

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Ed Bangs, Western Gray Wolf Recovery Coordinator
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Ed Bangs: 406-449-5225, x204
email: EA-WolfRuleChange@fws.gov, WolfRuleChange@fws.gov

RE: RIN 1018-AV39

Thank you for soliciting public opinion about the fate of gray wolves in the Northern Rocky Mountains. Please register my opposition to proposed revisions that permit states and tribes “more flexibility in managing nonessential experimental wolves.”

I strongly disapprove of the destruction of protected wolves to artificially inflate big game populations. A management scheme that could result in the slaughter of hundreds of wolves is irresponsible. The revised 10(j) rule nullifies wolf recovery gains in Wyoming and Idaho. Moreover, your proposal lets states initiate the killing before wolves are even removed from the Endangered Species List.

The mass elimination of predators always impacts an ecosystem. The USFWS Environmental Assessment fails to disprove that large-scale slaughter will hinder wolf recovery. In fact, the EA offers no scientific rationale for modifying the 10(j) rule — an indication that its primary purpose is to open hunting opportunities. This is not “wolf management,” especially when wolves have yet to attain steady numbers.

I am disgusted a government agency would authorize states to kill wolves on public lands if they are perceived as a threat to companion animals and livestock. Wolf provocation remains a rare event and certainly doesn't warrant revision of a rule intended to preserve a species. Furthermore, private landowners ought to employ non-lethal methods to deter wolf conflicts. Fencing, carcass removal, non-lethal repellents or scare devices, in conjunction with modified animal husbandry techniques, have proven more capable than kill tactics in decreasing livestock damages.

I ask USFWS to adopt Alternative A in your Environmental Assessment and take no action on the 10(j) rule. Please take a stand for wildlife impunity and uphold the Endangered Species Act.

Sincerely,

Governor Sarah Palin
State Capitol, Juneau Office
P.O. Box 110001 • Juneau, AK 99811-0001
ph: 907-465-3500; fax 907-465-3532
email: office_of_the_the-governor@gov.state.ak.us
web email: <http://gov.state.ak.us/govmail.php>

Dear Governor Palin,

Twice: The number of times Alaskans voted to ban aerial hunts.
35 years: The span aerial gunning has been outlawed under federal law.
Almost 700 wolves: Fatalities over four years of aerial hunts.
\$400,000: Funds allocated to promote the state's aerial gunning program.

Unfortunately, nobody's buying it. Aerial hunts only jeopardize Alaska's billion-dollar tourism industry. I will continue to boycott attractions in your state until these profoundly inhumane hunts end.

There is nothing responsible about "wildlife management" that calls for hundreds of wolves to be gunned down from low-flying aircraft. These animals are harassed to exhaustion. Pellets rain down on them. Some limp away to slowly bleed to death. Others are cornered in the snow and shot at point blank range.

Under the Federal Airborne Hunting Act, Alaska's aerial gunning policies are illegal. Yet the state still lets private citizens track and kill wolves using low-flying aircraft and high-powered rifles. No public relations campaign can convince Alaskans and the world that aerial slaughter is humane, rational, or necessary.

Aerial and land-to-shoot hunts shame the State of Alaska, prized for its breathtaking wildlife and terrain. Please permanently ban the senseless slaughter of Alaska's wolves and bears.

Thank you,

The Honorable Representative _____
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Representative _____,

I am a registered voter in your district who is distressed about Alaska's aerial gunning of wildlife. Aerial marksmen have killed nearly 700 wolves over the last four years.

An *aerial trophy hunter* aims his assault rifle out the window of a low-flying aircraft to shoot wolves on the ground. Pellets rain down on them. Injured wolves limp away to slowly bleed to death.

A *same-day airborne hunter* harasses animals from the air until they are worn down. He then lands his helicopter or plane, corners exhausted and wounded animals in the snow, and shoots them at point blank range.

Clearly, aerial slaughter is not humane, rational, or necessary. Yet it may expand beyond Alaska as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service weighs a proposed rule change that would permit the slaughter of hundreds of gray wolves in Wyoming and Idaho.

I call upon you to help end these inhumane hunts. I've learned Representative George Miller (D-CA) has authored legislation to defend wolves from aerial gunning. Please cosponsor this imperative legislation.

Rep. Miller's bill seals a loophole in the Federal Airborne Hunting Act (FAHA) and effectively terminates aerial gunning of wolves. In 1971, Congress enacted the FAHA to ban use of an aircraft to "attempt to shoot for the purpose of capturing or killing any bird, fish, or other animal" or to "harass any bird, fish, or other animal."

In addition, Alaskan voters passed ballot measures in both 1996 and 2000 to ban aerial and land-to-shoot wolf hunts.

I urge you to act on behalf of your constituents, most Alaskans, and the international community — who all want this senseless slaughter to stop. Please cosponsor Rep. Miller's legislation when introduced.

Thank you,