



For Immediate Release

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What In The World Is Going On In Alaska?

And what can you do to help?

On August 26, Alaskans voted 92,781 to 74,124 to continue to allow aerial hunting of wolves in their state under ballot Measure 2. Alaskan voters said no to this practice twice since 2003. What happened? Why did Alaskans change their minds?

Apparently, the ballot measure wording was quite confusing, and those who voted no on Measure 2 thought they were banning the practice, when in fact, it took a yes vote to stop private hunters from gunning wolves and bears from the air.

Another possibility points a finger at Governor Sarah Palin. She advocated and allowed the state to spend \$400,000 on an "educational campaign" on the whole aerial hunting issue, publicly aligning herself with hunting groups and other enthusiasts who support the practice. The educational campaign promoted shooting wolves and bears from the air to benefit wildlife that is sought after by human hunters. Some of the money went to create a pamphlet inserted in local newspapers, three weeks before the public was to vote on Measure 2.

Unfortunately, Palin's involvement in this incident is just one of many anti-wolf (actually, anti-carnivore) crusades she has lead, wielding her power as overseer of Alaska's state budget, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's predator programs.

In 2007, Palin approved an initiative to pay a \$150 bounty to hunters who killed a wolf from an airplane in areas of the state where human use of ungulates takes precedence over other carnivores. Hunters had to turn in the left foreleg of the wolf for the money, and could turn around and sell the pelt for personal profit. Fortunately, conservation and animal rights organizations fought the decree in state court and won - removing the bounty. Even so, wolves were still allowed to be shot from aircraft.

Last year, 172 independent scientists signed a letter to Palin, expressing concern about the lack of science behind the state's wolf-killing operation, citing unrealistic population objectives for moose and caribou. The letter fell on deaf ears in Palin's administration, and the aerial shooting continues without scientific basis.

To date, over 800 wolves have been killed over the last five years through aerial hunting in order to increase the numbers of moose and caribou. The goal in some areas is to cut the wolf population by 80 percent.

One of the biggest issues behind Alaska's poor track record in managing its wildlife, including its wolves, is in the state government organization. Earlier this year, Palin introduced state legislation that would separate Alaska's predator-control program from science even further. The proposal transfers authority over the predator-control program from the state Department of Fish and Game to the Alaska Board of Game, whose members are appointed by Palin. The legislation would give Palin's board more leeway without scientific input to make recommendations on numbers of wolves killed in the state. The legislation is currently stalled in the Alaska state Senate.

Yet another event that occurred this June under Palin's rule was the killing of 14 infant wolf pups at their den on the Alaska Peninsula. Killing wolf pups in the den has been illegal in Alaska under the Department of Fish and Game's own predator control regulations for the past 40 years. Knowing that the Alaska Board of Game oversees the implementation of the Department of Fish and Game's predator control program, Palin knowingly allowed this horrific, and illegal, act to occur.

Many of our supporters ask "What can I do to stop the aerial hunting of wolves in Alaska, and to push for reform of Alaska's predator control program?" We at Wolf Haven International, feel that it is critical that we all work to support the passage of the Federal Protect America's Wildlife Act (PAWS), introduced by Representative George Miller (Calif - D) in September 2007. The Act will close a loophole in the Airborne Hunting Act of 1972, which Alaska legislators and officials have exploited to permit private hunters to use planes to hunt, harass, and kill wolves and bears.

Contact your Representative. If your Representative isn't a co-sponsor of the PAWS Act, ask them to sign on as a PAW Act co-sponsor! In addition, Wolf Haven International is working with Alaska Wildlife Alliance and their signature campaign to end aerial hunting in Alaska. We collect thousands of signatures from visitors to Wolf Haven, and send them to the Alliance for their use in pursuing wolf management reform in our most northern wolf neighbor. Find out how you can support this initiative by contacting the Alaska Wildlife Alliance at www.akwildlife.org .

For more information on this topic or wolf conservation contact Linda Saunders, Director of Conservation at lsaunders@wolflhaven.org or by calling 800-448-9653 x216

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Wolf Haven Intl. has been working for wolf conservation around the Northwest and throughout the world since 1982. In addition to providing sanctuary for captive-born wolves, Wolf Haven educates over 30,000 visitors each year on the role of the wolf in the wild. Wolf Haven offers educational guided walking tours of its wolf sanctuary in Tenino Washington as well as off-site presentations to schools, community groups, and professional organizations.

For more information on Wolf Haven International or pictures to accompany this press release, please contact:
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