

# Public Doesn't Buy Report

Editorial by [www.GrayWolfNews.com](http://www.GrayWolfNews.com)

It certainly doesn't take a rocket scientist to understand there are several likely reasons the report of fewer wolves in Idaho is most likely faulty. Idaho wisely ended participation in wolf monitoring with the use of sportsmen's dollars that were raised from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses and that should be used for managing the same.

Obviously older collared wolves are going to die off and fewer young wolves and new packs are being located. In addition to that wilderness restrictions prevent effective monitoring of Idaho's great wilderness areas. Wolves are reported to be expanding into new areas weekly in local news reports that are likely overlooked by the USFWS.

Recently two Oregon residents reported wolf sightings complete with wolf photos and they have yet to be contacted back by authorities. Recently a Lohman, Idaho resident reported elk being killed in the backyards of local homeowners along with photos of the kills, no authorities contacted him and a Boise pro-wolf newspaper refused to print the story. So there is a definite attitude by many in the media and agencies to hide the truth about the real number of wolves roaming our states and the impacts from those wolves.

## Report: Wolf numbers dropped in 2010

March 12th, 2011 By Eric Barker of the Lewiston Tribune

End-of-year survey finds drop in wolf numbers across the Northern Rocky Mountain states for the first time

The number of individual wolves in Idaho and the Northern Rocky Mountain states dropped in 2010, marking the first time the population has dipped since the animals were reintroduced more than 15 years ago.

Biologists working for the Nez Perce Tribe and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service estimate there were at least 705 wolves in Idaho at the end of 2010, a 20 percent drop from the 870 at the end of 2009. The numbers were in a report detailing the wolf population in the Northern Rocky Mountain states released Friday. The report said there were about 87 wolf packs in the state last year, compared to 97 at the end of 2009.

Wolf numbers in the Northern Rockies region, which includes Idaho, Montana, Wyoming and parts of Oregon, Washington and Utah, were down about 5 percent. Biologists estimate there are 1,651 in the region. Last year the estimate was 1,733. Biologists wrote the regional decline can be explained entirely by the population dip in Idaho. They also said the Idaho decline could be partially explained by a reduction in wolf monitoring.

"We suspect the difference in wolf numbers in (Idaho) was partly due to loss of radio-collared wolves and reduced monitoring effort in the inaccessible rugged forested mountainous terrain in central (Idaho) wilderness areas," they wrote in the 2010 Rocky Mountain Wolf Recovery Report.

Despite the drop, Ed Bangs, wolf recovery coordinator for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at Helena, said the population is healthy and stable, and wolves have filled all the prime habitat.

"There is only so much really good stuff for wolves here in terms of wild country. They have pretty much filled it all up. Wolves are territorial and limit their own density," he said. "In the long run, everybody expects a slow decline. (Population growth) has been slowing for a couple of years and it looks like it's kind of flat now."

Jim Holyan, of the Nez Perce Tribe at McCall, said the report represents a minimum estimate of the number of wolves in Idaho. He said there may or may not be an actual decline in numbers and that population fluctuations are normal.

"I don't think there is any real urgency for people to get upset the population went down," Holyan said. "Wildlife populations go up and down."

Jim Unsworth, deputy director of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, declined to comment on the numbers. The department did not participate in writing a year-end wolf report, but did help collect information used in the report. In October, Gov. C.L. (Butch) Otter ended the state's role as designated wolf agent for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Environmentalists said the drop shows wolves are not growing unchecked, as many critics have claimed.

"This latest population report should put to rest the idea that the wolves in the Northern Rockies are out of control. Wolf populations won't grow forever. They will stabilize and restore a natural balance in the region," said Mike Leahy of the Defenders of Wildlife at Bozeman, Mont.

The report confirmed the death of 144 wolves in Idaho, including 131 that were human-caused. Of those killed by humans, 46 were killed by hunters, 80 died from authorized control actions, five died from other human causes including poaching and 11 died from unknown causes.

In Idaho, wolves were responsible for the deaths of 75 cattle, 148 sheep, two horses and one domestic bison. Another 14 cattle, 30 sheep, and one livestock guard dog were considered probable wolf kills.

Wolf numbers expanded slightly in Montana and Wyoming. Montana had an estimated 566 wolves at the end of last year, compared to 524 in 2009, and Wyoming went from 320 to 343.

There are estimated to be 16 wolves in eastern Washington and 21 in eastern Oregon.

*[Note: The Lewiston Tribune requires a paid subscription, hat tip to Idaho for Wildlife for the story.]*

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### **Comments to the above story:**

rustyzipper March 12, 2011

Farmer up the road couldn't find his terrier when he let him out at five in the morning last week and found a blood spot in the field next to his house with big canine tracks around it and yesterday afternoon within a mile of his place I spotted had to have been two wolves moving across a field. Wider and taller and running alot slower than coyotes.

abiggin2 March 12, 2011

There are far more wolves than they will ever admit to. Wolves are every where now days. Fact is a wolf killed a deer within a rocks throw of Pierce the other day in some ones front yard but you never here of that. Should not be too long before they inhabit Lewiston's city limits. Of course they want us to think they are in natural decline but we all know better than that. A blind man can only count so many while he is sleeping in a helicopter.

blackdogs March 12, 2011

This report is a bunch of BS. I dont believe it at all. See more wolves and sign now than we have ever. They just dont want to us to know what is really going on. Typical government liars

lane0831 March 12, 2011

Look at the 2nd paragraph, 2nd sentence, 2nd work, it say estimate. I don't believe this,especially when I am out trying to hunt to fill my freezer to feed my family. Hogwash on this article.

28chev March 12, 2011

How could anyone think there has been a drop in wolf population? Maybe in just one particular area but not overall. Why would the population be dropping? That just doesn't make any sense and the article gives totally the wrong impression. Count again and tell the real numbers!!!!

tundra March 12, 2011

Still,they are not sure how many wolves we have.It's the ones who spend many hours outdoors or the people who live outside of our cities that can give you a better idea of how many wolves we have. These dogs are smart,but they do leave a trace. Those who

say they are defenders of wildlife, should be renamed the destruction of wildlife, for this is what they have caused. Why is the Nez Perce tribe and the U.S. fish and wildlife trying to destroy our elk herds that our state has tried to maintain for the last 70 to 80 years? The wolves were never endangered in the first place but soon it will be our elk and moose that will be on the endangered species list. You people need to take off your slippers and put on some hiking boots and go out and see for yourself what is happening. Don't take your dog with you but if you dare, make sure it doesn't bark or cut its foot, because the wolves will track you down. It's happened before... Also you may want to pack a gun. Scare tactic!!! No, just the facts.

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### **Rebuttal by Will Graves - Author of Wolves in Russia**

(via email March 13th)

I am personally surprised and skeptical that there was a drop in the numbers of wolves in the Northern Rocky Mountain States. My research on wolves in Russia covered a period of approximately 150 years. All my Russian research showed numbers that were very similar to what Dr. David Mech reported on several occasions. That is, just to hold the population of wolves at a constant level, it is necessary to cull from about 28% to 50% of the wolves each year, not counting "normal" losses of probably about 6%. If you do that, you can hold the population approximately level. If not, the population of the wolves will go up. For example, in September 1975 the following was reported on page 16 in the Russian magazine, "Hunting and Game Management: In order to reduce the number of wolves it is necessary that every year not less than 50% of the fall population of wolves need to be culled."

To the best of my knowledge the number of wolves recently culled in the Northern Rocky Mountain States does not reach 28% to 50%; therefore, the population of wolves will go up. The pages 55 through 66 in my book are about Russian experiences in this area.