

Killing wolves doesn't protect livestock

April 4 2006

A University of Calgary study suggests lethal measures to control wolf attacks on cattle and sheep are ineffective in the long-term.

Calgary researchers examined wolf-control methods in Alberta and several U.S. states and determined costly and time-consuming efforts to eliminate wolves that prey on livestock and domestic animals are ineffective on a long-term, regional scale.

Assistant Professor Marco Musiani, the study's lead author, said lethal control to limit wolf numbers, thereby curbing depredation, requires 30 percent to 50 percent of an area's wolf population to be killed year after year.

"Killing that many wolves would be difficult," Musiani said. "If society wants to co-exist with wolves, it has to accept that there will be losses and address the real issue, which is that if ranchers lose some of their animals, or if animals are injured, it costs them money. There are also significant labor costs for increasing livestock surveillance to prevent attacks."

Results of the study were presented Tuesday during an annual meeting of wolf scientists, ranchers and wildlife managers near Yellowstone National Park.

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Citation: Killing wolves doesn't protect livestock (2006, April 4) retrieved 22 March 2023 from <https://phys.org/news/2006-04-wolves-doesnt-livestock.html>

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