

OVER SIXTY CANADIAN AND INTERNATIONAL SIGNATORIES VOICE OPPOSITION TO THE B.C. WOLF KILL IN AN OPEN LETTER TO THE B.C. GOVERNMENT*

‘B.C. Government scapegoats wolves for its failure to protect caribou habitat’

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More than sixty organizations and concerned citizens not only from British Columbia, but also from around the globe have signed an open letter addressed to Premier Clark opposing the B.C. government’s ongoing wolf slaughter. The government has inhumanely slaughtered at least 24 wolves by helicopter in the South Selkirk Mountains and another 160 wolves either have been or are about to be killed from helicopters in the South Peace region by the end of this month. Furthermore, we have learned that the B.C. government actually plans to continue the aerial killing of wolves for at least four more years, and it is willing to spend millions of tax dollars doing it. This means it won’t be hundreds of wolves that die because of government’s refusal to protect adequate habitat for caribou; thousands of wild wolves will be inhumanely shot from helicopters. The B.C. government claims that the wolf slaughter will “protect” the imperiled caribou in these areas from extinction, even though there is no scientific basis to its claim. For years, the B.C. government has sterilized and/or killed wolves while the caribou populations have continued to crash.

Ian McAllister who signed the open letter on behalf of Pacific Wild Alliance emphasizes that: “The public should not be fooled that killing wolves will recover endangered caribou herds as the B.C. government claims. The caribou are threatened because of decades of government inaction and refusal to protect adequate levels of habitat.” In the Selkirk Mountains, caribou have failed to thrive because of logging, as well as snowmobilers, heli-skiers and cat-skiers scaring them off their crucial winter-feeding grounds, and their tracks facilitating access for predators. In the South Peace, critical caribou habitat has been destroyed and fragmented by logging, oil and gas development, access roads and coal mines.

The more than 173,400 people from all over the world who have signed the #SaveBCWolves petition are certainly not fooled by the B.C. government’s claim. They understand that caribou need large intact zones free from human encroachment to thrive, and wolves, as top predators, play a critical role in maintaining healthy ecosystems.

The undersigned conservation organizations and concerned citizens call on the B.C. government:

- to immediately halt the ongoing inhumane aerial wolf slaughter;
- to develop caribou recovery plans in line with procedures for identifying critical habitat under the federal Species at Risk Act. These plans should include the creation of large intact protected areas in high and low elevation habitat that are off limit to logging, resource extraction and recreational users, with buffer zones where minimal industrial or recreational human encroachment is permitted;
- to ensure the recovery plans are implemented through a transparent and open process, including the publication of annual reports compiled by government scientists and peer-reviewed by independent conservation experts;
- to increase the immediate protection of the 18 surviving caribou in the Selkirk Mountains by enforcing all snowmobile closures recommended by government scientists, excluding overlapping heli- and cat-ski tenures from protected caribou habitat and its buffer zones and prosecuting trespassers. Ongoing Snowmobile Management Agreements negotiations with snowmobile clubs should be open to public review and comment.

*Since updated to 80 signatures, as shown below.