



The Corporation of the District of Saanich | Mayor's Office

770 Vernon Avenue Victoria BC V8X 2W7 | T 250-475-5510 | F 250-475-5440 | www.saanich.ca

Via email: FLNR.Minister@gov.bc.ca

May 5, 2021

Minister Katrine Conroy
Ministry of Forests, Lands,
Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development
PO Box 9049 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Conroy:

Re: Moratorium on Recreational Wolf Hunting on Vancouver Island

I am writing today on behalf of Saanich Council regarding the District of Oak Bay's February 22 resolution asking the memberships of the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities and the Union of BC Municipalities to request that the Province of British Columbia to implement a moratorium on recreational wolf hunting on Vancouver Island.

I am contacting you directly to express support for this resolution:

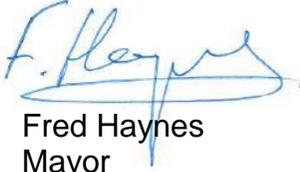
“WHEREAS the public and wildlife conservation organizations are concerned about provincial regulations for recreational wolf hunting practices on Vancouver Island and believe that these practices should be re-examined for scientific and ethical reasons;”

“AND WHEREAS very little scientific evidence exists about the size of Vancouver Island's wolf population or the sustainability of impacts of unrestricted harvesting levels on the Island's biodiversity related to habitats and wildlife ecology, especially at the regional level;”

“THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities request the Provincial Government to implement a moratorium on recreational wolf hunting on Vancouver Island, pending the completion of a scientific, data-driven and evidence-based study that includes consultation with the Island's Indigenous communities, to re-examine the efficacy of unrestricted wolf harvesting practices and their impacts on the Island's biodiversity, wildlife ecology and sustainability of the resident wolf population.”

Given, as the Oak Bay resolution clearly states, that Vancouver Island's sea-wolves are a unique, quite small and therefore extremely vulnerable population about which little is known, I wholeheartedly support its call for a moratorium to be implemented with all due urgency.

Respectfully,



Fred Haynes
Mayor

- cc: Saanich Council
Mayor Kevin Murdoch
Mayor Maja Tait
Nitya Harris, Coexisting with Carnivores Alliance
Samantha Webb, BSc, RVT, WR, Wild Wise President
Lisa Trotter, Wild Wise Society Volunteer



Reference: 264314

June 1, 2021

VIA EMAIL: Rachel.Mattiuz@saanich.ca; Mayor@saanich.ca

His Worship Mayor Fred Haynes
Corporation of the District of Saanich
770 Vernon Avenue
Victoria, British Columbia
V8X 2W7

Dear Mayor Haynes:

Thank you for your letter of May 5, 2021, to Honourable Katrine Conroy, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, regarding the Corporation of the District of Saanich's support for the implementation of a moratorium on recreational wolf hunting on Vancouver Island. I have been asked to respond.

Your letter states Saanich Council's concern about the vulnerability of Vancouver Island's unique wolf subspecies, and expresses your support for a scientific study, including consultation with Indigenous communities, that examines the impacts of unrestricted wolf harvesting on biodiversity, wildlife ecology and sustainability of the resident wolf population.

I understand that you are concerned based on the following reasons: wolves are a keystone species that is ecologically important, populations of wolves on Vancouver Island are not well understood, wolves are culturally important, and the behaviour of an individual trapper in a highly publicized recent case could be seen as unethical.

I can assure you that hunting and trapping opportunities in British Columbia are only provided where such activities are biologically sustainable. The BC government does not allow hunting or trapping that threatens the conservation of any species, nor does it condone unethical hunting or trapping practices. Overall, wolf populations in the province remain healthy and are not threatened by legal hunting or trapping activities.

The goal of wolf management in BC is to ensure a self-sustaining population throughout the species' range. The following objectives are outlined in the species management plan:

1. To ensure a self-sustaining population throughout the species' range that fulfils the role of wolves as a top predator in BC's diverse ecosystems.
2. To provide opportunities for economic, cultural, and recreational uses of wolves consistent with ministry program plans.

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3. To minimize impacts on livestock caused by wolves in a manner that does not jeopardize conservation objectives.
4. To manage specific packs or individuals where predation is likely preventing the recovery of wildlife populations threatened by wolf predation.

The open season for hunting wolves on Vancouver Island is September 10 to June 15. The maximum number of wolves a hunter can harvest per year is three. The open season for trapping wolves on Vancouver Island is September 10 to June 30. A trapper is expected to trap sustainably on their designated trapline and not over-harvest; however, there is no limit to the number of wolves a trapper can harvest. All wolves harvested (hunting and trapping) on Vancouver Island must be reported to government. Our data indicate the average annual harvest on Vancouver Island over the past five years is 18.

Specific to the area surrounding Sooke, the home range of a wolf pack, which generally consists of 5-10 wolves, can be very large, covering multiple watersheds and mountain ranges. Fewer observations of wolves does not necessarily mean fewer wolves; the pack could be occupying other parts of their range or avoiding humans. Of note is that wolves will defend their territory from other packs, and there is generally little overlap between the ranges of neighbouring packs.

Staff view hunting and trapping seasons for wolves on Vancouver Island as sustainable and appropriate to meet the objectives for wolf conservation and sustainable use. Current wolf trapping regulations, without any restriction on harvest numbers, have given no indication that there is a conservation concern or that over-harvest is occurring.

The province is currently working to ensure better harvest data is collected annually from hunters and trappers through regulatory changes. I have also asked staff to further review the biological data on which the above professional opinion is based. If this review changes the understanding of population levels and sustainability of current management, then additional regulation changes may be required. Consideration is also being given to trapping on private lands. All regulation proposals go through a comprehensive consultation process with First Nations, stakeholders, and the general public.

Again, thank you for writing to share your concerns and for your interest in wolf management on Vancouver Island.

Sincerely,



David Muter
Assistant Deputy Minister

pc: Honourable Katrine Conroy, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations
and Rural Development