

## Robert Martin

Following the next 2 paragraphs is the standard letter from the Center for Biological Diversity. I am a Certified Wildlife Biologist, now retired. A relative's son I spoke to recently told me he was out hunting deer with cousins in northeastern California. They came across a wolf. One of the cousins shot the wolf. These people, in their 50s-60s years old, grew up in a small town farming and ranching area. This is typical of many uneducated hunters. An education program is needed that informs people of the predator-prey population dynamic. The loss of a domestic animal to a wolf is a business loss. Owners of cattle and sheep must accept that and take the taxable loss. The wolf must not be shot by either the domestic animal owner nor the Department of Fish and Wildlife. Creating a "post-recovery" plan for wolves at this time is premature, as Washington is still far from meeting the goals set forth in the current plan. Instead of racing to create a post-delisting plan, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife must instead focus its attention on current wolf-management needs. This includes: (1) Resolving, through nonlethal means, conflicts between livestock and wolves, which are taking place in some of the state's best habitat for wolves; and (2) Conducting extensive public education on wolves. This is emphasized in the current plan but has not been done by you, despite the fact that all wolf experts say public education is the single most important action to take for successful wolf conservation. Additionally, under the current wolf plan and any future wolf plan, management guidance, policies and protocols — and especially those which could result in wolves being killed — must be developed through a science-based, public rule-making process that results in transparent, rational and enforceable strategies. Therefore I urge you to: (1) Stop cherry-picking science to justify wolf-killing; (2) Answer the global call by scientists to protect and conserve apex predators; and (3) Use every opportunity to extol the value of top predators in keeping nature healthy, and cease current messaging that prioritizes livestock over wolves. The public will fail to see any reason to coexist with wolves if the department fails to explain that wolves are ecologically important and worth conserving. Thank you for considering my comments.