
LETTERS

The following thought-provoking letter has been reprinted from the May/June 1988 issue of *Western Canada Outdoors*.

Dear Editor: Where I hunt, there are wolves. Beyond a doubt they do better than me. But they don't hurt my hunting. They're there for the same reason I am; there's lots of game. Each winter I fill my freezer.

Now I read that the Alberta Fish and Game Association is starting a new program to reduce wolves. This program will take up a lot of time, energy and donated dollars. It will get lots of media attention. It will make some hunters believe that at last something is being done to improve the hunting in this province.

Bad news, boys. You're dead wrong.

So many hunters pour into the Ram River country, the Brazeau and the Willmore each fall that their horses turn bunchgrass meadows, critical elk winter range, into bowling greens — and when the elk disappear, suddenly we are told that we have a wolf epidemic. The Alberta Forest Service guards forests from fires so well that grassy clearings grow up to inedible swamp birch: another wolf infestation!

Dozens of logging, oil, gas and coal companies cut roads into every isolated corner of the foothills, opening them up to hunting, poaching and native harvest.

The elk and other game start to disappear; too many wolves, obviously.

Come on guys! While you're out there tilting at windmills, the whole back forty is burning down!

There are lots of wolves in the foothills, and they eat lots of animals. As long as there is good, healthy habitat, there will be lots of animals for them to eat. **But without the habitat, there will be no wolves. There will also be no game.**

When I look at the fact that one dam alone, on the Oldman River, will forever eliminate 350 head of mule deer, I find it hard to get worked up about wolves. When I see Shell Canada bulldozing the winter range of forty bighorn sheep on Prairie Bluff — range that can never be reclaimed — I get a little impatient with frustrated hunters who would rather poison wolves than mail back a credit card or write a letter to an MLA.

I hope the AFGA gets some kind of lasting satisfaction out of dead wolves, **because the real battles are being lost for lack of support by the group of people who have the most at stake.**

Wolves are not the problem. Wildlife management by placebo is the problem — and short-sighted, narrow-minded hunters are a big part of the cause.

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