

Wolf Management in Washington State

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Washington
Department of
**FISH and
WILDLIFE**

Outline

- History
- Wolf Plan 2011
- Current Listing Status
- Monitoring
- Recovery
- Conflict Management
- Wolf Advisory Group
- Budget

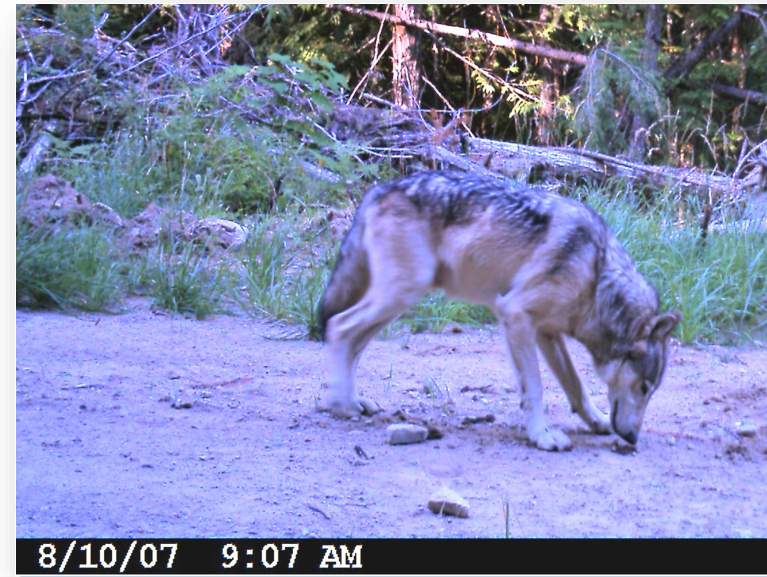


Photo Credit: WDFW Wolf & Grizzly Bear Policy Lead Shubh Bhattacharjee



Washington wolf history

- **Pre-1930s: Wolves historically present across WA**
- **1930s: Extirpated from WA**
- **1973: Wolves receive federal protection**
- **1980: Wolves receive state protection**
- **2008: First resident pack documented in Okanogan County**
- **2011: WA Wolf Conservation and Management Plan adopted**
- **2013: Wolf Advisory Group formed**
- **2023: Min. 260 wolves, 42 packs, 25 successful breeding pairs**
- **2024: Periodic Status Review**



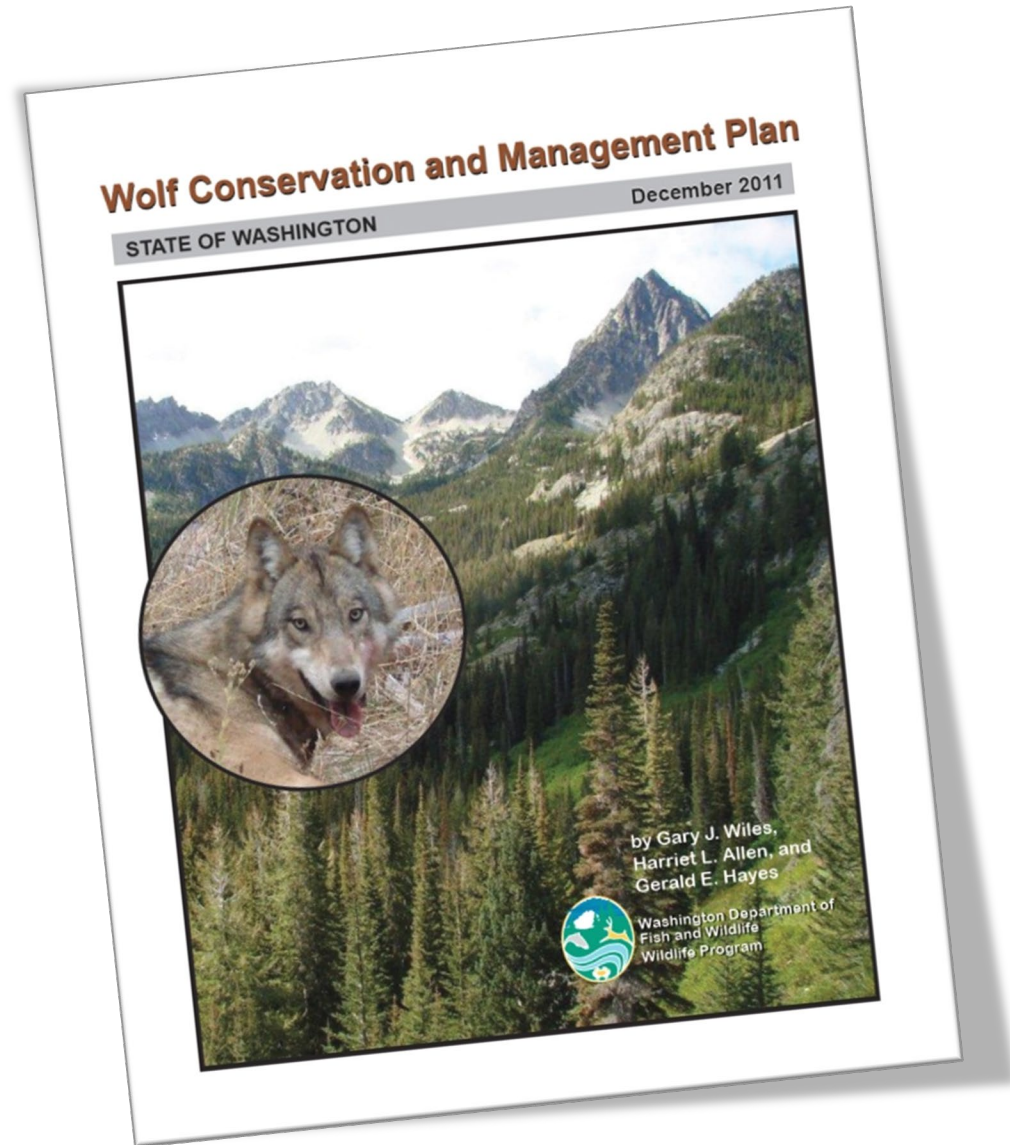
Lone wolf picture captured by WDFW in 08/2007



Wolf Plan Goals

1. Recover self-sustaining wolf populations
2. Manage wolf-livestock conflicts
3. Maintain healthy prey base
4. Develop public understanding and promote coexistence

[Wolf Conservation and Management Plan \(wa.gov\)](http://wa.gov)



Current Listing Status

Federal status

- **Eastern 1/3 delisted**
- **Western 2/3 listed as Endangered**

State status

- **Listed statewide as Endangered (WAC 220-610-010)(RCW 77.15.120)**



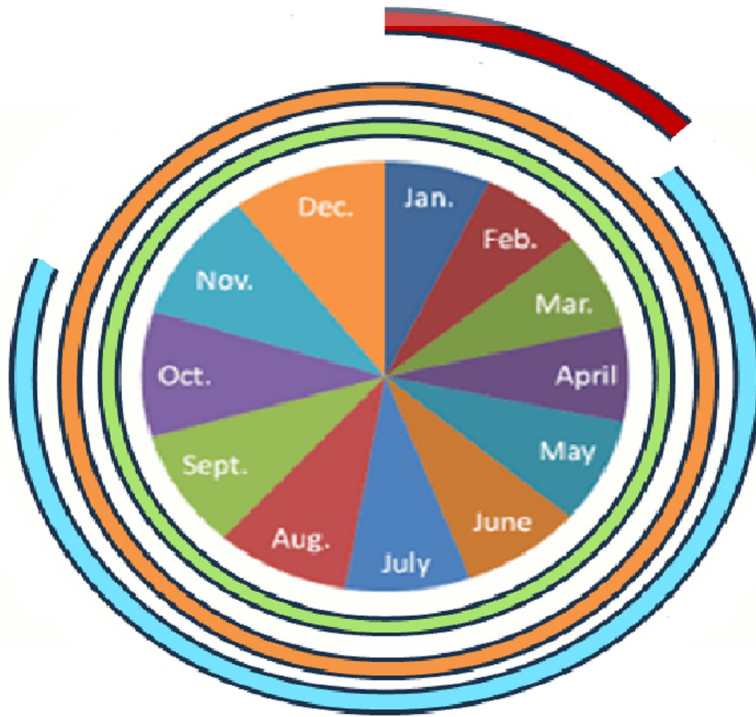
Washington's Current Wolf Distribution (2023)



Dispersers from adjacent US states and Canadian provinces, as well as resident WA packs, are naturally recolonizing the state – wolves were never reintroduced in Washington



Monitoring Wolves in Washington



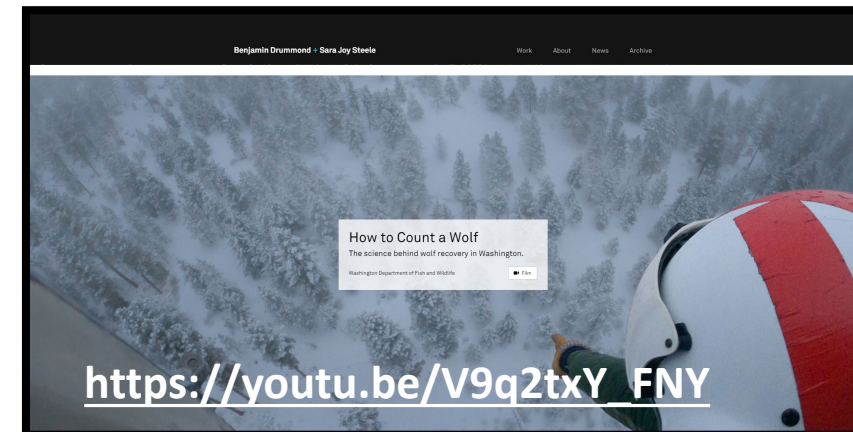
- Year around on-ground and trail camera-based monitoring
- In spring, summer to early fall – ground capture efforts for radio-collaring
- In winter, aerial surveys, minimum count, and radio-collaring
- Collaboration with CTCR biologists – minimum wolf numbers including harvest information in CTCR and north-half

On ground Surveys with tracks and sightings

Ground Captures and Radio-collaring

Trail Camera based Surveys

Aerial Surveys and Radio-collaring

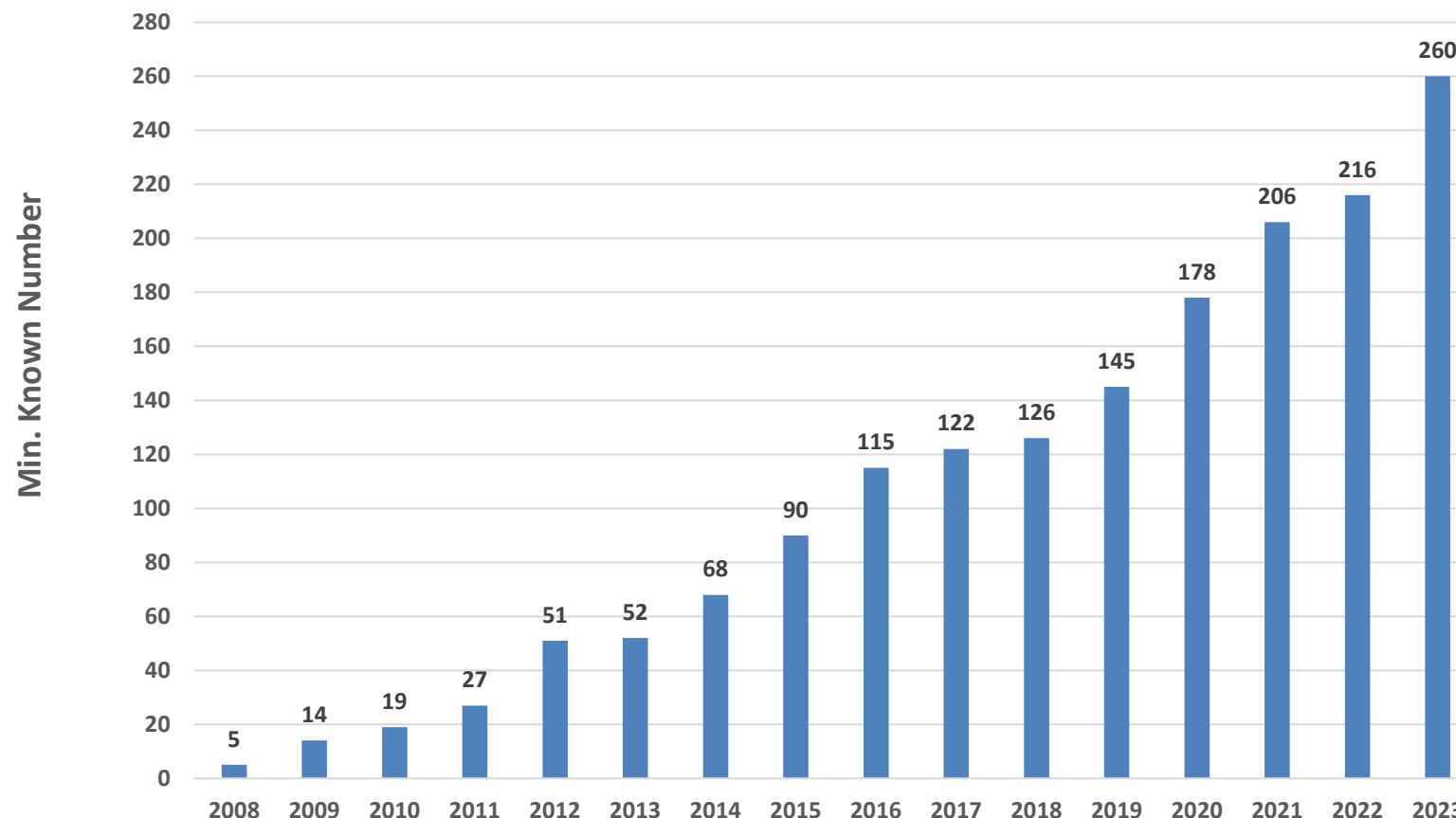


Capture and Monitoring - 2023 Calendar Year

- Captured 33 wolves - From 22 different packs
- Monitored 52 wolves from 25 packs in 2023
- 2023 Annual Wolf Report (<https://wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/02501/wdfw02501.pdf>)



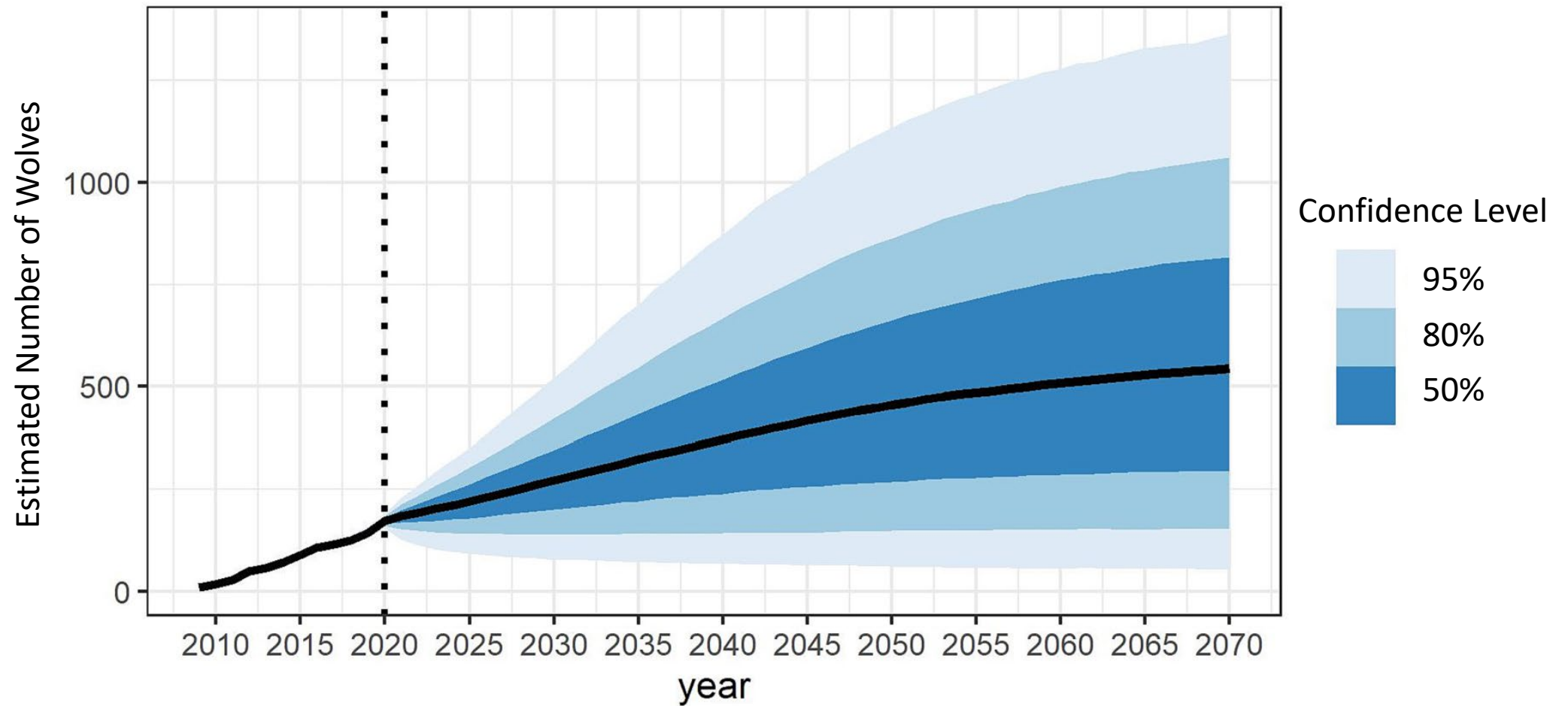
Estimated Minimum Count of Wolves in Washington over the years (2008 – 2023)



There were more wolves in the state than these minimum counts in each year, as detecting every individual wolf across the landscapes, is scientifically not possible



What is the future of Washington's wolves?

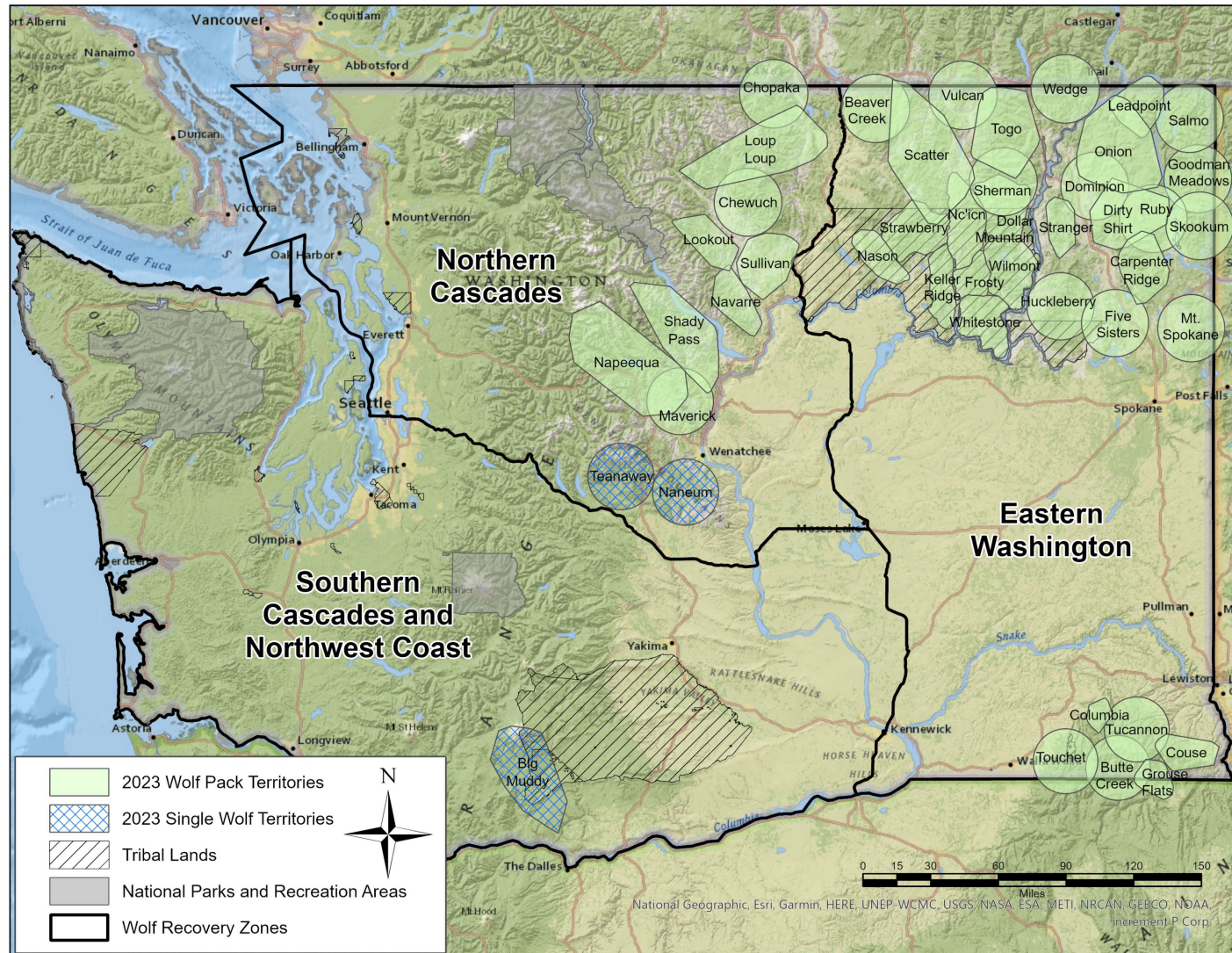


<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2023.110340>; Petracca et al. 2024



1. Restore self-sustaining wolf populations

Assessing statewide recovery



- Recovery Criteria have both numbers of successful breeding pairs and distribution of them across three recovery zones
- No known packs or breeding pairs in Southern Cascades/NW Coast region



2. Manage wolf-livestock conflicts

Mitigating wolf-livestock interaction

- **RCW 77.36 (Wildlife damage)**
- **Chapter 220-440 WAC (Wildlife management and wildlife interaction)**
- **Guiding Documents for WDFW Wolf-Livestock Conflict Management**

Wolf Conservation and Management Plan



[Wolf Conservation and Management Plan \(wa.gov\)](http://www.wa.gov)

WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE Wolf-livestock interaction protocol Revision date June 1, 2017 (sections 3 and 4 amended September 15, 2020)

This protocol was jointly developed by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW or Department) and its Wolf Advisory Group to guide the Department's efforts to reduce conflicts between wolves and livestock. The Wolf Advisory Group has expressed a strong value to reducing the likelihood of the loss of both wolves and livestock from adverse interactions. The protocol prescribes a variety of proactive measures livestock producers can take to reduce the probability of wolf-livestock conflicts and establishes a framework for WDFW's response when conflicts between wolves and livestock do occur.

The protocol draws on a diversity of perspectives expressed by people throughout the state for protecting wildlife populations as a public resource and livestock. These values include achieving a sustained recovered wolf population, supporting rural ways of life, and maintaining livestock production as part of the state's cultural and economic heritage. This protocol also serves to increase the transparency and accountability of the Department's activities and management actions related to wolves.

Section 1. Background and purpose of protocol

Gray wolves are listed as endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 in the western two-thirds of Washington, but are federally delisted in the eastern-third of the state (Fig. 1). Under Washington State rule, gray wolves are endangered statewide. Under the federal listing status, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is the lead agency for managing wolves in the western two-thirds of Washington, and WDFW has full management authority for wolves in the eastern third.

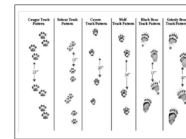
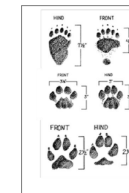


Figure 1. Federal classification of gray wolves in Washington State, 2017.

[WDFW2020wolf_livestock_interaction_protocol.pdf \(wa.gov\)](http://wdfw020wolf_livestock_interaction_protocol.pdf(wa.gov))



LIVESTOCK INJURY AND MORTALITY INVESTIGATIONS A REFERENCE GUIDE FOR WDFW FIELD PERSONNEL



Version 03/2014

[wdfw01581.pdf \(wa.gov\)](http://wdfw01581.pdf(wa.gov))



Mitigating wolf-livestock interaction

- **Promoting non-lethal deterrence measures (Pro-active and Responsive deterrents)**
- **Cost-share contracts (DPCA-L)**
- **Contracted Range Riding Program with WSDA (for NE WA)**
- **Partnerships with –**
 - **County Officials**
 - **Sheriff's Office**
 - **Non-Profit organizations**
 - **NGOs with Range Riding Contracts**
 - **Farm Bureaus**
 - **Conservation Districts**
 - **Private Landowners**
 - **USFWS (for federally listed areas – agreement on non-lethal mitigation strategies)**
- **Lethal Removal as a tool to change pack behavior**

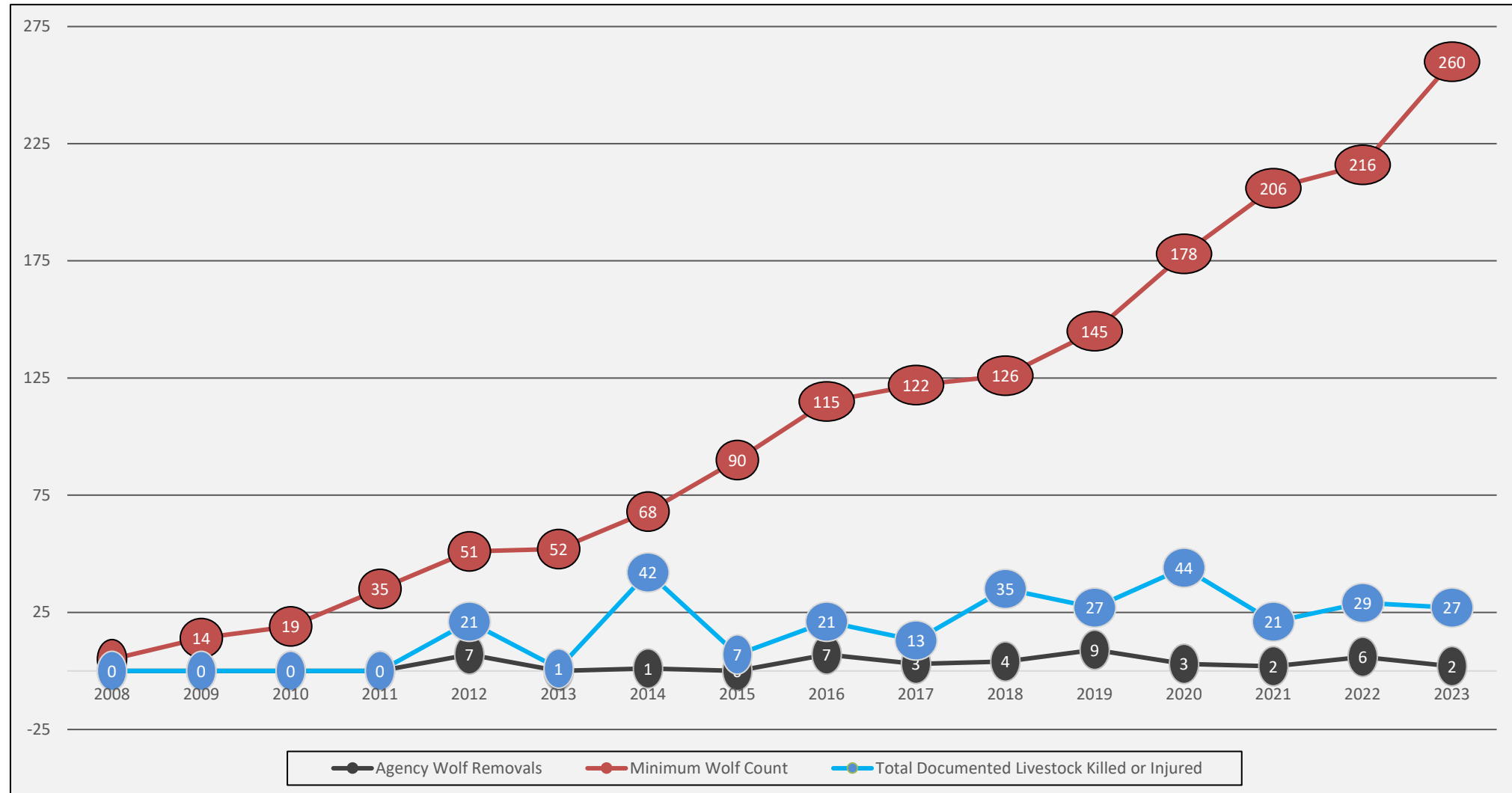


Compensation for wolf-livestock interaction

- **WDFW receives an appropriation each fiscal year (\$50,000).**
- **WDFW provides compensation to affected producers applied for Direct Livestock loss claims (dead livestock)**
- **WDFW also provides compensation to affected producers applied for Indirect Livestock loss claims (for missing cattle, reduced pregnancy rate, and reduced weight gain compared to the prior 3-year average)**
- **During the last five fiscal years WDFW received compensation claims and paid total sum per fiscal year ranging from \$ 25000 to \$124,000**



Wolf Population trajectory, Wolf - livestock interactions, and Lethal Removal (2008 – 2023)



Wolf Advisory Group

18 diverse members representing spectrum of perspectives to inform WDFW management



- Stevens County Commission
- Washington Farm Bureau
- Washingtonians for Wildlife Conservation
- Wolf Haven International
- Okanogan County Commission
- Washington State Sheep Producers
- Humane Society of the United States
- Conservation Northwest
- Washington Farm Forestry Association
- Wildlife advocates
- Hunting interests
- Independent livestock producers/ranchers
- Outdoor recreation interests



Wolf Expenditure – July 2023 – June 2024

Description	Wolf Expenditures
A. Population Monitoring	
▪ Captures, monitoring surveys	\$322,000
▪ Staff Time	\$443,000
▪ Total	\$765,000
B. Conflict Management	
▪ Staff time	\$357,000
▪ Non-lethal deterrence measures (cost-share, range riding, etc.)	\$218,000
▪ Compensation	\$124,000
▪ Lethal removal	\$32,000
▪ Total	\$731,000
C. Wolf Advisory Group (Third party neutral facilitator's contract and meeting logistics)	\$99,000
TOTAL (A + B + C)	\$1,595,000

Fund source: WLS/GFS/PLP/ORCA/Wolf Livestock Conflict Acct



Wolf Management – Summary

- The annual report for 2024 calendar year will be published and presented to the Fish and Wildlife Commission in April 2025.
- WDFW is committed to working closely with tribes, partner agencies, local governments, producers, and stakeholders:
 - Agreements and MOUs
 - Wolf Advisory Group
 - Non-lethal deterrence efforts
 - Response to reported depredations
 - Improved livestock compensation rules and processes



Photo Credit: WDFW Statewide Wolf Biologist Trent

Roussin



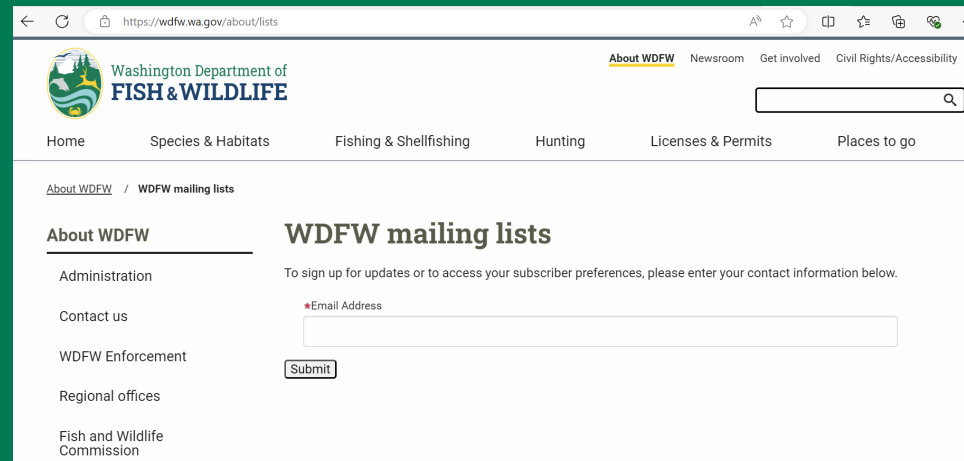
Thank you!

For more information on wolves in Washington:

wdfw.wa.gov/wolves

**If you are interested in receiving
e-mail notifications of wolf activity updates, you can sign up here:**

<https://wdfw.wa.gov/about/lists>



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <https://wdfw.wa.gov/about/lists>. The page header includes the WDFW logo and navigation links: Home, Species & Habitats, Fishing & Shellfishing, Hunting, Licenses & Permits, and Places to go. The main content area is titled "WDFW mailing lists" and contains a sign-up form. The form includes a text input field for "Email Address" and a "Submit" button. A sidebar on the left lists various WDFW sections: Administration, Contact us, WDFW Enforcement, Regional offices, and Fish and Wildlife Commission.





Ungulate management and assessments

- **Game Management Plan (July 2015-June 2021) - commitment to assess ungulate populations and predation.**

Reports:

[Wildlife Program 2015-2017 Ungulate Assessment](#)

[Washington Predator-Prey Project | Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife](#)



Wolf Management – 2025-27 Funding Requests

- **Biennial Wolf Recovery funding: \$1,110,000**
 - **Nonlethal deterrence strategies, including “gap” funding for range riding**
 - **Wildlife Conflict Specialist staffing in NE**
- **Biennial funding for the Wolf Advisory Group (WAG): \$330,000**
 - **Facilitator and meeting costs**
- **Personalized License Plate**
- **(Support for) WSDA funding for range riding program**

