

2025-2026

# Colorado Gray Wolf Annual Report

Gray wolf status, management, monitoring and research, and education and outreach



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There were four recognized wolf packs and four known litters born in Colorado in 2025-2026.

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# Colorado Gray Wolf (*Canis lupus*) Annual Report

April 1, 2025 - March 31, 2026

This report documents the status of gray wolves (*Canis lupus*), wolf management, wolf monitoring, research related to wolves, and education and outreach conducted by Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) in Colorado during the biological year April 1, 2025 - March 31, 2026. In this report, “2025-2026 Biological Year” represents this timeframe.

This report satisfies reporting requirements as specified in state statute (CRS 33-2-105.7 (4)), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) rule establishing a nonessential experimental population of gray wolves in Colorado under section 10(j) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the Colorado Wolf Restoration and Management Plan.

This is the third Colorado Gray Wolf Annual Report produced by CPW.

# History and Background

## History of Colorado Wolves

Gray wolves historically occupied all portions of the state of Colorado and are considered a species that is native to the state. Wolves were eradicated from Colorado in the mid 1940s. After the reintroductions of wolves to Yellowstone National Park and central Idaho in the mid 1990s, wolves have been periodically confirmed to have traveled into Colorado, but a self-sustaining population has not been present since the time of eradication.

## Background leading up to the restoration effort

On Nov. 3, 2020, Proposition 114 was approved by Colorado voters and is now codified into state statute at CRS 33-2-105.8. State law directs the Parks and Wildlife Commission (hereafter, Commission) to “develop a plan to restore and manage gray wolves in Colorado, using the best scientific data available” and “hold statewide hearings to acquire information to be considered in developing such a plan, including scientific, economic, and social considerations pertaining to such restoration.” The voter-approved statute required the Commission to take the steps necessary to begin restoration of gray wolves in Colorado west of the Continental Divide no later than December 31, 2023.

To develop the Wolf Restoration and Management Plan (hereafter, Plan), CPW worked with the Keystone Policy Center to hold public meetings, collecting feedback from more than 4,000 individuals. Additionally, CPW appointed two advisory bodies: a Technical Working Group (TWG) and a Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG). The Technical Working Group consisted of agency and academic scientists and managers with experience in wolf reintroduction and management, as well as others who provided a variety of perspectives and scientific and policy expertise toward the development of conservation objectives, management strategies, and damage prevention and compensation planning. The Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) consisted of wolf advocates, sportspersons, tribal representatives, outfitters, and livestock owners, with some members who represented multiple perspectives, who addressed such issues as when lethal and non-lethal measures would be appropriate and provided recommendations to staff as they drafted a wolf reintroduction plan.

The primary goal of the Plan is to identify the steps needed to recover and maintain a viable, self-sustaining wolf population in Colorado while concurrently working to minimize wolf-related conflicts with domestic animals and people. CPW presented the draft Plan to the Commission on December 9, 2022. CPW and the Commission then held a series of public meetings where the public voiced their concerns and support with materials presented in the draft Plan.

The Final Colorado Wolf Restoration and Management Plan (available at: <https://cpw.widencollective.com/assets/share/asset/wixcpz0wez>) was approved by the Commission on May 3, 2023, through a unanimous 11-0 vote. The Plan was the culmination of two-and-a-half years of extensive statewide stakeholder meetings and public outreach to develop a science-based approach that incorporated the biological needs of the gray wolf and the social concerns of Colorado's citizens.

The Plan sets recovery benchmarks for removing gray wolves from the state's Endangered and Threatened species list. The recovery goals in the Plan are not directly relevant to federal recovery goals.

## Legal Status of Gray Wolves in Colorado

### Federal

In most of the lower 48 states, the gray wolf is listed as an endangered species under the ESA and “taking” wolves is strictly prohibited. The ESA defines “take” as “to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.” In Colorado, wolves are part of a nonessential experimental population under section 10(j) of the ESA. The rule establishing the nonessential experimental population relaxes the ESA's strict take prohibition in certain circumstances and allows management actions the ESA would otherwise prohibit.

There are no Federal Recovery goals for gray wolves in Colorado.

### State

Gray wolves are listed as State Endangered under CPW regulations (#1002 A.1.). Wolves are classified as a nongame species (#1004. A. 6.).

The Plan describes state downlisting and delisting goals. To be downlisted from State Endangered to State Threatened, there must be a minimum count of 50 wolves (see Monitoring section below) for a period of four years. To be delisted from State Threatened to State Delisted, nongame status, there must be a minimum count of 150 wolves for a period of two years, or 200 wolves, with no time constraint.

The timeline to recovery will be influenced by the survival of wolves in Colorado, reproduction and ultimately recruitment of new litters, and future reintroduction efforts. Additional reintroduction efforts will accelerate the timeline to achieving a population of wolves in the state that meet state downlisting and delisting goals as established in the Plan.

There is currently no population objective (maximum desired population size) for wolves in Colorado.



Colorado Parks and Wildlife staff carry a wolf to the plane that will carry it from northeast Oregon to Colorado on Dec. 19, 2023. This operation marked Colorado Parks and Wildlife's inaugural effort to relocate and establish healthy breeding populations of gray wolves in Colorado, as mandated by the voter-approved proposition 114 during the 2020 general election.

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# Restoration of Wolves

As detailed in the Plan, the restoration of wolves was intended to be a multi-year effort, with plans to release 10-15 wolves per year for three to five years. Per state statute, releases must occur in locations west of the Continental Divide. CPW has self-imposed a 60-mile buffer from Tribal lands to the south, and the northern and western borders of the state to minimize the likelihood that released wolves would immediately leave Colorado. The first year of releases occurred in 2023-2024, and 2024-2025 was the second year of reintroductions of wolves to Colorado. These are documented in previous Annual Reports. Upon the completion of this three- to five-year effort, CPW will continue to monitor the wolf population and will supplement the restoration effort with additional releases if necessary.

Intending for a third year of releases in Winter 2025-26, CPW signed a multi-year MOU with British Columbia Ministry of Waters, Lands and Resource Stewardship on July 22, 2025 for continued partnership to support additional years of conducting wolf capture and translocation to Colorado. Planning efforts, including gear logistics and obtaining CITES and Provincial permits had begun in Summer 2025. Contracts were in place for capture operations for up to 15 wolves to be conducted in January 2026.

On October 10, 2025, USFWS Director Brian Nesvik sent a letter to CPW Director Jeff Davis stating that “We have reason to believe that CPW may be seeking to capture, transport and/or release one or more wolves from outside the specified NRM Areas outlined in the 10(j) rule. To the extent that these reports are true, such actions are violative of the 10(j) Rule. If CPW is currently engaged in such activities, CPW must immediately cease and desist any and all efforts related to the capture, transport and/or release of gray wolves not obtained from to the NRM Areas (sic).”

CPW disagrees that the 10(j) rule limits the source population for wolves or otherwise prohibits CPW from sourcing wolves from British Columbia. And USFWS had previously assured CPW it could import gray wolves from Canada without any permit from USFWS. Nevertheless, after CPW received Director Nesvik’s letter, it decided not to pursue a capture and translocation effort from British Columbia in January 2026. Attempts to establish partnerships for the purposes of supplying wolves to be reintroduced to Colorado during the 2025-2026 Biological Year with both the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Nation were unsuccessful. On January 21, 2026, CPW issued a media statement that there were no plans for translocation of wolves this release season and that we would continue to explore options for 2026-2027.

Because there were no capture, transport, or releases conducted in January 2026, there is no narrative in this Annual Report to describe such activities. The reader is referred to Annual Reports covering the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 Biological Years. The Plan does call for three to five years of 10-15 wolves translocated per year. It will likely be critical for the establishment of a self-sustaining wolf population in Colorado to have substantial translocation efforts (10-15 animals) for at least one, if not more, in additional years.

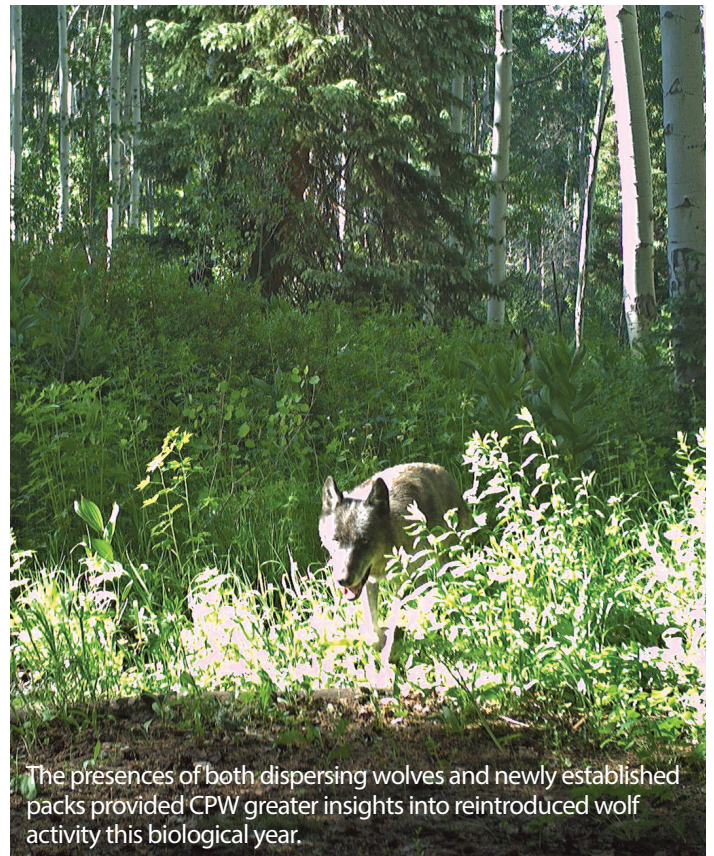
# Monitoring

## Population Monitoring

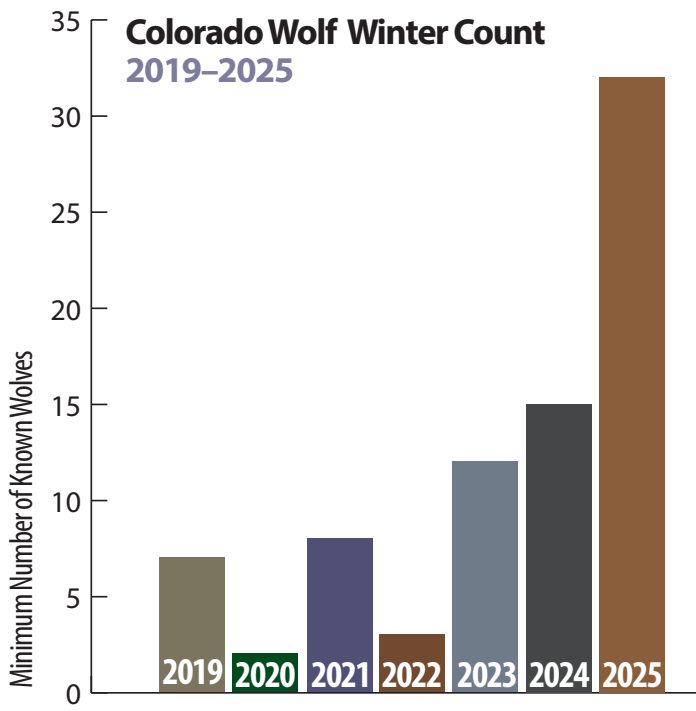
There were 32 known wolves in Colorado at the end of the Biological Year 2025-2026 (Table 1 & Figure 1). Minimum wolf population counts are done during midwinter when biologists can distinguish between adult and juvenile wolves, and wolves are often traveling together in packs. These midwinter minimum counts are reported in detail in Table 1 and pack summaries.

Pack	Collared Wolf ID	Minimum Winter Adult Count	Minimum Winter Pup Count	Total
Copper Creek	2312, 2401, 2402, 2503	4	2	6
King Mountain	2601	0	4	4
One Ear	2101, 2301, 2306, 2308	4	5	9
Three Creeks	2501, 2502	2	3	5
Collared Non-Pack Wolves	2302, 2403, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2516	7	N/A	7
Uncollared Non-Pack Wolves	N/A	1	N/A	1
<b>2025-2026 TOTAL</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>32</b>

**Table 1.** The minimum number of wolves present in Colorado during winter 2025-2026 with known collared wolf IDs, split by pack and age.



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**Figure 1.** Minimum number of known wolves present in Colorado during winter, 2019-2025. Note that the minimum count from 2024 occurred before the translocation of 15 wolves from British Columbia.

### Wolf Distribution

Wolves were monitored during the 2025-2026 Biological Year by tracking GPS collars, as well as ground and aerial observations, genetic analysis of samples, and remote cameras. Wolf monitoring is in a unique situation right now with such a large proportion of the population outfitted with GPS collars. As wolves naturally reproduce, the proportion of the wolf population that is collared will inherently decrease. In the 2025-2026 Biological Year, wolves spent the most time in northwest Colorado, but traveled into other areas (Figures 2 a and b).



Biologists have been engaged in field research and monitoring over the life of the restoration effort.

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CPW monitored wolves in Colorado through a combination of methods including GPS collars and remote cameras.

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### Reproduction

There were four recognized wolf packs and four known litters born in Colorado in the 2025-2026 Biological Year. Wolf packs are only recognized after a breeding pair of wolves reproduce (see Glossary).

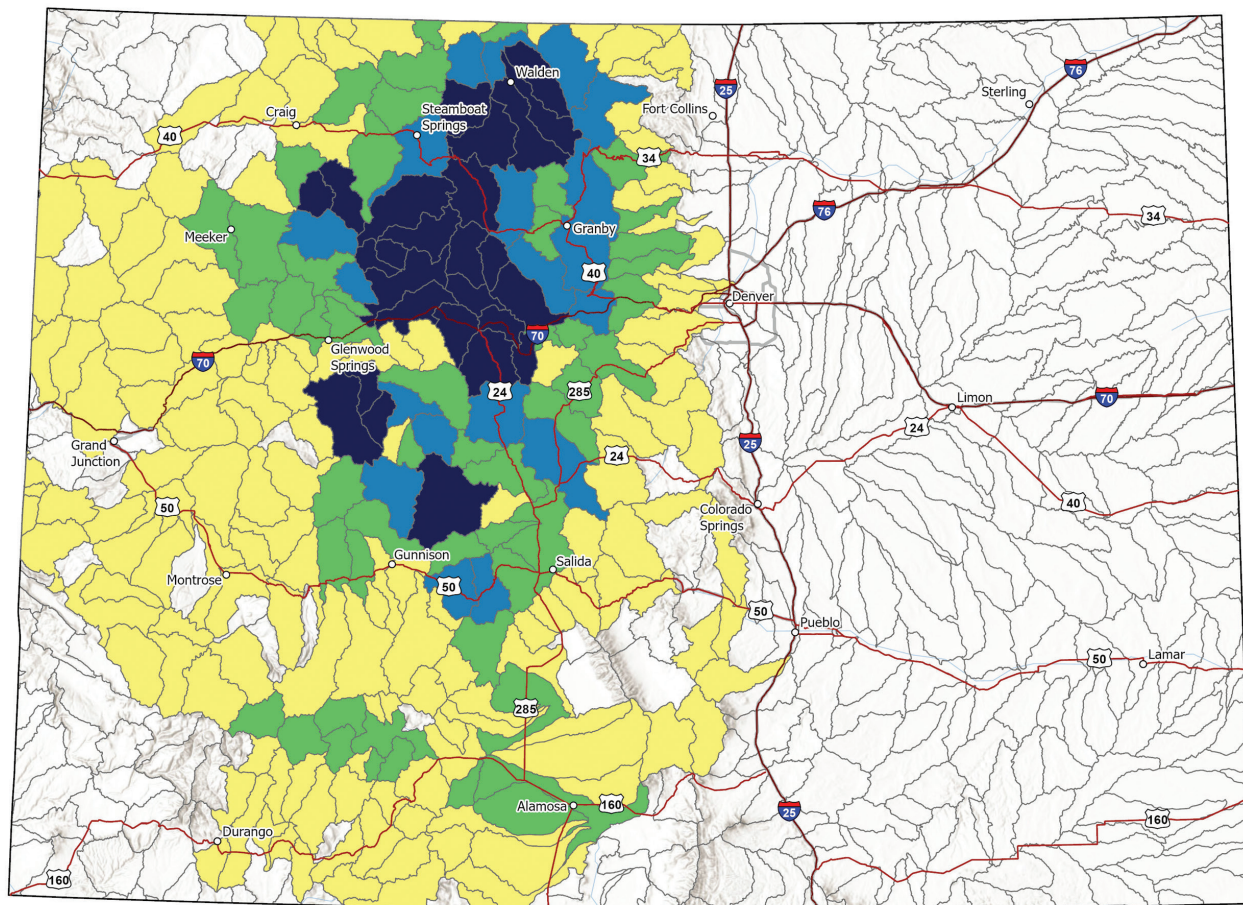
**Copper Creek:** The Copper Creek pack originally formed in spring of 2024 from two wolves translocated from Oregon. Yearling wolf 2403 is not included in the 2025-2026 Biological Year pack count since he dispersed from the pack in fall of 2025. Yearling wolf 2405 is also not included in the 2025-2026 Biological Year pack count since he was lethally removed on 5/29/2025 after CPW determined wolf 2405 was a depredateur wolf and lethal removal was appropriate under federal and state law. In the winter of 2025, the Copper Creek pack consisted of a breeding pair (2312 from Oregon and 2503 from British Columbia), as well as two yearlings (2401 and 2402) and pups. The pack had a high count of four pups in the summer of 2025, of which at least two survived through the winter. The minimum count for the Copper Creek Pack for the 2025-2026 Biological Year was six members (Table 1).

**King Mountain:** The King Mountain pack formed in spring of 2025 with two adult wolves (2305 and 2310) that were translocated from Oregon. This pair denned and had a high count of four pups. All four pups survived until the end of the 2025-2026 Biological Year. Wolf 2305 died from capture related complications while attempting to replace the radio collar on 1/28/2026 and wolf 2310 died on 3/10/2026. The cause of death for 2310 is under investigation. The minimum count for the King Mountain pack for the 2025-2026 Biological Year was four members (Table 1).

**One Ear:** The One Ear pack formed in the spring of 2025 with wolves that were translocated from Oregon and wolves that were in Colorado before translocation efforts began in 2023. In 2025, the One Ear pack consisted of a breeding pair (2308 and 2101), two other adults (2306 and 2301), and pups. The pack had a high count of six pups, of which at least five survived through the winter. The minimum count for the One Ear pack for the 2025-2026 Biological Year was nine members (Table 1).

**Three Creeks:** The Three Creeks pack formed in spring of 2025 with two adult wolves (2501 and 2502) that were translocated from British Columbia. This pair denned and had a minimum of three pups that all survived through the winter. The minimum count for the Three Creeks pack for the 2025-2026 Biological Year was five members (Table 1).

**Figure 2a.** Watershed map of wolf locations in Colorado from April 1, 2025-March 31, 2026. A watershed is a geographic unit that drains water into a specific waterbody at a HUC 10 scale here. In order for a watershed to indicate wolf activity, at least one GPS point from a wolf collar must have been recorded within the boundaries of the watershed in a month. The distribution of wolves without collars is not depicted. For more information about watersheds: <https://water.usgs.gov/GIS/huc.html>.



Number of Months Wolves were Active in a Watershed — Full Biological Year



### Annual Wolf Activity Distribution

April 1, 2025 – March 31, 2026



### Wolf Survival and Mortality

Overall adult wolf survival was 61% (0.61, 95% CI: 0.45-0.83) for known wolves in the 2025-2026 Biological Year. These 95% confidence intervals are relatively wide, reflecting the modest sample size of 28 wolves and limited number of mortalities. We estimated survival using Kaplan-Meier survival analysis, a method which calculates how survival changes over time while accounting for animals that are still alive or no longer monitored at the end of the monitoring period. There were ten known wolf mortalities in this timeframe. One wolf was killed by natural causes, six wolves were killed by anthropogenic causes, and three mortalities are still under investigation (Table 2).

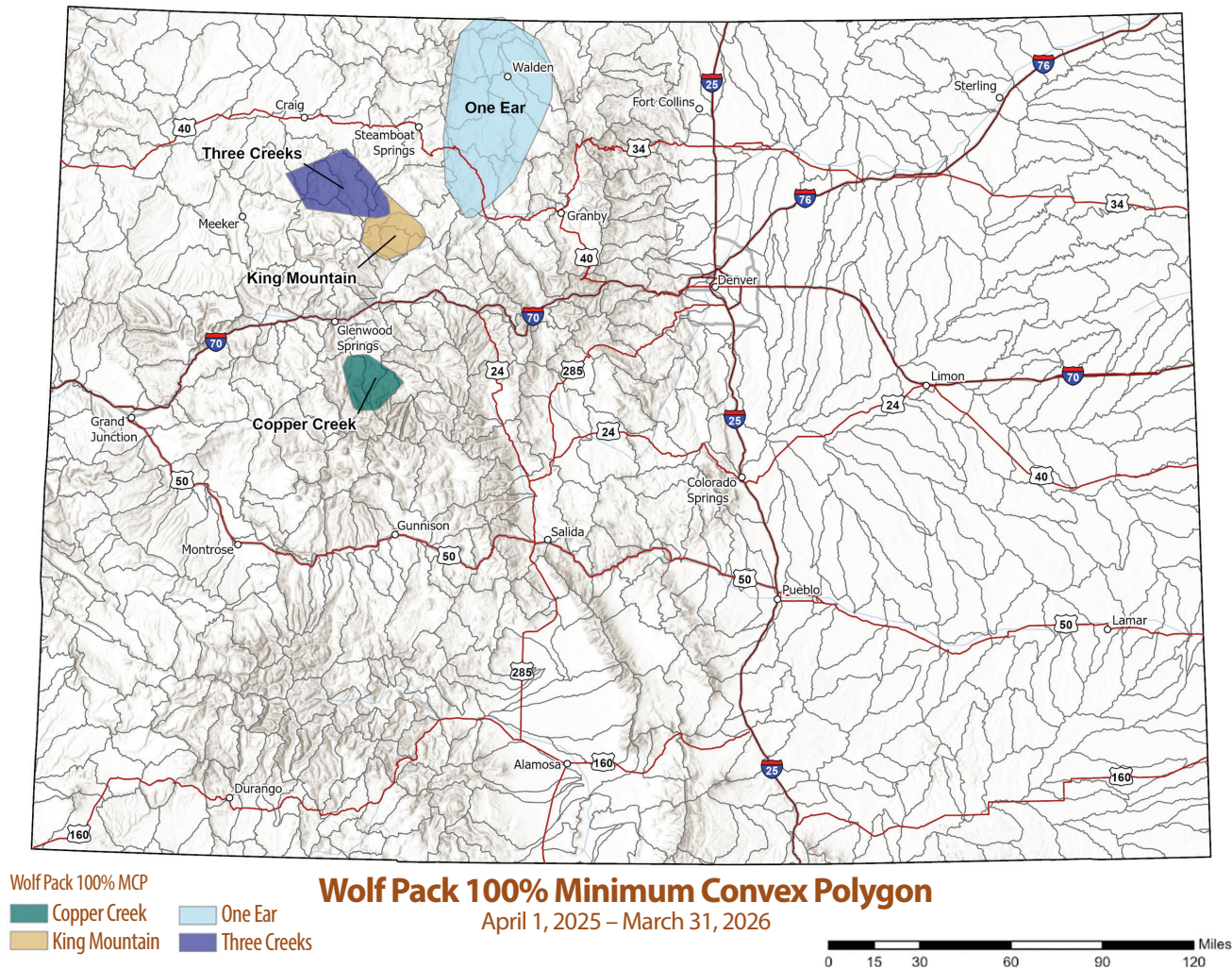
The Plan states that if a survival rate of less than 70% in the first six months after release was observed, then a review of the capture, transport and release protocols would be initiated.

CPW determined that none of the wolf mortalities were due to any of the capture, transport and release protocols and concluded further review was not warranted.

Wolf ID	Date of Death (mm/dd/yy)	Cause of Death	Pack at Death	Age at Death
2513	4/9/2025	Legal Anthropogenic Outside CO	N/A	2
2514	4/19/2025	Interspecific (mountain lion)	N/A	2
2512	5/14/2025	Entrapment	N/A	5
2405	5/29/2025	Control Action (CPW)	Copper Creek	1
2507	5/31/2025	Vehicle Strike	N/A	2
2304	7/23/2025	Legal Anthropogenic Outside CO	N/A	3
2506	10/31/2025	Ongoing USFWS Investigation	N/A	2
2504	1/16/2026	Ongoing USFWS Investigation	N/A	2
2305	1/28/2026	Capture	King Mountain	3
2310	3/10/2026	Ongoing CPW Investigation	King Mountain	3

**Table 2.** Description of wolf mortalities that occurred during the 2025-2026 Biological Year.

**Figure 2b.** 100% minimum convex polygons (MCPs) of pack territories in Colorado from April 1, 2025-March 31, 2026. An MCP illustrates the area where all GPS locations were recorded for a particular wolf pack. Wolves can and do travel beyond the MCP boundaries, though it may not be captured by GPS collars. The distribution of wolves without collars is not depicted.



### Conflict-related wolf lethal removals

Reporting requirements dictate that management removals are included in the Annual Report.

**Lethal Removal of wolf 2405:** In May 2025, CPW determined three Pitkin County livestock producers in close proximity experienced chronic depredation by members of the Copper Creek pack despite implementing all viable, reasonable, and effective non-lethal deterrence measures identified in site assessments and removing all known attractants that could lure wolves to the site. In consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, CPW concluded lethal removal was legally authorized and appropriate under the circumstances. CPW lethally removed wolf 2405 on May 29, 2025. Following the lethal removal, Pitkin County producers experienced three additional depredation events from July 18 - August 7, 2025 which resulted in an attempt to remove an additional wolf from this pack. This effort was not successful and was terminated.

**Attempted Lethal Removal of Uncollared Wolf:** In August 2025, CPW determined a Rio Blanco County livestock producer experienced chronic depredation by an uncollared gray wolf despite implementing all viable, reasonable, and effective non-lethal deterrence measures identified in a site assessment and removing all known attractants that could lure wolves to the site. In consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, CPW concluded lethal removal was

legally authorized and appropriate under the circumstances. Attempts were made to lethally remove the wolf but were unsuccessful. In October and November 2025, a Rio Blanco County livestock producer again experienced chronic depredation by an uncollared gray wolf, which was suspected to be the same wolf responsible for prior depredations. There was another depredation in January 2026. CPW reinitiated efforts to lethally remove this wolf in November 2025 and January 2026 but were unsuccessful and ceased efforts.



## Wolf-Prey Relationships

There was no formal examination of wolf predation on wild ungulates in Colorado in the 2025-2026 Biological Year. CPW biologists opportunistically investigated wolf predation events.

There are several High Intensity Elk/Deer Monitoring Areas which overlap where wolves were present in 2025-2026. In these Monitoring Areas, elk (*Cervus canadensis*) and mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) were outfitted with GPS collars to monitor survival, cause-specific mortality, and other aspects of ungulate ecology. These Monitoring Areas will continue in future years.

## Management

Where wolves and livestock share the landscape, there will be conflict. CPW has developed protocols to investigate and address this conflict both proactively and retroactively.

### CPW Staffing

Wildlife Damage Specialists (WDS) have been hired to supplement existing field staff with a primary responsibility to assist in depredation investigation, site assessments, deployment of non-lethal tools and other important duties.

A total of 9 Wildlife Damage Specialists were deployed during this reporting year, distributed among the 4 CPW Regions (NW:4 SW:3 NE:1 SE:1). Additionally a Wolf Damage and Conflict Minimization Manager position was hired in December 2025. This position leads the State Range Rider Program, implements the gray wolf damage and compensation program, and provides technical assistance across conflict minimization approaches.

### Conflict Minimization

Upon CPW receipt of a notification from a livestock producer that there is a need or a desire for conflict minimization tools, the staff will contact the Wolf Conflict Coordinator or their local WDS. A site assessment is then either proactively or reactively conducted by trained CPW, Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA), Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) or USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services-Colorado (WS) staff collaboratively with the landowner, evaluating the materials needed, the scale of impact, and risk of conflict. A timeline is developed and, if appropriate, materials are deployed.

Conflict minimization materials are deployed based on the following considerations:

- Proximity of livestock to wolves (localizing vs traveling).
- History of depredation associated with the wolf or wolf pack.
- If the requester has had a confirmed depredation.
- Willingness of the landowner to implement and maintain deployed tools.

At the end of the 2025-2026 Biological Year, CPW had an inventory of 45 miles of fladry, 500+ scare devices such as Foxlights, Critter Gitters, motion activated alarms, propane cannons, and airhorns. It is anticipated that these materials will continue to accumulate in the coming years.

## Summary of Efforts/Tools Deployed

During the 2025-2026 Biological Year, a variety of conflict minimization tools were deployed (Table 3). During this period, 13.75 miles of fladry were deployed on 15 locations. These projects were completed in Pitkin, Grand, Routt, Garfield, and Jackson counties. An estimated average of 200 pairs of cattle were protected in each of the fifteen locations for a duration of 45-73 days. For the locations where fladry was deployed during the 2025 calving season, no livestock were lost to wolf depredation while the fladry was deployed. CPW has conducted 282 total site assessments since 2022, with 78 conducted during this time period.

County	Site Assessments	Outreach Events	Scare Device	Fladry Miles	Night Watch Events
Boulder		1			
Chaffee	2	1			
Conejos		1			
Custer	1				
Delta	3				
Denver		1			
Douglas	1				
Eagle	1	1	10		
Fremont	1				
Garfield	6	1	15	4	
Gilpin	1				
Grand	3	1	5	.25	
Gunnison	11	1			
Jackson	3	1	15	2	4
Jefferson	3	1			
Lake		1			
La plata		2			
Larimer	2				
Mesa	3	1	1		1
Moffat	6	1	5		
Montezuma		1			
Montrose		2			
Park	5	1			
Pitkin	11	2		3.5	3
Rio Blanco	2	1			2
Rio Grande	2	2			
Routt	10	3	10	4	2
Summit	1				
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>13.75</b>	<b>12</b>

**Table 3.** Conflict minimization efforts and non-lethal tool deployment (Site assessments, fladry and other tools/techniques) by county April 1, 2025-March 31, 2026.

## Range Riding

Range riders are trained personnel with a specialized skill set. Riders are tasked with providing human presence, monitoring livestock health and activity, locally monitoring wildlife activity (particularly predators), and managing to reduce conflict between the two when necessary. Through these efforts, riders help reduce negative interactions between carnivores and livestock, support livestock producer decision making to improve herd health and safety, and increase communication between producers and agency staff to improve coordination.

County	Riders	Miles Rode	Hours Rode	Producers with Riders
Jackson	8	2,900	771	3
Grand	3	127	19	2
Routt	7	4,520	1,265	5
Moffat	4	257	49	4
Rio Blanco	5	2,657	696	8
Garfield	6	839	163	4
Pitkin	5	1,100	527	4
Eagle	3	2,400	834	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>14,800</b>	<b>4,324</b>	<b>34</b>

**Table 4.** 2025 CPW range rider distribution and effort by county. Note: riders often rode for more than one county and effort totals do not include CDA or NGO riding effort.

**2025 Grazing Season (April - October):** In partnership with the CDA, CPW launched the Colorado Range Rider program in 2025. Eleven contracted riders from local communities were hired and deployed across Jackson, Grand, Routt, Eagle, Garfield, Pitkin, Summit, Rio Blanco, and Moffat counties to help mitigate wolf conflict and support livestock operations. In addition to the range riders contracted through the Colorado Range Rider program two CDA nonlethal specialists provided support to producers (Table 4). Candidates were recommended by local stockgrower or cattlemen’s organizations in an effort to work closely with livestock producers and local communities. The riding season started in April after a mandatory four-day training (see Training section below) and finished in October. Defenders of Wildlife also deployed 2 range riders during the 2025 grazing season

operating in Jackson, Routt, Grand, Mesa, and Delta counties. CPW riders and producers were surveyed by CPW Human Dimension specialists during, and at the end of, the riding season and their feedback is being incorporated into the 2026 rider program.

## Funding Sources for Non-lethal Efforts

Funding for non-lethal efforts came from a variety of funding sources including:

- Substantive monies generated through the “Born to Be Wild” license plate are an integral funding source for CPW non-lethal efforts. During this reporting timeframe these funds exceeded \$1.8 million with over 28,000 license plates in circulation.
- Funding from appropriations through the State Legislature supports non-lethal efforts including loan materials to livestock producers.
- NGOs continue to make direct material contributions to CPW (\$57,529.99) as well as funding to local livestock producers and associations for non-lethal efforts such as Range Riding, Permanent fencing, Trail cameras (\$36,200).
- Individual livestock producers and associations have made significant investments into non-lethal tools that either replace or support CPW investments.
- An additional \$2.5 million were made available to Colorado producers through the NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program “Stewarding the Working Wild” award. This funding was awarded to Colorado in an effort to incentivize management practices such as exclusion fencing (electric fence/fladry), carcass management, range riding, and monitoring. Funds made available through this “Stewarding the Working Wild” are awarded directly to producers and do not go to CPW.

## Summary of Investigations and Compensation

In the 2025-2026 Biological Year, CPW staff confirmed 43 wolf depredations (19 cattle, 1 working dog and 23 sheep). The total compensation paid for direct losses was \$43,275.06 (Table 5a). While several claims for this reporting period are pending Commission review, those approved for payment at time of reporting and all confirmed depredations for the reporting period are included and the status of claim indicated. Additionally, CPW has approved payment of \$709,629.05 in compensation for missing cattle/sheep and production losses in five claims (Table 5b). Several wolf damage claims for confirmed losses, missing animals, and production losses from the previous reporting period of April 1, 2024-March 31, 2025 are included in this report, though are delineated by a separate table (Table 5c).



The Colorado Range Rider program was stood up by CPW in partnership with CDA during the 2025-2026 biological year.

Additionally, CPW convened a livestock record working group in the Spring of 2025 to address nonregulatory items in need of clarification on record types and timing for the filing of indirect/itemized claims. This group included university experts in livestock production, CDA, livestock producers, gray wolf restoration proponents, and CPW staff. This effort resulted in increased clarity and an improved claims process. During this same time, the Commission undertook rule-making to include compensation for veterinary care provided by a livestock owner under the guidance of a licensed veterinarian.

Damage Dates	Number of Animals	Type of Livestock	Amount paid
4/19/2025	1	cattle	\$2,250.00
5/6/2025	1	cattle	\$2,300.00
5/17/2025	1	cattle	Claim Open at Time of Report
5/23/2025	1	cattle	\$3,046.00
5/24/2025	1	cattle	Claim Open at Time of Report
5/25/2025	1	cattle	Claim Open at Time of Report
7/14/2025	1	cattle	\$3,500.00
7/18/2025	1	cattle	Claim Open at Time of Report
7/20/2025	1	sheep	\$323.44
7/22/2025	1	sheep	\$323.44
8/02/2025	1	sheep	\$485.16
8/07/2025	1	cattle	\$2,875.00
8/12/2025	1	cattle	\$2,775.00
8/16/2025	3	sheep	\$970.32
8/21/2025	1	cattle	\$2489.93
8/29/2025	1	cattle	\$2489.93
9/30/2025	3	sheep	\$954.00
10/05/2025	1	cattle	\$3500.00
10/09/2025	1	sheep	\$485.16
10/12/2025	1	cattle	\$2,899.84
10/12/2025	1	sheep	\$485.16
10/29/2025	1	cattle	\$2,899.84
11/04/2025	1	cattle	\$2,899.84
11/04/2025	1	sheep	\$485.16
11/07/2025	1	cattle	\$2,219.60
11/22/2025	1	cattle	\$2,618.24
01/24/2025	11	sheep	Claim Open at Time of Report
02/07/2026	1	dog	Claim Open at Time of Report
02/20/2026	1	cattle	Claim Open at Time of Report
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>43</b>		<b>\$43,275.06</b>

Table 5a. Number and type of depredation incidents and compensation amounts paid to producers from April 1, 2025-March 31, 2026. Based on timing of report, all confirmed depredations were included for the reporting period, though not all claim amounts were finalized.

Claim Type	Number of Claims of this Type	Amount Paid
Ratio	5	\$115,785.13
Decreased Conception Rates	2	\$85,764.28
Decreased Weights	3	\$350,922.68
Missing Livestock	3	\$157,156.96
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$709,629.05</b>

Table 5b. Compensation delivered through ratio claims, missing livestock and itemized/indirect losses for reduced weights and conception rates by type and total for April 1, 2025-March 31, 2026 are included in this table. Note: At the time of reporting, CPW is processing one additional claim from the reporting period that is not reflected in these totals.

Claim Type	Total
Missing Livestock	\$100,045.57
Missing Livestock and Reduced Conception Rates	\$95,549.10
Base Claim and Veterinary Care Provided by Livestock Owner	\$2,542.05
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$198,136.72</b>

Table 5c. Compensation for claims in previous reporting year, April 1, 2024-March 31, 2025 not included in previous biological year report. These claims were finalized after that reporting period, though are not payments for damages incurred during the 2025-2026 Biological Year.

### Take Permits

Wolves are protected by federal and state law, so they can only be taken in limited circumstances (Table 6). See also the Wolf Restoration and Management Plan, Chapter 5, Wolf Management.

Permit Type	Requested	Denied	Issued
<b>NW Region</b>			
Injurious Non-Lethal Hazing	43	0	43
In the Act Of	0	0	0
Chronic Depredation	3	3	0
<b>SW Region</b>			
Injurious Non-Lethal Hazing	2	0	2
In the Act Of	0	0	0
Chronic Depredation	0	0	0
<b>NE Region</b>			
Injurious Non-Lethal Hazing	0	0	0
In the Act Of	0	0	0
Chronic Depredation	0	0	0
<b>SE Region</b>			
Injurious Non-Lethal Hazing	0	0	0
In the Act Of	0	0	0
Chronic Depredation	0	0	0

Table 6. Take permits requested, denied and issued, 2025-2026 Biological Year

Intentional harassment, deliberate and pre-planned harassment of wolves, including by less-than-lethal munitions that are designed to cause physical discomfort and temporary physical injury but not death, must be permitted via an "Injurious Non-Lethal Hazing" permit. This permit provides specific methods that may be used to haze wolves (bean bags, rubber buckshot, and/or double balls). Specific direction on how to deploy these methods and where to aim are provided in the permit. Permittees are required to inform CPW within 72 hours of striking a wolf with any of these methods under the permit. These permits are valid for one year.

Take of wolves in the act of attacking livestock or working dogs must be permitted by a retroactive "In the Act Of" permit. Attacking livestock or working dogs includes the actual biting, wounding, grasping, or killing of livestock or working dogs or chasing, molesting, or harassing by wolves that would indicate to a reasonable person that such biting, wounding, grasping, or killing of livestock or working dogs is likely to occur at any moment.

## Trainings

CPW, with collaborators, continues training staff and partners. During this reporting period CPW conducted multiple depredation investigation trainings including two, three-day, workshops in Fall 2025. One of these included collaboration with Tribal partners, CDA, Wildlife Services-Colorado, and incorporated trainers from other States and a panel of livestock producers who have experienced depredations. A comprehensive range rider training in April 2025 was held in partnership with CDA, Western Landowners Alliance, and Tracker Certification North America. Panelists and instructors from Washington, Oregon, Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, and Montana trained nearly 150 attendees on livestock management in predator country, wildlife track and sign identification, non-lethal and monitoring tools, hazing methods, and communication strategies. Additional training included predator hazing methods, including the use of drones. Finally, through existing and growing partnerships, CPW was involved in over 20 outreach events spanning livestock producers to the general public and exposing audiences to non-lethal tools, efforts and strategies.

## Research

### CPW and Collaborative Research

Disclaimer: Research results will not be reported until peer-review and publication has been completed. See publication list. Please refer to the CPW 2025 Mammals Research Annual Summary Report for additional project information and preliminary research results. (<https://cpw.cvlcollections.org/files/original/fddc073d12cfef-da0ba5576f8b955503.pdf>)

Biological, ecological, and management-related research topics are determined based on information needed for wildlife conservation, CPW staff and Commission input, and public interest. Research complements wolf monitoring and management activities by increasing focus on gathering locational data from wolves of particular interest, such as by age class (e.g., most likely to disperse) or proximity to conflict. Several research projects related to wolves in Colorado are underway, primarily in the pilot or testing stages. The goal is to refine aspects of these projects over the next few years to develop and deploy rigorous long-term research projects.

Much of the current field research takes place in North Park, Colorado (Jackson County), where field data collection is coming to an end for two three-year studies. Data collection for a study examining how wolves and humans may influence elk group sizes and movement patterns ended in January 2026. CPW is also working to estimate moose (*Alces alces*) calf recruitment, and the final moose calf-at-heel survey will take place in spring 2026. Data will be analyzed in 2026 and 2027.

Research is under development for examining and minimizing wolf-livestock conflicts. CPW is also exploring the efficacy and effort related to non-lethal wolf management through the use of small uncrewed aerial systems (drones) for hazing wolves away from livestock. The goal with drone hazing is for wolves to develop a negative association with livestock in a particular area (e.g., fenced pasture). Drones are also being used to monitor wolves and several successful flights were conducted at homesites in 2025, improving our pup counts.

On a larger scale, CPW is developing a long-term study to examine community interactions in Middle Park, Colorado (primarily Grand County) as wolves re-establish. We aim to include both direct and indirect impacts of wolf re-establishment (predator-predator, predator-herbivore prey, and herbivore prey-vegetation interactions) in the study. Preliminary work began in 2025, including the development of methods for studying changes in browsing pressure on important elk and mule deer winter forage. We plan to systematically build on this study once vegetation study sites have been selected in summer 2026.

CPW has several social science/human dimensions research projects related to wolves, the largest of which assessed the social outcomes associated with wolf restoration and the public involvement process in Colorado. This study examined perspectives of various segments of the population including members of the stakeholder advisory group (SAG), other interested stakeholders, and members of the public using a combination of qualitative (interviews) and quantitative (surveys) methods. Additionally, trends in perceptions of wolf recovery are being investigated by analyzing public comments submitted to CPW during the wolf management planning process.

Researchers are also engaging in continued efforts to evaluate efficacy and satisfaction with livestock conflict prevention programs. In 2025, this included both the wolf depredation investigation training and the range rider program. The goal of these evaluations is to build a longitudinal database that identifies and measures metrics of program efficacy, especially emphasizing perceived success. The range rider program evaluation is extensive, seeking to examine the perceived efficacy of the program through a co-management approach, involving both range riders and producers, and identifying success measures to monitor throughout the season to support future adaptive management.

CPW collaborated with partners at Colorado State University, Colorado State University Extension, the USGS Colorado Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, the USDA-APHIS National Wildlife Research Center, and livestock producers. Funding sources for this research came from the National Science Foundation, Colorado General Fund, Colorado State University, and USDA.

## Publications

Brandell, E.E. 2026. Pilot evaluation of prey distribution and moose recruitment following exposure to wolf predation risk in North Park, Colorado. Pages 13–15 in 2025 Mammals Research Summary Report. Colorado Parks and Wildlife. Fort Collins, Colorado, USA.

Johnston, D., Brandell, E., Gerber, B., Peyton, M., & Brandt, L. 2025. Wildlife Research Project Summary: Predator community effects pilot study: browsing of upland shrubs in Middle Park, Colorado. Colorado Parks and Wildlife. Fort Collins, Colorado, USA..

Niemiec, R., Quartuch, M.R., Gonzalez, M., & Champine, V. 2025. Social outcomes associated with a public and stakeholder engagement process for wolf reintroduction. *Conservation Science and Practice*, 7(6), e70058.

Gonzalez, M. N., Quartuch, M. R., & Niemiec, R. (2025). Stakeholder engagement for Colorado wolf reintroduction: stakeholder-derived metrics of success. *Human Dimensions of Wildlife*, 1-17.

## Agency Collaboration

CPW and the CDA entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to coordinate and collaborate in assisting agricultural producers in reducing livestock-predator conflict in concert with each other's statutory and regulatory roles and responsibilities. This includes the advancement and field implementation of non-lethal management tools, handling public and media relations, and providing training.

In May of 2025, CPW and USDA-APHIS, Wildlife Services Colorado entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that outlines collaborations on non-lethal efforts at conflict reduction and cooperative investigations of suspected depredations. As outlined in the MOU, CPW is the final authority on determining the cause of death or injury for livestock suspected to be damaged by gray wolves.

Additionally, CPW has partnered with the USDA-APHIS, National Wildlife Research Center to conduct genetic analyses of materials related to wolf genomics.

## Tribal Collaboration

CPW has entered into an MOU with the Southern Ute tribe and is working to finalize the MOU with the Ute Mountain Ute tribe. These MOUs describe wolf reintroduction and release areas; monitoring, research and information sharing responsibilities; state assistance with conflict management; investigations and response to wolf conflict and depredations; wolf damage compensation; and training and education.

## Education, Outreach, and Media Responses

The CPW Gray Wolf Reintroduction email newsletter was launched in March 2021. CPW has issued 12 email newsletters in the reporting period, all are archived and listed on CPW's Wolves in Colorado webpage. The newsletter has more than 5,800 subscribers. The goal of these monthly email newsletters is to provide subscribers with the latest information and news about wolves in Colorado, including available educational resources, wolf movement maps and updates, wolf biology and behavior facts, and more. The subscriber number continues to grow as we promote the eNews via press releases, social media, and Colorado Outdoors Online blogs. The average click rate for eNews was over 35%.

To support public awareness and understanding of the wolf reintroduction work, CPW continues to offer in-person and virtual programs about wolves and the reintroduction of the species as requested by school and public audiences. In addition to facilitator led programs, CPW offers a number of educational resources such as lesson plans and videos through its website (<https://cpw.state.co.us/education>).

Additionally CPW hosted a conflict minimization media education day at Roxborough State Park in November, 2025. This education day was attended by reporters from six different outlets and provided a mixture of classroom discussion and field demonstrations of the tools, tactics, and resources that CPW and CDA utilize to support producers in minimizing wolf-livestock conflict.

## Media Response

To assist with the media and public interest in gray wolf restoration in Colorado, CPW hired a dedicated Carnivore Public Information Officer in June 2025. This Public Information Officer has been focused on communication needs of the gray wolf restoration and management program through the biological year and prepared numerous press releases during the reporting period, which are archived at this link (<https://cpw.state.co.us/aboutus/Pages/NewsReleases.aspx>). Media response occurred at the local, regional, state, national, and international levels. Social media was active on various channels, including Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram, Youtube, and Vimeo.

## Appendix

### Appendix 1: Glossary

**Biological Year** — April 1, 2025–March 31, 2026. The 2025–2026 Annual Report covers this period. Activities that have occurred since April 1, 2026 will be incorporated into the annual report covering the 2026–2027 Biological year.

**Breeding pair/male/female** — The dominant pair, male, or female that breeds in a wolf pack. The term "alpha" has fallen out of favor.

**Decreased Conception Rate Claim** — A claim submitted by a claimant to seek compensation between the difference of three year conception baseline rate prior to a confirmed wolf depredation with the conception rate for the year where a confirmed wolf depredation took place.

**Decreased Weight Claim** — A claim submitted by a claimant to seek compensation between the difference of the three year average baseline weight prior to a confirmed wolf depredation and the year where a confirmed wolf depredation took place.

**Fladry Miles** — Miles of fladry deployed on the ground, not held in inventory. Fladry is most often deployed in a defined area for a defined time where livestock will be confined to that area, such as calving/lambing/pair out. For this reporting timeline that includes calving/lambing seasons for both 2025 and 2026.

**Group** — Wolves that consistently travel together without documented reproduction.

**Missing Livestock Claim** — A claim submitted by a claimant to seek compensation between the difference of the three year average number of missing livestock prior to a confirmed wolf depredation and the year where a confirmed wolf depredation took place.

**Night Watch Events** — The number of instances where increased/dedicated efforts, including human presence, was carried out over night time hours by CPW staff or range riders. Each event is likely to have a series of individual nights associated with the effort.

**Outreach Events** — Any large public meeting staff attends or hosts with the express purpose of communicating information on wolf damage/conflict minimization.

**Pack** — A pack is made up of the breeding wolves and their offspring from that and previous years. Nonrelated and more distantly related wolves may also be members of a pack. A group of wolves will only be named as a pack after documented reproduction.

**Ratio Claim** — A claim submitted by a claimant to seek compensation for livestock based on either a 5:1 or 7:1 ratio of missing livestock relative to each confirmed wolf depredation experienced by the claimant.

**Scare Device** — Any audio/visual device that may be placed or loaned to temporarily deter wolves.

**Site Assessments** — A cooperatively completed course of action agreed upon by the requesting producer and staff to identify viable, reasonable and effective wolf conflict minimization tools and techniques.

**Wolf ID** — Each collared wolf is given a unique identifier. This four-number code indicates the year that the animal was initially captured, and the consecutive order in which it was captured. For the last two digits, an odd number indicates that the animal is male; an even number indicates that the animal is female. Therefore 2301, was the first male captured in 2023. 2302 would be the first female captured in 2023.

In November 2025 CPW held a dedicated media engagement day highlighting conflict minimization efforts.



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