

# HOWLING



*Through education, dispelling the myths.*

## Alberta's draft caribou protection plan: "Dirty Oil"

Summer edition 2016

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The Alberta government recently announced a draft plan for the recovery of woodland caribou recovery in North and Central Alberta. Part of the plan includes a fencing experiment that would enclose large tracts of former wilderness for caribou and then slaughter many other species found inside. Natural predators such as wolves, as well as deer, elk, and moose would be destroyed.

Over decades, most of the areas in question have been converted from wilderness into industrial landscapes. "The recovery plan proposes a bloodbath so that industry can continue at all costs," says Sadie Parr, Executive Director of Wolf Awareness Inc. "Outside of these caribou farms, industry will continue to fragment what little is left of caribou habitat into land that supports the very animals targeted for killing."

Through Canada's *Species At Risk Act* (SARA), the Government of Alberta is compelled to contrive a strategy to recover threatened subpopulations of mountain caribou and implement it by 2017. The province released its draft plan for caribou recovery in North and Central Alberta on June 8, 2016.

Contained within this proposal are the Government of Alberta's Draft Little Smoky and A La Peche Caribou Range Plan (June 2, 2016). Wolf Awareness is encouraging the public to comment on the draft before the August 5<sup>th</sup> deadline.

According to 2012's federal *Recovery Strategy for Caribou*, 95% of critical caribou habitat in the Little Smoky already is disturbed by people and their activities. Most of these disturbances are caused by industrial development and infrastructure, including forestry and the energy sector. *Continued ...*

### Bow Valley Wolves Suffer More Losses

The beautiful photograph on the right, courtesy of Amar Athwal, is of one of the juveniles from the Bow Valley wolf pack in Banff National Park. This pack recently suffered the loss of their leading female after she was shot and killed by wildlife officials in Banff National Park. This was an unfortunate decision Parks Canada had to make due to this individual becoming less wary around people because she had gotten into human food and garbage. This tragedy could most likely have been avoided if these wolves were unable to obtain food associated with humans, which ultimately leads to the death of animals.

After losing their mother, one of this years pups was killed by a train. A couple of weeks later another three pups suffered this same tragic fate, see article [here](#) from the Calgary Herald.

It is disheartening to recognize that even in these "protected areas", wolves and other wildlife require extra protection from humans and our actions. As long as this continues, these Parks are nothing more than "wilderness ghettos". To learn more about the continued struggles facing wolves in the Mountain National Parks see <http://www.wolfawarenessinc.org/#!more-are-wolves-protected/c1olu> The previous alpha female of the Bow Valley Pack died in a vehicle collision.



**Wolf Awareness**

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Says Parr, "This is not caribou recovery, this is simply Dirty Oil and the world needs to know about it. Although we fully endorse protecting caribou and habitat, widespread killing programs and fenced enclosures are not conservation tools. They are merely tools to preserve tiny island-like farms of caribou on a carved up and impoverished landscape." Furthermore, she questions, "If caribou are indeed the priority, why is industrial activity planned to continue within essential caribou habitat?"

Dr. Paul Paquet is a world-renowned large carnivore expert and co-author of a recent scientific article titled "[Maintaining ethical standards during conservation crises](#)". He questions the ecological validity of range plans for Little Smokey and A La Peche herds, "These management experiments will destroy entire ecosystems, and many of the animals within, in an attempt to recover several threatened subpopulations of a woodland caribou. I can't imagine that this was ever the intent of the Species at Risk Act."

Hannah Barron, a director of Wolf Awareness, emphasizes the lack of scientific rigour behind predator killing components of the proposal, "More than 1000 wolves have been killed under the guise of protecting the Little Smokey Caribou herd over the past 11 years with no significant increase in caribou numbers. Wolves have been strangled, gunned down from helicopters and poisoned using carcasses laced with strychnine. Snares set for wolves also strangled 676 other animals, including 2 caribou."

Recently, the caribou-fencing plan has been justified by proposing that it will help the Alberta government wean itself off killing wolves and using poison. However, predator killing is slated to continue for the next fifty years. "Poisons have devastating effects on non-target animals that cannot be controlled. Banning horrific poisons strychnine and Compound 1080 is something that should have happened decades ago," says Paquet. "Although this is a welcome announcement that needs to be carried out across the province, it does not justify the fencing experiment."

Numerous scientists, conservation organizations, animal welfare groups and people around the world are vehemently opposed to predator kill programs, yet this critical expertise and input is being ignored by decision makers who continue to scapegoat wolves for caribou declines.

Nearly 24,000 people have signed an [online petition asking Premier Rachel Notley to end the wolf killing ostensibly being carried out to recover caribou in Alberta](#).

"Each and every Canadian should hold our government accountable for conservation," concludes Parr. "Hundreds of interconnected species are facing extinction in our country. Forging ahead with business as usual while scapegoating predators is embarrassing and shameful".



### Background documents:

**Maintaining ethical standards during conservation crises:** [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/272153185\\_Maintaining\\_ethical\\_standards\\_during\\_conservation\\_crises](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/272153185_Maintaining_ethical_standards_during_conservation_crises)

**Witnessing extinction:** [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/274320654\\_Witnessing\\_extinction\\_-Cumulative\\_impacts\\_across\\_landscapes\\_and\\_the\\_future\\_loss\\_of\\_an\\_evolutionarily\\_significant\\_unit\\_of\\_woodland\\_caribou\\_in\\_Canada](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/274320654_Witnessing_extinction_-Cumulative_impacts_across_landscapes_and_the_future_loss_of_an_evolutionarily_significant_unit_of_woodland_caribou_in_Canada)

**"Cry Wolf, An Unethical Oil Film"** by DeSmogBlog: <http://www.desmogblog.com/cry-wolf-unethical-oilstory>

### Links to additional articles and our Action Alert

#### [Our Action Alert](#)

[Parr and Genovali: Alberta must call a truce in war on wolves](#)

[Caribou fence plan panned](#); Wolf Awareness Speaks Up

[Caribou genetics reveal shadow of climate change](#)

[Caribou in Alberta's oil sands stressed by human activity, not wolves](#)

[The Draft Plan for Caribou Recovery](#)

**Please, join and support our efforts to stop this senseless slaughter of wolves & the destruction of entire ecosystems. See back page for how to take action and become involved.**

If you have any questions please contact us  
at [wolfawareness@gmail.com](mailto:wolfawareness@gmail.com)



**#NoWolfCull**



**#NoBouZoo**



# Wolf Awareness

## SAVING CARIBOU HABITAT MEANS SAVING WOLVES

Article by **Gilbert PROULX**, Alpha Wildlife Research & Management Ltd, 29 Lilac Terrace, Sherwood Park, Alberta, T8H 1W3.  
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In the last decade, there has been a major trend in western North America to kill predators to save the woodland caribou. In Alberta, since 2005, the Government of Alberta, in cooperation with some researchers from the University of Alberta, have killed nearly 1,000 wolves to "recover" the Little Smoky boreal caribou population. Yet, the population has not increased in numbers. This may be due to the fact that wolves do not significantly impact on caribou numbers (see Kuzyk *et al.* 2006) and prefer upland habitats that are actually avoided by caribou (Proulx 2013). Then, killing wolves does not help caribou. Protecting and restoring habitat can, however, save the caribou and eliminate the need to use wolves as scapegoats. But, in order to conserve habitat, one must know what caribou need during crucial periods of the year.

In 2011 and 2012, I had the opportunity to study the late-winter habitat of the Little Smoky caribou population. This study was conducted during extreme colds with average snow levels, and during warm periods with above average snow depths. Independently of the environmental conditions, however, boreal caribou selected muskegs of mixed black spruce and tamarack, and adjacent lodgepole pine stands (Proulx 2015). This finding was contrary to the Habitat Suitability Model developed by Government of Alberta biologists who had identified pure black spruce as ideal habitat for caribou. In fact, caribou avoided these habitats. My study showed that 20% of the Little Smoky landscape met the habitat requirements of caribou. Knowing that caribou calve in regions that are within or similar to winter habitats, it became obvious that managing muskegs and adjacent pine stands would provide caribou with adequate protection cover and food. On the basis of these findings, I was able to demonstrate that the habitat requirements of the caribou were poorly understood in the Little Smoky region of Alberta, and that it was possible to develop an effective habitat management plan to ensure the sustainability of populations.

The Little Smoky caribou population can recover if its critical habitats, as determined in late-winters 2011 and 2012, become High Priority (Figure 1), i.e., preferred muskegs and adjacent lodgepole pine stands would be protected from logging, and oil & gas activities would be limited to already existing seismic lines, when caribou are not found in the vicinity of their operations. These habitats would be protected by buffer habitats where industrial activities would be reduced in importance and better controlled. These priority habitats would be interconnected by corridors that would allow animals to travel across landscapes. With such a management plan, caribou populations would become sustainable and there would be no need to kill wolves. However, it would be essential that the government and industry representatives sit at the same table with us to produce a working schedule for the conservation of habitats and the maintenance of their exploitation activities.

**Biologists state landscape changes due to human activities are the real cause for caribou decline, destroying specialized habitat caribou NEED to survive.**



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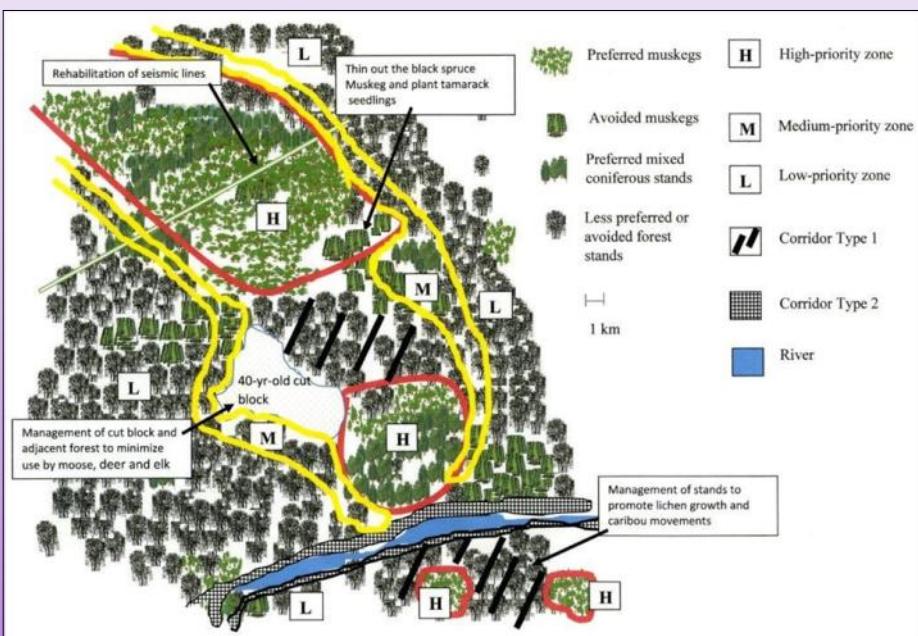
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Unfortunately, few complete field studies were conducted in Alberta to customize habitat conservation plans for the many caribou populations of the province. So, **knowing that saving caribou means saving wolves**, there is a pressing need for wolf advocate organizations and ecological groups to meet together and discuss how adequate resources can be assembled to pursue the study of caribou habitats and the development of effective conservation programs. If we cannot ensure the future of caribou habitats, and therefore the sustainability of populations, wolf culling programs will continue. More wolves will be killed, biodiversity will be further impoverished, and caribou will eventually disappear.



**Figure 1.** Example of a landscape with caribou movement corridors and habitat management zones (from Proulx 2015).

## References

- Kuzyk, G. W., J. Kneteman, and F. K. A. Schmiegelow. 2006. Pack size of Wolves, *Canis lupus*, on Caribou, *Rangifer tarandus*, winter ranges in west central Alberta. Canadian Field-Naturalist 120: 131– 318.
- Proulx, G. 2013. Development of a forest rating system to predict late-winter habitat use by boreal woodland caribou (*Rangifer tarandus caribou*) of the Little Smoky population in the ANC's FMA area. Alpha Wildlife Research & Management report submitted to Alberta Newsprint Company, Whitecourt, Alberta. 37 pages.
- Proulx, G. 2015. Late-winter habitat of the Little Smoky boreal woodland caribou (*Rangifer tarandus caribou*) population, Alberta, Canada: vegetation composition and structural characteristics, management implications, and habitat conservation plan. Canadian Wildlife Biology & Management 4: 81-106. Accessible at <http://www.alphawildlife.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/132-2015-2Proulx-LS-Caribou-Habitat.pdf>



Species thrive in their own unique habitat. Indeed, they have been designed to.



Join us in asking for an [IMMEDIATE HALT TO LETHAL WOLF "control" IN ALBERTA](#): [Click!](#)



# Wolf Awareness

# Spreading the Word for Wolves

## Eastern Wolf Update, Brought to us by [Earthroots](#)

Article by Hannah Barron, Director of Wildlife Conservation Campaigns –  
Earthroots and Wolf Awareness Director

On June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) announced that Canada's rarest wolf faces a higher risk of extinction than previously thought. Now named 'Algonquin Wolves', after their stronghold population in Algonquin Provincial Park, the wolves were upgraded from Special Concern to Threatened status in Ontario. A Management Plan, legally mandated for Special Concern status, has been overdue since 2008.

Under Ontario's Endangered Species Act, Threatened status affords the wolves and their habitat immediate and automatic protection from harvest. However, under existing regulations, the wolves will continue to be killed in unknown numbers in legal wolf/coyote open seasons.

"Outside of Algonquin Park, Algonquin wolves are largely unable to find a mate of their own kind, and more commonly mate with eastern coyotes. This interbreeding makes it impossible to tell the difference between the two animals without a genetic test," explains Lesley Sampson of [Coyote Watch Canada](#). "MNRF does not require these tests, and therefore has no idea how many Algonquin wolves are being killed each year. Algonquin wolf recovery requires a government commitment to protect the eastern coyotes they live alongside and are often confused for."

As the last representatives of the once wide ranging Eastern Wolf species, Algonquin wolves have been found infrequently across central Ontario and western Quebec, numbering somewhere between 250 and 1000 animals. Naïve to the risks associated with humans – hunting, trapping and vehicle collisions – the animals' survival is low outside of protected areas. MNRF's own research shows that without more protection in Ontario, where most of the wolves are found, recovery is virtually impossible.

"Ontario set a terrific conservation precedent when wolf and coyote killing was permanently banned in a buffer zone made up of all townships adjacent to Algonquin Park in 2004," says Hannah Barron of [Earthroots](#). She adds, "To recover this rare wolf, hunting and trapping wolves and coyotes must be immediately prohibited beyond the buffer zone, across the full range of Algonquin wolves. They also require a Recovery Strategy now that their at-risk status has deteriorated." She notes that the buffer zone had the added benefit of maintaining the genetic integrity of Algonquin wolves, which is diluted when the wolves interbreed with eastern coyotes.

"Collectively, we urge the Honourable Kathryn McGarry, newly appointed Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, to capitalize on the proven success of Algonquin Park's buffer zone," says Sadie Parr of [Wolf Awareness](#). "Expanding the ban on wolf and coyote killing is necessary to safeguard an at-risk keystone species that benefits all Canadians. Wolves increase biodiversity and have many other effects that trickle down through the ecosystem."

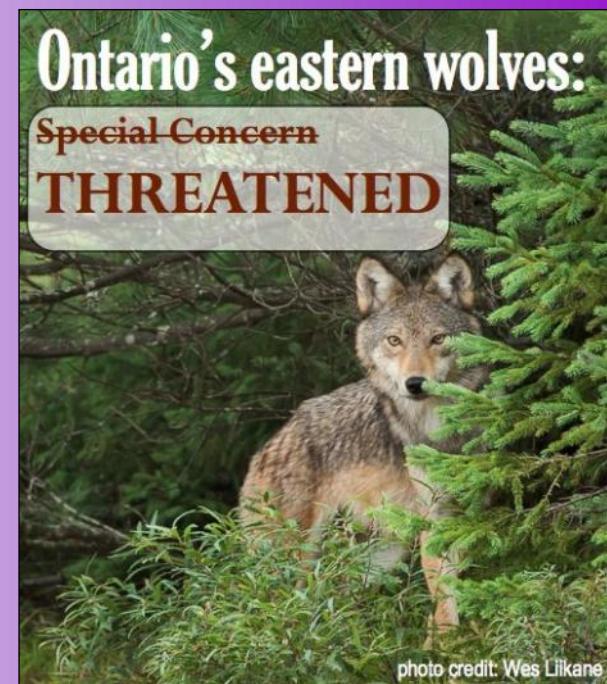


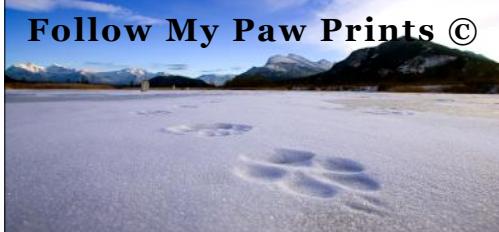
photo credit: Wes Liliane

Wolf Awareness Inc. was established in 1987 as a non-profit, charitable foundation (Canada Revenue Agency Charitable no. 119301851 RR001) whose primary goal is to foster an awareness and appreciation of wolf ecology and conservation. We achieve our mission through the development and implementation of educational programs and by supporting scientific wolf research. WAI functions as a critical link between scientists and the public, using the results of scientific research as a knowledge base for educational and public outreach programs.

### Wolf Awareness WISHLIST!

**GEAR:** Go-pro; working laptop, new or gently used display-boards, Gas cards for transportation costs (research, education, outreach).

**VOLUNTEERS:** social media gurus; fundraisers; event organizers; administrative helpers; costume makers



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# Wolf Awareness

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## What is humane when it comes to controlling wildlife?

*Contributed by Dr. Sara Dubois, BC SPCA Chief Scientific Officer*

A recent poll of 800 British Columbians asked “what does humane mean to you in terms of pest control?” – and the answers varied from using non-lethal actions only (38%), not using poison (40%), trapping and releasing animals (55%), quick killing (55%), to not injuring trapped animals (70%). Given that the word “humane” differs between people, their values and their experiences, it is hard to determine what is “humane wildlife control”.

From the BC SPCA’s perspective – there are three definitions of “humane” – a legal definition, a scientific definition and a societal definition. Legally, many activities that cause pain and suffering to wildlife unfortunately are still allowed under federal and provincial laws that permit certain industry practices to continue under wildlife regulations. Yet, scientifically, the “humane” test is whether sentient animals are caused distress, for how long, and at what intensity. Thus, an animal can be legally trapped using a snare for example, but this may not meet the scientific definition of humane if the animal is left to suffer. And then many will ask, does the animal need to be trapped in the first place? This is where the societal definition of what is humane towards wildlife asks that on top of the methods, what are the ethics, justifications and alternatives of the situation.

Pest control is just one area of wildlife control where specific species of animals are targeted for their nuisance activities, property protection or for human health and safety. Although the use of poisons is regulated by government oversight, misuse by residential, agricultural and commercial users can occur. Further the use of harmful traps is widespread and unmonitored. This is an issue relevant to humane and conservation organizations and animal welfare enforcement agencies, as suffering and non-target effects are significant.

There are currently no assurances that pest control practices are taking place humanely and no clear standards for what is humane in wildlife control. The BC SPCA is aiming to address this need by developing evidence-based Humane Wildlife Control Standards, to differentiate between merely legal control methods, and which of these are scientifically humane methods, to provide both the public and enforcement agencies with guidance. The overall goal of developing scientific standards for wildlife control is to create an educational and enforcement tool, setting a higher bar for control measures, whether they are done for conservation or nuisance purposes. This will hopefully then better inform society’s evaluation of the humaneness of such actions.

## YOUR VOICE IS NEEDED NOW!!!

Please participate in the 60-day public feedback period by contacting the Ministry of Environment and Parks ([esrd.planning@gov.ab.ca](mailto:esrd.planning@gov.ab.ca)) and participating in the governments’ [on-line survey](#) for [the draft plan for caribou recovery](#) in North and Central Alberta.

For your convenience, we have [outlined some of our major concerns and main points](#) to consider when contacting the Ministry and taking the survey.

Public feedback on the proposal will be accepted until August 5th.

If you use social media, sign up to create a **WAVE OF THUNDER** on **JULY 18th**.

### JOIN OUR THUNDERCLAP CAMPAIGN!



Please sign-on and also share the campaign <https://www.thunderclap.it/projects/43717-help-us-save-alberta-s-wolves?locale=en>

Click [HERE](#)

