



#### WOLF NEWS

## THE DAILY HOWLER: LATEST REMOVAL EFFICACY STUDY MEETS BIG SHIFT IN WASHINGTON'S WOLF WORLD

SEPTEMBER 7, 2016 | ANDY WALGAMOTT | [LEAVE A COMMENT](#)



The Daily Howler has been pretty damned lazy of late, relying on other lupus news outlets to track down and bring red meat back to the den, but I want to spotlight what I consider to be a fairly big and positive shift in Washington's wolf world.

If you'll pardon the use of the phrase of these days, last week, "[directly on top](#)" of a state operation to remove a livestock-depredating wolf pack in Northeast Washington, came yet another study looking at how effective doing so can be in preventing new attacks.

The University of Wisconsin's Adrian Treves et al argue in "[Predator control should not be a shot in the dark](#)" that "there's little scientific evidence that killing predators actually accomplishes the goal of protecting livestock," [according to a write-up](#) by the *National Geographic* last week.



It was met, remarkably, with something of a yawn here.

As I understand it, there will be more public discussion of the paper in the weeks ahead, but at one time — say, 2014 — a study like that would have been [trumpeted far and wide as The Final Word](#) on why we should never, ever discipline wolves for gnawing on cattle and sheep.

But it's 2016 and a different landscape has grown in Washington.

**THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC'S STORY** on Treves' analysis was posted far and wide on Facebook, as if doing so would somehow ground WDFW's chopper.

One place it landed was the Facebook page of Mitch Friedman, executive director of Conservation Northwest.

Asked his initial thoughts, Friedman said **that he was** “not a big fan of that research.”

David Mech, one of the foremost wolf experts in North America, “**isn’t persuaded**” by it either, but what’s of note here is that Conservation Northwest is one of the state’s most dedicated defenders of predators.

If it’s got fur and fangs, they’re fans.

Naturally, CNW is also part of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife’s Wolf Advisory Group.

After much give and take (and no small amount of what appears at this juncture to have been state money well spent), the ranchers, hunters and wolf advocates on that panel came to an agreement earlier this year on the protocol for lethally removing depredating packs.

What’s more, the **four major wolf groups on the WAG stood by it** as the Profanity Peak Pack unfortunately reached set benchmarks for partial then full destruction.

(**WDFW reports** eight confirmed and five probable calf and cow depredations and six wolves killed as of last Friday.)



A TRAIL CAM SHOT CAPTURED A MEMBER OF THE PROFANITY PEAK PACK IN 2014.  
(WDFW)

The Washington Cattlemen’s Association tipped their Stetsons to CNW, Wolf Haven International, the Humane Society of the United States and Defenders of Wildlife for their tough but gutsy stand.

The “(lethal take protocol) helps to maintain a higher level of social tolerance amongst members of rural communities throughout Eastern Washington. Removal of problem wolves benefits the rest of Washington’s wolf population that do not depredate livestock,” the cattlemen noted.

And Northeast Washington Republican state Reps. Shelly Short and Joel Kretz called the four organization’s support for removal “unprecedented” in an **Omak Chronicle** opinion piece. They say it yielded “a glimmer of hope in the eyes of our neighbors.”



A SCREEN SHOT OF REPS. SHELLEY SHORT  
AND JOEL KRETZ’S OPINION PIECE IN THE  
OMAK CHRONICLE.

Now, this is not to say that nonlethal methods have been abandoned. Far from it. Nor that we should ignore solid science.

But it's pointing towards Another Way of doing business, one that may not work for the national groups, but on a local level ...

"We know for fact that a number of ranchers who have signed up for conflict avoidance help, like range riders, waited until they felt they could trust us with clear rules (lethal take protocol) and a track record of standing by the rules," Friedman wrote on Facebook. "When I hear that someone 'only returned our call because of our action on ...', it tells me that this study missed something important."

What his organization and the others have realized is that to get what they want requires working constructively with the other side.

As Friedman wrote in a [thoughtful blog](#) after removals of the Profanity Pack began, "Coexistence, social tolerance and healthy wolf populations are all possible in Washington."

As Kretz and Short wrote, "There is a tenuous path forward to balanced solutions that hinges on respect for the values of others. We believe it's worth a try."

Hat's off to rational fans of wolves and ranching interests.

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