Presentation Outline

• Fragmentation & Connectivity
• Wolf Distribution
• Wolves in California
• The Ecology of Wolves
• Predator Prey Relationships
• Fear-Based Mythology/Debunking Mythology
• Farmers & Ranchers
• Predation Statistics
• Conflicting Facts
• Non-Lethal Alternatives to Take
**Problems with Fragmented Habitats**

- Difficult for juveniles to travel out of parental home range to establish their own territory
- Causes loss of gene flow (inbreeding) and genetic extinctions
Y2Y

Yellowstone to Yukon
Dispersal & Connectivity

• KEY to successful recovery for wolves and continued persistence of mountain lions, bears, foxes and coyotes
Wolf Distributions-Historical

- Extirpated from >50% of historical distribution
- Western US eliminated by the 1930s
- WI and MI eliminated by mid-1960s
- Northeast MN and Isle Royale small numbers survived
- Canada and AK large populations
Wolf Species & Distribution Worldwide

3 species of wolves:

1. *Canis lupus* – Gray wolf

2. *Canis rufus* – Red wolf

3. *Canis lupus simensis* – Abyssinian wolf
North American Wolf Species/Distribution

2 species of wolves:

1a. *Canis lupus irremotus*
   N. Rocky Mountain Wolf

2. *Canis rufus* – Red wolf
   Southeast

1b. *Canis lupus baileyi*
   Mexican wolf: Southwest
U.S. Distinct Population Segments

- Northern Rocky Mountain
  - Montana
  - Wyoming
  - Idaho
    - Washington
    - Oregon

- Midwest
  - Minnesota
  - Wisconsin
  - Michigan
Nevada, Utah, and Colorado

- NV - No wolf sightings for decades
- Transient dispersing wolves seen in UT & CO
Washington and Oregon

- Dispersal to E. WA and E. OR in the last 3-4 years
- Both federally delisted in eastern areas in 2011
- Both have State Endangered Species Acts
- Both have Wolf Conservation and Management Plans
Washington

- Wolf Conservation & Management Plan highlights:
  - 1) recovery & strategy for downlisting
  - 2) reduce & address conflicts with livestock/big game
Oregon

• From 2009-11 wolf kills allowed in documented livestock predation; ranchers compensated for losses
• State kill program stopped to check legal violations
California Wolves

- On the federal endangered species list
- A petition has been filed for **state listing**
- Fish & Game Commission hearing October 3, 2012 - further research for 1 year then a final decision
- No plans for reintroduction
California – Wolf History

- Historical Distribution - Sierra Nevada foothills and mountains, Southern Cascades, Modoc Plateau, and Klamath Mountains and likely North Coast Ranges, Central Valley
- Last seen: San Bernardino Cty-1922 & Lassen Cty-1924
California – OR7 (Journey)

Lone dispersing male from NE Oregon

OR7 crossed into CA from Oregon December 29, 2011
Mexican Wolves in CA

- Julian, CA – the CA Wolf Center - participant in the Mexican Wolf Species Survival Plan (SSP)
- SSP – a consortium of institutions working together to breed captive Mexican wolves for reintroduction to the Southwestern U.S.
The Ecology of Wolves

- **Habitat** – wolves are habitat generalists
- **Constraints** – topography, human presence, road density
- **Territory Size** – is highly variable
- **To give up territory is to give up food**
The Ecology of Wolves - Stats

- **Weight** Males 85-130 lbs, Females 60-95 lbs
- **Length** Males 5-6.5 ft, Females 4.2-6 ft length
- **Height** 26-33” at the shoulder
- **Teeth** – 42, fangs up to 2.5”
- **Vision** color blind, great night vision
- **Tracks** 4.5” long x 3.5” wide
- **Life Span**: 3-7 wild, 15-19 captivity
Predator – Prey Relationships

- Pack Size – depends on prey
- Primary Food – ungulates
- Prey on elderly, sick or injured, weak, or young – keeping herds healthy and vigorous
What’s Not a Fair Hunt?

- Aerial gunning, ATVs, snowmobile hunting
- Mile-range rifles, electronic calls, guide/outfitter
- Eye shining, night hunting with bait
- Trapping and snaring
- Use of Dogs
Wolves, Puma, Bear – Keystone Species

- Healthy Ecosystem: Top predators control prey pops from growing beyond carrying capacity
Fear-Based Mythology

- Predators - God’s great mistake
- Middle ages, Catholic church wolf voted proof of evil
- Wolves, pumas and coyotes kill for fun
- Wolves are introducing new diseases to the West
Debunking the Old Mythology

- No inclination to coexist with people
- Kill to keep minimally fed
- Carry Hydatid Tapeworm, a parasite not new to the west
- Die from mange, parvo, distemper & rabies
Wolf – Human Interactions

- 1 confirmed human mortality since records have been kept
- 1 non-confirmed human mortality
- In the past Century, 80 humans attacked by habituated wolves

It's widely accepted among biologists that healthy wild wolves present little threat to people
Habituated Wolves

- Wolves typically avoid people
- Habituated when provided food
- Capable of killing people
- Never encourage a wolf to approach
- May act playful, unafraid, and want food handouts – leading to closer contact and potential bites
USFWS Stats - Sheep Deaths by Wolves in Idaho

- 2007 – 185 Wolf #s Up
- 2006 – 244
- 2005 – 237 Wolf-caused Deaths Down
- 2004 – 270

Sheep Deaths by Other Causes (year 2004)
Digestive problems: 1,600
Respiratory disease: 1,300
Birthing problems: 1,100
Miscellaneous health problems: 3,200
Predators (combined) 12,100 (270 by wolves)
Harsh weather: 600
Biological v. Social Carrying Capacity

- Agriculture and hunting groups
- Human persecution – most critically damaging
- Important: keep wolves away from humans and livestock
Wolf Depredation Compensation by Defenders of Wildlife

• Approximately $1.5M compensation for documented livestock predation by wolves at fair market price from 1987-2011 until federal compensation program estab.

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<tr>
<th>RECOVERY AREA</th>
<th>PAYMENTS</th>
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• In 2008 and 2009, Defenders of Wildlife contributed two payments totaling $100,000 to the state of Montana.
Non-Lethal Alternatives

- Best – No Wolf-Livestock Interactions
- Next Best – Human Presence: Shepherds, Range Riders
- Barriers – night corrals, electric penning, turbo-fladry
- Scare Tools - shock collars, radio-activated guard boxes,
- Remove Attractants
  - carcass removal – bury or haul away
Non-Lethal Alternatives

Guard Dogs

- Mastin, Spain
- Great Pyrenees, Spain
- Anatolian Shepherds
- Maremma Sheep Dog, Italy
- Akbash, Turkey

Aggressive Cattle Breeds

- Brahman and Corriente
  - Aggressive nature
  - Strong maternal instincts
Co-existence of Wildlife and Humans
Thank You for Being With Wolves

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