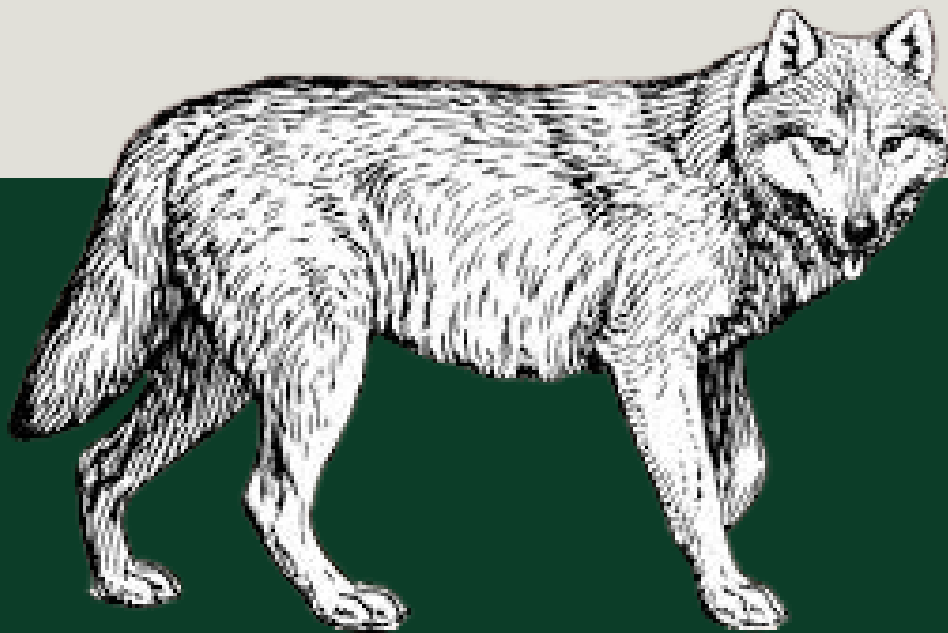




CONGRESSIONAL
WESTERN CAUCUS
CHAIRMAN DOUG LAMALFA

H.R. 845 THE PET AND LIVESTOCK PROTECTION ACT

Sponsored by Rep. Lauren Boebert
(CO-04)



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SUMMARY

The Pet and Livestock Protection Act directs the Department of the Interior to delist the gray wolf as an endangered or threatened species, under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA). This legislation aligns with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) 2020 rule delisting gray wolves and finding that they are "recovered" and no longer in need of ESA protection.



BACKGROUND

- The gray wolf was listed as endangered under the ESA in 1974. In the following decades, USFWS took action to protect the species and restore it to much of its historical habitat in the Northern Rocky Mountains and Great Lakes regions. These recovery efforts were extremely successful.[1] While considered the same species, gray wolves in Alaska and Canada have never been listed as endangered or protected by the ESA.
- From 2008 to 2022, gray wolves in the Northern Rocky Mountains were repeatedly delisted and relisted as endangered and threatened, on a state-by-state basis. USFWS consistently attempted to delist gray wolves because the species' population had recovered and were no longer at risk for extinction. However, that finding was repeatedly blocked through environmental lawsuits.[2]
- In 2020, USFWS delisted gray wolves as threatened and endangered, celebrating their recovery. This decision was overridden in 2022, when an environmentalist lawsuit resulted in a court order that relisted gray wolves (outside of Alaska) as endangered in the lower forty-eight states, and threatened in Minnesota.[3]
 - The court stated that the USFWS's decision to delist gray wolves did not take into consideration their historical habitat, adequately consider the impacts of a partial delisting, or utilize "the best available science" to count wolf populations in Montana and Idaho.
 - Additionally, the Judge argued that USFWS did not consider the possibility that Mountain-West states would grossly mismanage their wolf populations without federal supervision.[4] This is the most recent legal decision dictating gray wolf management.

- As gray wolf populations grow and naturally cross state lines, they increasingly conflict with humans and livestock. For ranchers, wolves are an extremely expensive predator to coexist with, regularly killing and toying with livestock, from sheep and cattle to house pets and horses.
- While the federal government provides minimal refunds for wolf depredation (wolf kills) to states and tribes,[5], depredation compensation greatly varies from state to state. Some states refund ranchers for all depredation related losses (including livestock weight loss, decreased conception rates, and missing animals) while others will only compensate ranchers for the market-value of animals “confirmed” killed by wolves.[6] Indisputably, gray wolf depredation is a major financial drain both for farmers and states .
- Federal Programs for Wolf Depredation Payments:
 - USFWS distributes the Wolf Livestock Loss Demonstration Project Grant Program to provide federal financial assistance to states and tribes to 1) assist livestock producers in taking proactive actions to prevent livestock loss due to wolves and 2) compensate livestock producers for losses due to predation.[7] Annually, this program distributes \$1 million in grants, providing between \$30,000 and \$150,000 to every impacted state.[8]
 - Gray wolf depredations are covered under the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP). This program provides benefits for livestock owners with compensation for certain eligible loss conditions, including attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal laws, including wolves. A program fact sheet states, “LIP payments for owners are based on national payment rates that are 75 percent of the market value of the applicable livestock.”[9]



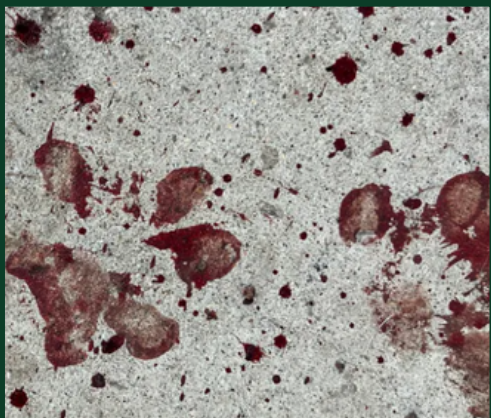
Real World Examples ↓

“California Sheriff Declares His County ‘Under Siege’ from Gray Wolves”^[10]

In just one month, 18 wolf attacks on livestock and big game were reported in Sierra Valley, CA. During that time, wolves killed cattle in broad daylight and frequently attacked big game near homes, leaving behind gruesome blood and remains. The affected residents of Sierra Valley stated that attempts to deter the wolves were consistently unsuccessful. The Sierra County Sheriff’s Office expressed concern that the wolves are moving closer to residential areas, demonstrating very little fear of humans, and creating a major public safety concern.

“CPW Commission approves high-value claims filed by 2 ranchers after 2024 wolf depredations on livestock”^[11]

Since Colorado began its voter-mandated, voluntary, reintroduction of gray wolves in 2023, local ranchers have been faced with an onslaught of gray wolf attacks. Ranchers who can confirm a wolf kill on their property can request refunds from the state of Colorado, for lost income. Thus far, the two largest approved depredation refunds totaled \$287,407.63 and \$56,008.74. Conway Farrell, the rancher who received the larger payment, was compensated for about 15 animals killed by a wolf, missing sheep, reduced weaning weights (“about 1,470 calves weighed an average of 36.5 pounds less each”), and reduced conception rates (“the ranch saw a 2.9% reduction in cow pregnancy rates, which ended up with a total loss of \$90,000”). In 2025, he was also compensated for an additional \$100,046 in losses, caused by the loss of 89 more calves to wolves. ^[12] Doug Bruchez who received the second largest payment explained, “This is literally a reimbursement for losses that we have already incurred ... Nothing is ever going to make us whole for what these wolves are doing to us.”



“Area ranchers alarmed by livestock losses to growing Grouse Ridge wolf pack”[13]

Gray wolf populations have naturally grown rapidly in Oregon, with the wolf population increasing fifteen percent from 2023 to 2024. As a result, Ron Anderson, an 81 year-old rancher in Butte Falls, OR reported, “between one and three encounters per night between his cattle and a pack of up to 14 wolves that den near his Rancheria cattle ranch, stalk and kill cattle during day and nighttime hours and have attacked and fed on calves just steps away from the front door of his home.” Each year, Anderson reports dozens of his cattle as confirmed wolf kills; he has received compensation for many but not all of the cattle he has lost this way.



“Washington state ranch owner reacts to gray wolf kill: ‘They’re eating us alive, literally’”[14]

One wolf was “lethally removed,” North of Spokane, WA, after it repeatedly attacked livestock on multiple properties. One ranch manager impacted by the local wolves said, “I would say we’ve lost over 100 over the last 10 years of our pets. Our horses, donkeys, alpaca, pigs, our cart pony, my milk cow, eight horses, dozens of cattle, and baby calves. It’s devastating,” she explained. “They’re eating us alive, literally.” She expressed that her ranchers are struggling to maintain their livelihood, apprehensive about seeking state refunds for wolf depredation.



“Gray wolves in California blamed for 19 livestock deaths. What happened?”[15]

Wolf depredation incidents have increased rapidly in Northern California, growing from six incidents in 2019 to fifty-four in 2024. Residents of the affected areas have reported concern that the wolves are not afraid of people, and that they are increasingly willing to enter populated areas to find food. Ranchers combatting the growing population of wolves are not at liberty to shoot or remove the wolves, nor are they compensated by the state of California for the cost of deterring the wolves. While the state refunds ranchers for up to the market value of an animal killed by wolves, they do not compensate ranchers for any of the other losses caused by wolf depredation.

