



*Mule deer are commonly found where water and habitat have been developed for livestock. More cattle/wolf problems directly relates to more mule deer taken by wolves as well. Photo ~ Sam Carpenter*

"insignificant factor" compared to disease or weather-related livestock deaths. According to pro-wolf advocates, wolves killed 148 cattle in Idaho during 2010 out of a state-wide total of 2,200,000 animals. While in 2009, wolves killed 97 cattle in Montana out of a state-wide total of 2,600,000 for a loss of only 0.004%. Assuming that these figures, and similar oft-repeated statistics are correct, what is the problem? The problem with these types of numbers is what, in the trade, is known as "lying with statistics". In fact, there was a paper on this very subject presented at the wolf conflict symposium sponsored by the Wyoming Animal Damage Management Board in 2005, at which I was an invited speaker.

Now while all cattle in a state are subjected to factors such as disease or severe weather, all livestock in any one state are NOT subject to wolf predation. In Montana, for instance, most livestock are found on the state's eastern grasslands where there are few or no wolves, while the majority of wolves are found

in the more heavily timbered western part of the state. Moreover, even in the western third of Montana, not all cattle are subject to wolf predation. The federal speaker at the Wyoming symposium concluded that nobody knew what the true percentage loss to wolves really was because the necessary data had never been collected. Meaning, how many cattle were actually exposed to possible wolf predation compared to known wolf depredation.

There is, however, another way of looking at the existing data that sheds considerably more light on this issue. What proportion of wolf packs with livestock in their territories sooner or later have turned to killing livestock? The answer is 100%, a fact I have in writing from both Wildlife Services (the federal agency responsible for predator control), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (the federal agency that turned wolves loose on a largely unsuspecting public). So again, based on the available data, every wolf pack will eventually turn to killing livestock if cattle or

domestic sheep are available in a pack's territory---a fact that has never been reported by the media, and certainly not by pro-wolf advocates.

In Idaho, Wildlife Services calculated the number of livestock killed per individual wolf, mountain lion, coyote, and black bear. Based on data collected during 2005, individual wolves were 20 times more likely to kill cattle than individual mountain lions. In addition, individual wolves were 170 times more likely to kill cattle than either individual black bears or coyotes. So, wolves are much more likely to attack and kill livestock than other predators, plus every wolf pack will eventually turn to killing livestock if given the opportunity. Why have these facts never been widely reported? ---because the media is incompetent, biased, and/or corrupt.

According to pro-wolf advocates, though, none of this matters because ranchers are "fully compensated" for losses caused by wolves. This is a bold-faced lie. True, Defenders of Wildlife administered a wolf