


# Wildlife Services should be abolished

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We have a cheer for Richard Conniff's op-ed in the Sunday NY Times "[America's Wildlife Body Count](#)," which suggests that Wildlife Services, a century-old agency of the United States Dept. of Agriculture, is what needs to be controlled in this country, not predators. The agency slaughtered an alarming 3.2 million animals and birds last year to protect doomed cattle and sheep, up from 2.7 million in 2014.

The catalyst for writing the piece was a new study published in the journal *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment* this month called "Predator Control Should Not be a Shot in the Dark."

The study reveals that although the "protection" of doomed cattle and sheep from predators like wolves, cougars and bears is hotly contested in the United States and Europe, lethal control methods like hunting, poisoning, live-trapping and destroying litters of young, are rarely subjected to rigorous scientific testing and non-lethal methods face higher standards of evidence.

The study's authors actually found that non-lethal methods such as guard dogs, fences and warning flags are actually more effective at protecting livestock than killing predators, and recommend suspension of lethal methods.

Friends of Animals couldn't agree more, and would take it a step further that Wildlife Services be dismantled altogether. It's time ranchers start treating wildlife like neighbors instead of pests. After all, why should taxpayers have to foot the bill—\$127 million in 2014—for killing and destroying their own assets of wildlife while contributing to overall ecological degradation?

The answer is...they shouldn't have to!



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