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Interesting, but maybe some misinformation here. Perhaps this is a good opportunity for the Coexistence Council to introduce what it is trying to accomplish – how and why, as an alternative to the tired, old “us-versus-them” story.

<http://www.azjournal.com/2014/10/29/new-mexico-investigator-offers-stern-wolf-warning-to-arizona/>

New Mexico Investigator Offers Stern Wolf Warning To Arizona

Oct 29, 2014

By Tammy Gray

Wolves are the main killers of cattle in Catron County, N.M., and are setting a record for the number of confirmed kills in 2014.

Catron County, which borders eastern Arizona and is included in the Gila National Forest, is the site of the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area. It was one of the first areas where Mexican gray wolves were released in an effort to reestablish their population in western states.

According to Catron County Wildlife Investigator Jess Carey, the results have been devastating to local ranchers. In a report titled Mexican Wolf Recovery Collateral Damage Identification in Catron County alone, he noted that of five ranches he studied, two went out of business and a third did not restock cattle after 2009. Over the course of the study, the five ranches lost a total of 651 head of cattle valued at more than \$382,000.

"The negative effects to livestock producers caused by Mexican Wolves are a wide spectrum not addressed and/or ignored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Prior negative data and documentation of wolf recovery from other states were not utilized to mitigate the same negative effects of Mexican wolf recovery in New Mexico and Arizona," he noted.

Carey also pointed out that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service does not take into account other types of damage to cattle operations, such as stress deaths caused by wolves running cattle,

or loss of production by cows due to stress created by the presence of wolves. He noted that the department "demands that ranchers change their entire husbandry scheme to accommodate the presence of wolves; if the rancher refuses, no compensation is paid on wildlife services findings on confirmed or probable livestock depredations."

In addition, payment of claims is running years behind schedule and a pro-wolf non-governmental organization is in charge of processing the claims, according to Carey.

He notes that he believes that the harm caused to ranchers is not only the result of the federal wildlife service and pro-wolf organizations, but also to a lack of coverage in the media.

"The truth about the negative impacts to rural folks by Mexican wolves is never provided to the citizens of Arizona and New Mexico because of the failure of the press. The collateral damage to achieve Mexican wolf recovery has destroyed many family ranchers," he wrote.

According to Carey's report, wolves quickly become acclimatized to humans and after a time do not flee even when warning shots are fired in the air.

In Catron County, domestic animals besides cattle have been killed and injured, including horses, dogs, chickens and cats. The report notes that in one instance, a wolf bit the head off of a kitten in front of a group of children, and many attacks on domestic dogs occurred in the owner's front or back yard.

Wildlife investigation reports from Catron County reveal that between Jan.

1, 2006, and Aug. 30, 2014, a total of 143 cattle were confirmed to have been killed by wolves. That total does not include deaths deemed as "probable" due to wolf depredation, or any other animals killed by wolves.

During that same period, a total of 29 cattle were confirmed killed by coyotes, bears and mountain lion combined.

The wildlife investigation report notes that, "U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service John Oakleaf's study of confirmed wolf killed livestock found: for every wolf killed livestock 'confirmed' there are 7 more that are not confirmed. Example: one ranch in 2009 had 10 confirmed wolf killed yearlings and have another 80 head missing. This is consistent with Oakleaf's study."

As of Aug. 30, wildlife investigations conducted in 2014 included 28 confirmed cases of cattle killed by wolves and one horse injured by a wolf.

During the same period, there was one confirmed kill by a coyote and one by a bear, while five cattle died of unknown causes. In addition, there was one confirmed cattle injury by a wolf and six deaths ruled as likely caused by a wolf.

In the cases investigated in 2013, 14 cattle were confirmed to have been killed by wolves,

while two were killed by coyotes and nine were listed as "unknown." During that year, one dog and one puppy were confirmed to have been injured by wolves.

Investigations in 2012 included 13 cattle confirmed killed by wolves, one death listed as a "probable" wolf case and one confirmed cattle injury caused by wolves. One mule was killed by wolves, while three cattle were killed by bears, none by coyotes and in seven cases, the results were listed as unknown.

The 2011 investigative report shows that 25 cases of cattle killed by wolves were confirmed and two cases were listed as probable. A young horse was also confirmed killed by wolves. There were four cattle confirmed to have been injured by wolves, and 11 died of unknown causes. Three cattle were killed by bears and none by coyotes.

Of the cases investigated in 2010, five cattle were confirmed killed by wolves and two injured. There were also confirmed wolf kills of one colt and one elk. Six cattle deaths were of unknown cause, while one was killed by a bear and one by a domestic dog. In 2010, coyotes also killed a colt and some sheep.

During 2009, there were a total of 14 confirmed cases of wolves killing cattle and two "probable" cases. Wolves also killed a group of chickens and an elk that year. Six cattle died from unknown causes, while one was killed by a coyote and one by a mountain lion.

Cases investigated in 2008, include 13 cattle confirmed killed by wolves, three probable cases, and six injuries confirmed to have been caused by wolves. Wolves also killed a group of chickens. Bears killed three head of cattle that year, coyotes killed five and 14 deaths were due to unknown causes. In 2008 there were also three cattle killed by lightning and three in an accident.

Over the course of 2007, investigations revealed 20 confirmed wolf killings of cattle, 20 probable wolf killings of cattle and one confirmed cattle injury. Wolves also killed one horse and an elk, were listed as a probable cause in the killing of another horse and elk, were confirmed to have injured two dogs and were the probable cause of injury in a horse. Five cattle were killed by coyotes, two by bears and 10 by unknown causes. Coyotes also killed an emu that year.

In 2006, investigators confirmed that 11 cattle deaths were caused by wolves, and three were listed as probable cases. There was also one case of cattle injury by wolves and one probable injury due to wolves. That year, wolves were also confirmed to have killed one dog, one kitten and one cat, injured a dog, and were listed as the probable cause in the injury of three horses and a sheep. Also during 2006, four cattle were killed by motor vehicles, two by bears, one by a coyote and five by unknown causes. Two died during calving and one was due to natural

causes.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2013 progress report on the Mexican Wolf reintroduction project notes that the 1996 environmental impact statement predicted that there would be between one and 34 confirmed cases of cattle killed by wolves in the Blue Range reintroduction area, based on a population of 100 wolves. According to the report, at that rate the total kills would be less than one half of one percent of all cattle in the area.

From 1998 to 2003, the total number of kills in the Blue Range area stayed below the projected amount, at an average of 13.8 cattle per 100 wolves.

Between 2005 and 2009, that number increased and the report notes that, "the number of confirmed cattle killed by wolves exceeded the predicted rate." In 2008, the average was 36.5 cattle per 100 wolves and in 2009 it was 50 cattle per 100 wolves. According to the report, the number dropped back down to within the predicted range between 2010 and 2012, with an average of 24 cattle killed per 100 wolves.

In 2005, the Arizona Game and Fish Department reported that a preliminary diet analysis of Mexican Wolves revealed that their diet is comprised of about 75 percent elk, 11 percent small animals and unknown sources, 10 percent deer and four percent livestock. At that time, there were a total of 70 confirmed or suspected cattle killed by wolves and ranchers had been reimbursed a total of \$34,000.

The Arizona Game and Fish report notes that most observed predation is on young elk, however, wolves were also seeking out livestock.

"Although small in comparison to all available livestock present, depredation is measurable, and usually focused on one or two allotments," the report states.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working on a plan to reintroduce wolves to nearly the entire state of Arizona, including all areas south of Interstate 40.

Carey noted that Arizona residents should take heed.

"The folks of Arizona do not realize what is coming to their community. Most impacted will be the rural families. They will have their family pets killed, livestock killed, and have to live with habituated wolves in yards, on front porches, and confronting children and adults alike at close range," he wrote.
