

THE Golden Star

Letter to Editor, April 13, 2021

Killing wolves is not OK.

NO – it is NOT OK to kill wolves. The harm we are inflicting upon wolves is just plain wrong and must end.

For the past 15 years or so I have focused my life on learning as much as I can about wolves. I've worked with captive wolves and researched wild wolves. I've read about wolves in books, government reports and peer-reviewed science papers. I've had countless conversations with other people about their first-hand experiences with wolves. I've collected and analyzed wolf poop, I've backtracked their steps, I've captured their images on remote cameras, and I've treasured their howls. I have been privileged to get a glimpse into the complicated and emotional lives of some wolves, as individuals and also as families trying to survive. These experiences have shaped my views and more importantly my values.

B.C. has become a place ripe with carnivore carnage, with wolves as refugees on their own land. The province has completed its seventh consecutive year of aerial gunning, ostensibly under the guise of caribou conservation. This past winter government contractors shot down 237 wolves; chased them with helicopters and let loose bullets that expand on impact.

I will never comprehend how a person can plan and carry out the killing of any being as intelligent and sentient as a wolf. Wolves certainly suffer from physical pain and also mourn the loss of kin. There can be no doubt about this. I have almost become 'undone' over the past five years by trying to reconcile what I know of these animals with how we as humans treat them.

A major limitation of science is that it can't distinguish right from wrong; societies determine these values. For the Klinse-Za caribou herd in the South Peace region, where **wolves have been massacred for the past seven years** - there is **no sustainable recruitment of caribou calves**. *Some* government data suggests that in *some* areas of the province where wolves are being decimated caribou calf numbers are increasing - but I don't want or care for this information. Predator kill programs cross an ethical line that I hold sacred. No equation or amount of math will convince me otherwise.

Wildlife management and conservation decisions which focus solely on increasing the number of one species neglect other species and ecosystem processes. Wolf kill programmes fail to consider the immediate and long-term effects on wolf genetic and social structures, the impacts this has on other wildlife, and the sustainability of the entire ecosystem. Some state that killing wolves is not a conservation concern due to a seemingly robust population, however, the resilient reproductive nature of exploited wolf populations does not excuse the continuous killing of these sentient animals. If anything, this biological trait makes our behaviour even more abhorrent and unsettling due to creating a cycle of sanctioned harm.

Chasing and shooting wolves from aircraft results in high levels of distress and pain, as does the excruciating death brought to them by neck-killing snares or poisons. I don't appreciate or have room for data or decisions that result from imposing suffering on any species or individual. B.C.'s government-sanctioned wolf kill programme should not have begun seven years ago. It is a stain on the province of British Columbia and the Nation of Canada. Murdering wolves is not okay and must be abolished.

Author: Sadie Parr – former executive director of Wolf Awareness Inc. (2015 – 2020)
Golden, British Columbia