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SCIENTISTS PUBLISH NEW DATA SUPPORTING A PARADIGM SHIFT FROM LETHAL CONTROL OF PREDATORS TO COEXISTENCE VIA NONLETHAL DETERRENTS

An interdisciplinary group of wildlife biologists and social scientists has just published a series of papers presenting new evidence of the greater efficacy and social acceptability of nonlethal deterrents to livestock depredation by large carnivores, as well as the lack of justification and possible harm to populations and ecosystems resulting from lethal control of these predators. [A Special Feature on Predator Control in the February 2017 issue of the Journal of Mammalogy](#) compiles evidence of these effects on wolves in Idaho, Wisconsin, and Michigan, and dingoes in Australia, and also provides new evidence of the growing intolerance for lethal control in the attitudes of the American public.

The Special Feature as organized by Dr. Bradley Bergstrom of Valdosta State University (bergstrm@valdosta.edu), who in his introduction reviews the science and history of predator control. The Feature includes analyses by Suzanne Stone of Defenders of Wildlife (sstone@defenders.org) and colleagues of the effectiveness of adaptive use of nonlethal strategies over a 7-year program for minimizing wolf–sheep conflict in Idaho; and by Dr. Arian Wallach of the University of Technology Sydney (arian.wallach@uts.edu.au) and colleagues of the value of simply suspending lethal control of dingoes and allowing their social systems to stabilize on large cattle stations in Australia.

Dr. Kristina Slagle of Ohio State University (slagle.44@osu.edu) and colleagues show that American public acceptance of lethal methods of predator control has declined over the past two decades, with people increasingly finding lethal methods inhumane. Dr. Adrian Treves of the University of Wisconsin (atreves@wisc.edu) and colleagues show that mortality of gray wolves in Wisconsin due to unreported illegal take, or poaching, has been underestimated and could drive total mortality rates higher than managers assume. And Dr. John Vucetich of Michigan Technological University (javuceti@mtu.edu) and colleagues show that a public hunt of gray wolves in Michigan in 2013 was not justified on the basis of meeting the stated purposes and goals of the hunt (to reduce threats to livestock and humans) nor on the basis of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, which is widely embraced by wildlife managers.

Abstracts of the six papers in the Special Feature can be read at the journal website: <https://academic.oup.com/jmammal/issue/98/1>. For those articles not Open Access, pdf copies can be requested from the corresponding authors of the articles at the e-mails above.