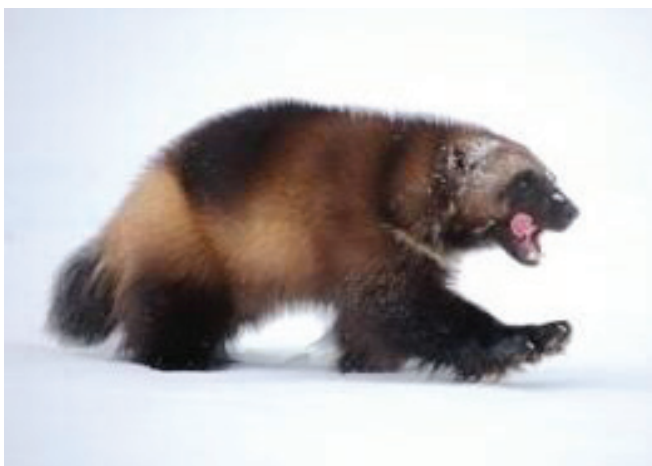


Conservationists to challenge federal decision to not protect wolverines

By COURTNEY FLATT
Northwest News Network



Steve Kroschel/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Wolverines, which look like a small bear and are part of the weasel family, are rare in the Northwest and are listed as threatened in Oregon.

Mountains in the northeastern part of the state.

“What I think that indicates, is that if we give the wolverine a chance and lend them a hand, they can recover. They are incredibly resilient, and they are very tough. But they need some help to ensure that they have a future in this country,” Wertz said.

In Washington state, wolverines are candidates to be listed as threatened. A wolverine mother and her kits were recently spotted at Mount Rainier National Park. Biologists hope that wildlife crossings and underpasses will allow wolverines to travel from the state’s North Cascades to other habitat further south in the Cascades.

This wasn’t the first time wolverines were spotted in Washington’s Southern Cascades. But researchers haven’t seen signs of the first wolverines in the area in years.

In Idaho, wolverines are listed as an “Idaho Species of Greatest Conservation Need.” Idaho’s Fish and Game Department says a threatened status is not warranted because there is “the high level of uncertainty related to climate change effects on wolverines and their habitat.”

Pushed toward extinction

Wolverines were pushed toward extinction by the early 1900s, from trapping and baiting for other predators. Trapping is still allowed in Canada. When conservation groups began petitioning to list wolverines, Montana still allowed anyone to trap one wolverine, according to Preso. That is no longer the case, but he worries trapping could resume in Montana.

Conservation groups first filed a petition to add wolverines to the federal Endangered Species List in 2000. In April 2016, a judge ruled the fed-

eral government had to make a decision about the wolverines’ status, but it didn’t set a deadline. The groups sued again in March 2020.

Now, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said threats to wolverines aren’t as significant as scientists believed in 2013, when it proposed to list wolverines as threatened. In a news release, the service said wolverine populations “remain stable.”

“In the time since our original proposal, the science on wolverine (sic) has been greatly advanced thanks to the work of state wildlife agencies and researchers in the U.S. and around the world,” Noreen Walsh, regional director for the service, said in a statement.

The service also said wolverine populations in the Lower 48 states are connected and “interact on some level” with those in Canada and Alaska. Therefore, it says, wolverines in the Lower 48 do not qualify as distinct populations.

Preso said that reasoning doesn’t track. He points to other species protected under the Endangered Species Act that also have northern populations, such as bald eagles, grizzly bears and grey wolves.

“I don’t think most Americans want a future in which we are fine with writing off wildlife in the Lower 48 because they still exist in Alaska,” Preso said. “That’s certainly not the vision that was enacted into law in the Endangered Species Act.”

He said the pushback against listing the wolverine under the Endangered Species Act stems from the national debate over climate change. Peer-reviewed studies show that 97% of actively publishing scientists agree that the warming climate is extremely likely caused by human activities.

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Lead with compassion

Dear Annie: My son and daughter-in-law have been married for about three years. She used to be a very nice girl when dating my son. When they told me they were getting married, it was just so that she could be put on my son’s health insurance because she couldn’t work anymore. I was still happy. She sold her house and moved into his house.

I live five hours away, so when I visit, I usually stay four days and play with my granddaughter, who is 9 years old. I was kidding around one day when my son was leaving for work and I said, “Aren’t you going to kiss your wife goodbye?” She yelled, “We don’t have that kind of relationship!” I quickly shut my mouth.

When I used to go down, I would ask if I could take my granddaughter for a walk, but now she always says no. She says she doesn’t trust me. She accuses me of all kinds of things that are not true. When I tell my son what she says to me, he always answers that’s just how she is. Once my son and his wife went to a ballgame, her mother was babysitting at her house because I can’t be trusted. I had nothing to do, so I vacuumed the house. When they came home, she had a fit. She considers that

I’m saying she’s dirty.

When she got pregnant again, I was not allowed to know until my son called months later and told me they were having twins. That’s why they were telling me — because he said it wasn’t a good time to come down, instead of just telling me she is pregnant (everyone else knew). He said there would never have been all that arguing. My daughter-in-law and I have not spoken since she became pregnant nine months ago. She started messaging me nasty things, saying it wasn’t

any of my business why I couldn’t come down. She states, “STAY UP WHERE YOU ARE NOBODY LIKES YOU DOWN HERE ANYWAY.” So we started arguing back and forth.

I was talking with my doctor about this, and he says to stay away from her. What do I do if I’m invited to birthdays or the twins’ christening? She took away my bonding time with my granddaughter. I don’t want to be around her, but I want to see my grandchildren. — *Shut-Out Grandma*

Dear Shut-Out Grandma: Your daughter-in-law does sound unstable, or certainly like she believes you cannot be trusted. That must be

so hurtful for you as a grandmother, and I’m sorry you are going through this. Grandparents are a gift to children, so let’s try and find a way for you to be back in their lives. You should attend events if you are invited. Birthdays and christenings are memorable days that you don’t want to miss. When you’re there, focus on the love you have for your grandchildren and your son. If you can take it a step further, send your daughter-in-law some love. Clearly, she is hurting deeply. Have an open and honest conversation with your son about your feelings. Tell him you are willing to go to family counseling or do whatever it takes to have a relationship with him and your grandchildren. Don’t give up on them.

How someone treats you is a statement about who they are as a human being, not a statement about you. How you respond is a statement about you. When you are with them, it’s probably best to avoid making any comments whatsoever about their marriage. Of course, you were right in your comment about a kiss goodbye, but that makes her even angrier.

If she says hurtful things again, don’t engage in an argument. Remember she is hurting and that is why she is acting out. Act with compassion, and keep being there for your son and grandchildren.

DEAR ANNIE



ANNIE LANE
Creators
Syndicate Inc.