



COS

Human-Wolf Conflict Response Guidelines

INTRODUCTION

An effective wildlife management strategy must balance the necessities of wildlife with those of the public. Protection of life and property is a priority, as is meeting objectives for wolf population management.

This guide provides a standard approach for determining an appropriate response to human-wolf conflicts and will be applied throughout the Province, including provincial parks and protected areas. It is a resource for conservation officers who must act in situations of conflict where clear, concise, and consistent direction is needed. The guide supports Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (“FLNRORD”) Procedure, 4-7-04.01.1 -Preventing and Responding to Conflict with Large Carnivores, and is the result of collaboration between government biologists, conservation officers, park rangers, the Provincial Wildlife Veterinarian, and the ministry’s Human-Wildlife Conflict Manager.

This guide is also intended to explain to the public how human-wolf conflicts should be handled. Conservation officers will use the guide as a reference to communicate with stakeholders and the public about managing conflicts with wolves and to promote public and community support for wolf conservation.

This guide will be reviewed annually and revised as required.

USING THIS GUIDE

This guide will be applied to human-wildlife conflicts with wolves, including pack conflicts.

The Report All Poachers and Polluters (“RAPP”) Program offers a toll-free tip-line and web-based service that members of the public can use to report human-wolf interactions where public safety may be at risk. On average, the RAPP line receives 400 human-wildlife conflict reports (“HWCRs”) per year related to wolves. This guide will assist conservation officers with determining an appropriate response to these reports, which is based on an incident investigation including an assessment of the reported actions of the wolf/wolves, the presence of humans near the occurrence location, and known conflict history.

Conservation officers will use the guide to categorize wolves into one of three different threat levels. Each category has recommended responses based on the public safety risk and effective conflict prevention actions. Category 1 wolves are a serious threat to public safety and may have caused loss to pets or livestock and/or are injured or suffering from distressed health and require a conservation officer to respond. Category 2 wolves may pose a threat to public safety and/or pets or livestock and will result in a conservation officer taking steps to manage the incident. Category 3 wolves are exhibiting normal, natural behaviour and are assessed to have a low public safety risk. Conservation officers typically

provide advice and education in response to Category 3 wolves.

Wolves have known behavioural patterns, which, when combined with the wolf's actions, location of the incident and proximity of humans, conflict history and other factors, may indicate an incident is highly probable. It is unlikely, however, that this guide will anticipate all possible situations. Nonetheless, where unusual or novel incidents arise, conservation officers will make decisions that most closely follow these guidelines. Furthermore, for any incident where an imminent threat to public safety exists, any appropriate and necessary action may be applied.

NOTE: The Livestock Protection Program ("LPP"), a partnership between the BC Cattlemen's Association and the Province, provides verification and mitigation services to cattle and sheep producers for losses caused by wolves and coyotes. All other wolf and coyote conflicts are managed by the Conservation Officer Service.

INVESTIGATION

HWCR's relating to human-wolf conflicts will be reviewed and categorized. Category 1 and 2 wolves will be investigated by conservation officers. The aim of the investigation is to collect evidence, including witness reports and physical evidence that will provide an accurate account of the wolf's actions, as well as any human activity involved.

Conservation Officers should review the following General Orders related to wolf response:

- [CO Authority to Destroy Wildlife](#)
- [Wildlife Attack Response](#)
- [Human-Wildlife Conflict Reports \(HWCRs\)](#)
- [Houndsmen](#)
- [Atipamezole as Emergency Treatment for Medetomidine Exposure](#)
- [Media Contacts](#) and [Standard Messaging for Media Contacts](#) [includes messaging respecting attractant management, cougar safety, RAPP and WildSafeBC]

CATEGORIES and RESPONSE

Category 1

Wolves in this category pose a serious public safety threat and may have caused pet and livestock loss and/or are injured or suffering from distressed health. They include animals that have attacked, injured, killed or fed on a human and/or attacked, injured or killed a domestic pet or livestock. Wolves that have previous conflict history and are deemed a threat to public safety will be included.

Category 1 Response Guideline

Conservation officers will contact the complainant and conduct an investigation to determine an effective response to resolve the conflict. Wolves involved in this category will be euthanized if the investigation determines that there is a serious threat to public safety, significant property damage has occurred and/or the wolf is injured or suffering from distressed health.

Euthanasia will follow the Canadian Council on Animal Care's guidelines to ensure humane and efficient methods. Where possible, euthanasia will take place out of the public eye to minimize risk to the public and stress on the animal. The following actions are to be used as a guide for Conservation Officers to determine an appropriate and consistent response to Category 1 wolves.

- Investigation
 - Assessed public safety risk
 - Assessed health as per animal welfare guidelines
 - Assessed known conflict history
 - Confirmed identification of offending animal(s)

- Prevention and Education
 - Provided safety information to the public
 - Provided attractant management and husbandry information to the public
 - Contacted FLNRORD Biologist/Veterinarian
 - Conducted media release to educate the community
 - Contacted WildSafeBC or local interest group to deliver education to the public
 - Contacted bylaw to assist with managing attractants
 - Direct livestock owner to / explain sections 2, 26(2) and 75 of the *Wildlife Act*
 - Contacted the Livestock Protection Program ("LPP") (cattle and sheep only)

- Outcome
 - Enforcement action (warnings, Dangerous Wildlife Protection Order, charges)
 - Closed area to the public, post signs warning the public
 - Euthanized responsible animal(s) following Canada Council on Animal Care Guideline
 - Resolved incident with other qualified responders (Police)
 - Destroyed by others
 - Attended - animal was gone on arrival
 - No capture efforts taken
 - Trap(s) set – capture
 - Trap(s) set – no capture
 - Removed or secured attractants
 - LPP mitigated sheep and cattle issues
 - Local trapper mitigated conflict
 - Completed Wildlife Attack report

Category 2

Wolves in this category may pose a public safety threat or attack or harass pets or livestock. They include wolves that injured or killed domestic pets or livestock or have followed or stalked a human in wilderness areas with a moderate to low history rank. They also include wolves that are confined and present on school, park and playground property, found killing or feeding on natural prey or food conditioned.

The majority of wolf HWCR's in British Columbia involve wolves that on initial contact with communities have moved close to people and have been seen. If attractants, wolves, people

and site are not successfully managed, public safety risk will increase and the wolves will likely become Category 1 wolves.

Category 2 Response Guidelines

Conservation officers may provide technical advice or education. In some situations they may be required to conduct site visits to assess public safety risk, manage attractants, wolf, people, and site. Non-lethal responses may be warranted for a wolf that is deemed healthy and early contact has occurred with a low level of conflict history with humans or property. The following actions are to be used as a guide for conservation officers to determine an appropriate and consistent response to Category 2 wolves.

- Investigative Result Options
 - Assessed public safety risk
 - Assessed health as per animal welfare guidelines
 - Assessed known history
 - Confirmed identification of offending animal(s)

- Prevention and Education Result Options
 - Provided safety information to the public
 - Provided attractant management and husbandry information to the public
 - Contacted FLNRO Biologist/Veterinarian
 - Conducted media release to educate the community
 - Contacted WildSafeBC or local interest group to deliver education to the public
 - Contacted bylaw to assist with managing attractants
 - Direct livestock owner to / explain sections 2, 26(2) and 75 of the *Wildlife Act*
 - Contacted the Livestock Protection Program (“LPP”) (i.e., cattle and sheep)

- Outcome Result Options
 - Enforcement action (warnings, Dangerous Wildlife Protection Order, charges)
 - Close area to the public, post signs warning the public
 - Destroyed by others
 - Other qualified responders (Police) resolved incident
 - Gone on arrival
 - Trap set - no capture
 - Delivered aversive conditioning/hazing
 - Removed prey animal being fed upon
 - Remove or secure attractants

Category 3

Wolves in this category are exhibiting normal, natural behaviour and generally represent a low public safety risk. They may be observed crossing a road, searching for food, or using natural travel corridors close to communities. In wilderness areas wolves may demonstrate some levels of habituation.

Category 3 Response Guidelines

Conservation officers may provide technical advice and/or education. In wilderness areas officers will manage people to prevent conflict. The following actions are to be used as a guide for conservation officers to determine an appropriate and consistent response to Category 3 wolves.

- Investigation
 - Assessed public safety risk
 - Assessed health as per animal welfare guidelines
 - Assessed known conflict history
 - Confirmed identification of offending animal(s)

- Prevention and Education
 - Provided safety information to the public
 - Provided attractant management and husbandry information to the public
 - Conducted media release to educate the community
 - Contacted WildSafeBC or local interest group to deliver education to the public
 - Contacted bylaw to assist with managing attractants

- Outcome
 - Enforcement action (warnings, Dangerous Wildlife Protection Order, charges)
 - Closed area to the public, post signs warning the public
 - Resolved incident with other qualified responders (Police)
 - Destroyed by others
 - Attended - animal was gone on arrival
 - Delivered aversive conditioning/hazing
 - Removed prey animal being fed upon
 - Removed or secured attractants

HWCR TYPE

Wolf Action (HWCR Type):

Sighting: Includes sightings where there was no conflict.

Natural Prey Killed or Fed on: Natural prey may include deer, elk, moose and ducks etc. killed or fed upon.

Confined: Inside structure, no escape route, e.g. inside fenced area.

School/Park/Playground Present: Present at a school, park, or playground.

Livestock/Killed/Injured: LPP to respond, verify and mitigate confirmed attack/harass/injury and kill on cattle and sheep only.

Food Conditioned: Learned to associate people (or the smell of people), human activities, human-use areas, or animal storage areas and includes feeding on non-natural food.

Follow/Stalk a Human: Predator behaviours are described as persistent – bold, growl, snarl, howl, and snap jaws. Defensive behaviour include showing teeth, vocalizing while protecting pups, dens and/or confined without escape route.

Pet/Livestock/Killed/Injured: All livestock other than cattle and sheep including goats, horses, sheep, swine, game farmed animals, animals held under a fur farm licence and animals not defined by the Wildlife Act, that is not native to or does not naturally occur within the province and is tame and kept in captivity for the use of man.

Injured/Debilited Present: On site and is so badly injured or debilitated that chance of survival is doubtful, e.g. immobile or restricted movement.

Human Injury/Death: Contact with a person resulting in death or injury (e.g., wound, bruise, puncture, cut, scratch, abrasion, laceration, or other physical trauma). An attack may be predatory, non-defensive (e.g., offensive, aggressive or threatening) or defensive. This also includes feeding on a human.

CONFLICT HISTORY

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Conflict history describes the number of times a wolf has been in conflict with the public. Habituation occurs as the conflict increases. Habituated wolves show little or no perceived reaction to people. These are animals whose presence could be interpreted as, or lead to a public safety risk. Habituated wolves may frequent developed areas or areas of high human use, or may feed on natural foods within or adjacent to developed sites or in areas frequented by people such as roadsides, campgrounds, or ranch yards.

Low: The initial known conflict by a wolf.

Moderate: Multiple known conflicts by a single wolf. This may be determined on the first HWCR as a result of facts that the wolf has been in conflict multiple times.

HWCR LOCATION

HWCR Location

Wilderness: Remote area with few people; may include forest recreation sites, Provincial Park camp grounds and remote cabins.

Rural: May include small communities, regional districts or small towns.

Urban: May include larger communities, towns or cities.

Generally, subjective language, such as the term “aggressive,” tends to be a characterization rather than an objective description of coyote behaviour and should not be used in the application of this guide.

Wolf Threat Level		Human-Wolf Conflict Response Guidelines										
Category 1		Wolf Action (HWCR Type)					Public Safety Risk					
Category 2		History Rank	Sighting	Natural Prey Killed or Fed on	Confined	School/Park/Playground Present	Livestock/Pet -Killed/Injured (LPP Sheep and Cattle)	Food Conditioned	Pet or other livestock Killed/Injured	Follow or Stalk a Human	Injured/Distressed Present	Human Injury/Death
Category 3												
HWCR Location	Wilderness	Low	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green
		Moderate	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green
	Rural	Low	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green
		Moderate	Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
	Urban	Low	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green
		Moderate	Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green

COS Response to Wolf Conflict Threat Level

Category 1 - CO must take action due to serious public safety risk or loss of property.

Category 2 - CO to manage people and the site.

Category 3 - CO to monitor and may provide education and advice.