildlife, anti-democratic petition to indefinitely delay the positive and needed effects of legal wolf restoration. It's these same backers who just announced a ballot measure designed to unravel wolf restoration entirely.

Add to this a couple weeks ago, hundreds of people seated at a Garfield County presentation about the second phase of wolves on the ground erupted in applause over one man's point to say that in Wyoming, wolves are run over by snowmobiles and are shot dead. He was

referencing Cody Roberts, a Wyoming man infamous for running over a female young wolf with a snowmobile before taping her mouth shut, torturing her while in pain, then shooting her in a bar. That joy for wolf torture occurred with dozens of CPW staff present. Their silence was noted.

Our wildlife commissioners have a chance to make things right and do their core job to represent wildlife first. It's Colorado Parks and Wildlife, not Colorado Parks and Agriculture.

I strongly encourage our commissioners to make a powerful public statement at the Jan. 8 and 9 meeting in Denver to declare that Colorado has zero tolerance for this kind of disgusting display of public hatred of our wildlife. We will be there to support them, because this room will likely again be filled with men from Big Ag with big money and political power that cries wolf — and so absurdly when there are just a few wolves on the landscape.

Their collective cry is uncompromising, leaving no sliver of room for respect or understanding of wildlife as it exists to keep life in balance and ecosystems free of disease. We are talking

about Chronic Wasting Disease that is equally uncompromising. It has no cure and is 100% fatal. We need predators to combat it. But predator haters' actions show zero willingness to uphold this public responsibility or make the noble, meaningful effort for coexistence.

It's the same record played during The Persecution Era as it continued circa 1850s with man poisoning millions of wolves, and the 1930s with man hating on wolves and wiping them out in most places with passage of federal exterminations. With a similar song played to blame mountain lions and bears. The call to kill is loud despite our best science that shows predators are among the least cause for concern in losing livestock or livelihood, or for public safety. Scapegoating or demonizing predators as competitors is pure egocentric fantasy that serves no common or public good.

In 2025, we know better.

As Dr. Jim Keen, PhD., a former USDA veterinarian explains from decades of field investigations: "Predator kills of livestock get inflated. The risk and cause of livestock deaths

comes mainly from weather, disease and sometimes a combination of both.” Ranch animals are susceptible to contagious viruses and diarrhea. It is more common to find that animals partly eaten by a predator, were in fact not killed by any predator, but dead due to disease or extreme weather unrelated to local wildlife.

This is what I heard directly from Leo Hogan. Camera readers may recall Leo fondly; he ran cattle over our Boulder County lands for decades. I spent one year with him decades ago, following on horseback as he drove his cattle up Coal Creek Canyon as well as waiting eagerly for spring birth in a massive snowstorm. Predators never once came up in our deep and candid conversations as being any significant problem during his lifetime as a rancher. Birthing concerns were always tied to the weather and disease, as well as how good a momma cow would be in raising her young.

We can support and appreciate our ranchers as well as our native ecologically valuable predators at the same time. And we are doing that right now by subsidizing ranchers for losses and land.

This all reminds me of decades ago, when I worked for our state wildlife agency and a well-known rancher who sat on the wildlife commission was asked, “What amount of loss are you willing to accept from predators?”

His answer? None. It seems as if nothing much has changed. It’s uncompromising hate in humans — not predators — that is the real problem here.

Julie Marshall is a former Daily Camera Opinion Editor, Features Writer and Columnist. Citizens can speak in person to ask commissioners to deny the petition to delay restoration at the Jan. 8 CPW Commission meeting at 6060 Broadway in Denver. Sign up at the door. Learn more about it at: [Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission / Colorado Parks and Wildlife.](#)

Originally Published: January 8, 2025 at 5:00 AM MST

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