

## EDITORIAL

# Poaching wolves not helping

If anyone wanted to help out the animal rights crowd in its efforts to reinstate federal Endangered Species Act protection to all wolves, all he would have to do is randomly kill the predators.

Since wolves were reintroduced into parts of the West, animal rights activists have been hollering that, unless wolves are fully protected under the ESA, they could be indiscriminately killed.

In a few parts of Eastern Oregon, that appears to be happening. In the past two years, eight wolves were poisoned and seven were shot and killed.

This was not someone protecting himself or his livestock. This was someone poaching and breaking the law.

Animal rights and environmental groups are pushing right now trying to convince the federal government to reinstate ESA protections for wolves in the Northern Rockies. Just last week, we published a column by two members of the U.S. Senate making the case for state management of wolves in Idaho and Montana.

The senators are 100% correct. Idaho, Montana and other states where wolves have been imposed on ranchers and others have done their best. Reinstating federal protections would take management decisions out of the states' hands.

If you think there are problems with wolves now, wait until management decisions are returned to the hands of federal bureaucrats in Washington, D.C.

No one has been more vociferous than the Baker City Herald's sister paper, Capital Press, in criticizing how the reintroduction of wolves has been managed. Time and again, we have stood up and pointed out the shortcomings of federal wildlife managers and the unfairness their actions have inflicted on ranchers, whose livelihoods depend on their ability to raise cattle and sheep.

The basis of those criticisms was that wolves have been allowed to run roughshod through portions of the rural West, attacking cattle, sheep, wildlife and other animals such as working dogs. Capital Press argued that ranchers also were the victims but were willing to follow the law.

Ranchers have worked hard to use non-lethal means of separating wolves from cattle and sheep.

But all of that is for naught when irresponsible parties take the law into their own hands. It accomplishes nothing — except to put law-abiding ranchers on the defensive.

We are unimpressed by how federal wildlife managers have done their jobs managing wolves. From the beginning, they needed to do more to keep wolves away from livestock.

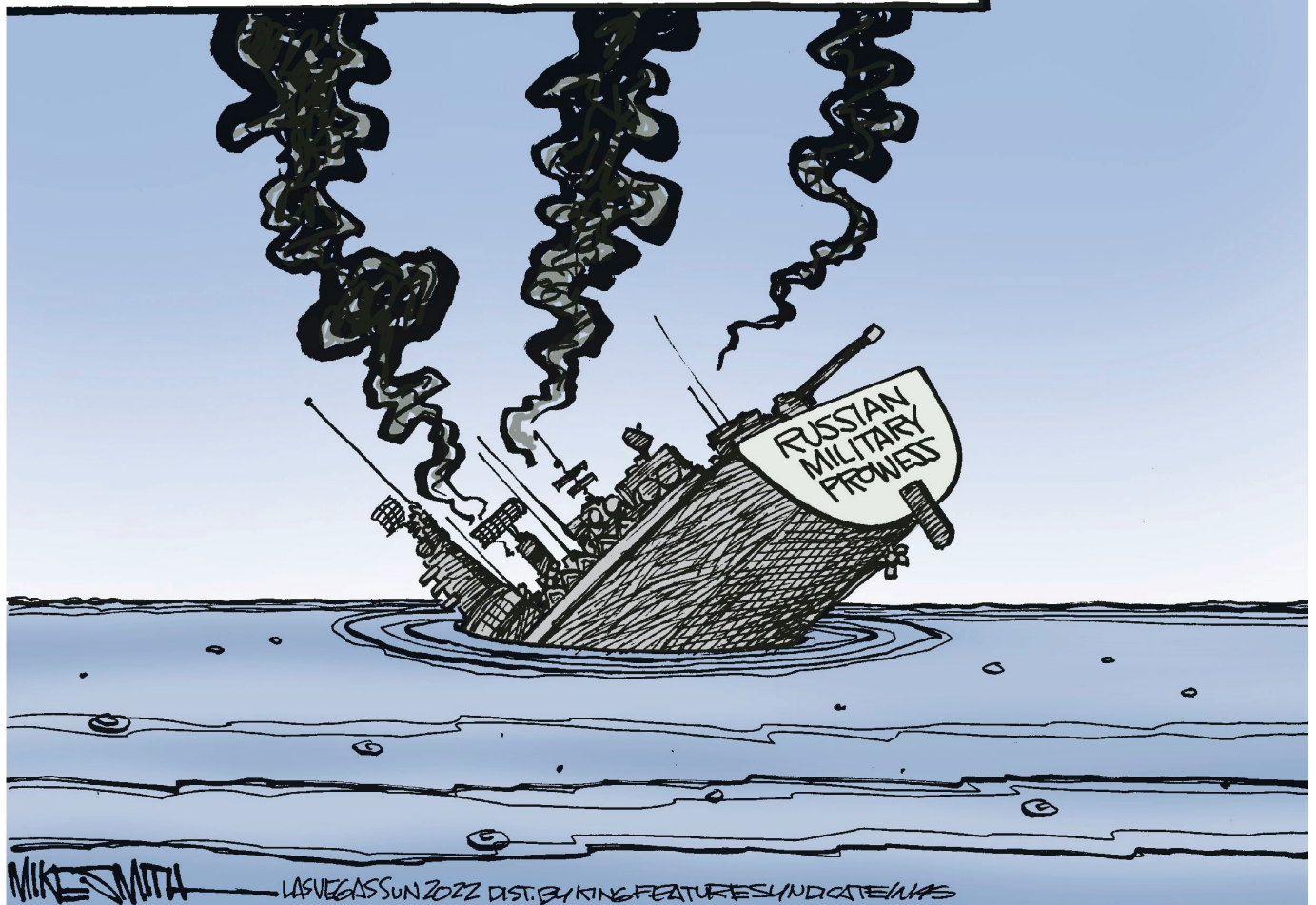
But we are 100% opposed to illegally poaching wolves.

Doing that only gives the animal rights activists more ammunition in the court of law — and the court of public opinion — to criticize ranchers.

Stop the poaching. It only makes matters worse.

*Unsigned editorials are the opinion of the Baker City Herald. Columns, letters and cartoons on this page express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the Baker City Herald.*

## UKRAINE SINKS ANOTHER RUSSIAN WARSHIP



## COLUMN

# China and the folly of zero-COVID

BY DRs. CORY FRANKLIN AND ROBERT A. WEINSTEIN

From the outset, mystery has shrouded the COVID-19 pandemic in China. The origin of the virus remains unknown, important Chinese journalists and key scientists have been muted, and case and death totals reported by China's government have been unbelievably low — the United States and most of Western Europe have reported 500 to 1,000 times as many per capita deaths as China.

There are several theories on the reason for the low numbers coming out of China: poor reporting, deliberate or otherwise; a population with immunity, either natural or acquired through previous coronavirus infections; or the Chinese government's efforts to reach zero COVID-19 infections through mass testing, lockdowns, quarantine and contact tracing. China is the last major country attempting to eliminate COVID-19; other countries have tried with disappointing, and in some cases disastrous, results.

But now the Chinese zero-COVID-19 policy has been put to the test by the highly infectious omicron variant and subvariant. The focal point is the tight government lockdown in China's largest city, Shanghai. Reports emanating from Shanghai are harrowing. People are prevented from leaving their homes for any reason — they are dependent on the government to deliver medications, food and water. Parents who test positive are sent to isolation centers, separated from their children. Cats and dogs left homeless when their owners are sent away are being killed by public health authorities. Businesses are closing, and there are reports of people scavenging food and committing suicide.

According to the BBC, centralized "isolation facilities — many using only camp beds, with no showers or other facilities — are bursting with infected people squashed

in next to one another. One of China's few reliable media outlets, Caixin, has reported that close contacts of infected people will be moved to neighbouring provinces. This could potentially involve hundreds of thousands of Shanghai residents."

Even with these measures, Shanghai is reporting more than 10,000 new cases per day, and things may worsen because China's vaccine, a non-mRNA one, appears to be less effective than Western vaccines.

While China clings to its zero-COVID-19 approach, other countries have abandoned it in the face of the omicron surge. South Korea, which was praised internationally for its control measures after an initial surge, was overwhelmed by omicron and now ranks eighth in worldwide cases, a higher per capita case rate than the U.S. New Zealand, an island country, that as of February had recorded fewer than 30,000 cases over the first two years of the pandemic, now has seen 800,000 cases total. Hong Kong, with only 200 total deaths during the pandemic at the beginning of the year, had the highest per capita death rate in the world in March.

Why has a zero-COVID-19 policy proved unattainable? Control of COVID-19 poses different problems from previous epidemics. The virus is evolving and mutating at a surprisingly rapid rate, and the current variants present a greater risk of person-to-person transmission. But the real sticking point has been extensive transmission in the community by infected people who are asymptomatic.

This feature of COVID-19 has complicated the pandemic from the beginning. It makes it problematic to know whom to test and whom to isolate.

Contact tracing, a basic public health tool used successfully for previous communicable diseases — especially those sexually transmitted — is basically impossible. Contact tracing works when symp-

tomatic patients seek care, enter the public health surveillance tracking system and identify their contacts. Those exposed to contagious individuals are then located and advised about quarantine, testing and treatment options. But millions of dollars and a lot of personnel have been ineffective in tracing COVID-19 when asymptomatic patients are unaware they should be tested or fail to report a positive if they test at home. The contacts of those infected are often unknown, especially when the virus is spread in crowded indoor locations.

South Korea employed the most extensive contact tracing system in the world but abandoned it recently in the face of the omicron surge. Jang Young-ook, a researcher at the Korea Institute for International Economic Policy studying pandemic response policies around the world, said, "The size of the surge Korea is seeing now renders contact tracing almost pointless. That makes collecting personal information with QR (computerized personal) codes kind of unjustified."

This is basically an admission that zero COVID-19 is a pipe dream, a lesson the residents of Shanghai are learning the hard way.

When the definitive history is written about the COVID-19 pandemic of the early 2020s, an essential chapter will be the futile quest for zero COVID-19. It will be symbolized by a drone hovering over deserted Shanghai streets, blaring the disheartening epitaph for zero COVID-19 that China has been broadcasting to its people: "Please comply with COVID restrictions. Control your soul's desire for freedom. Do not open the window or sing."

*Dr. Cory Franklin is a retired intensive care physician. Dr. Robert A. Weinstein is an infectious disease specialist at Rush University Medical Center.*

## YOUR VIEWS

### Why is the Baker City Council reversing course on whistles?

How can the "City Council" change a previous vote, just because they have a new council member? If that is the case, the council should be able to go back and change all the decisions the council has made, after getting a new member. How can the "City" attorney change the city charter for such a small motion as the one to stop the train whistles? Why Joanna Dixon and Mayor McQuisten think they need to change the City Charter is beyond me! It reeks of an ethics violation to me! If the rules don't favor the way the mayor thinks, why not change the rules? The "stop the train whistles" group has already come up with almost half of the funds to

do this project, no tax dollars will be involved. This project can make it safer for our schoolchildren, that's why the school district has donated \$25,000. It will also help with property values. There have been plenty of "small interest groups" that have done wonderful things in our little city. Look at the Sports Complex, Wade Williams Field and the parkway beside the river. All of these were done without a vote of the people.

If my letter hasn't changed anyone's mind, I invite you to go to the south end of 4th Street, get out of your car, and hear for yourself how loud these whistles are. You won't have to wait long for a train to be by.

The city council already has plenty to do; the ambulance problem, changing 10th Street, Cedar Street, and Hughes Lane

are just a few of the items already before the council.

The fact that our mayor is running for governor with Joanna Dixon as her treasurer sounds to me like a conflict of interest. They have been to "every county in Oregon," and been present at many meetings, all while running the business of Baker City. They even had a meeting at the Elks Club where they had to call the police to escort some people out who were not abiding by Mayor McQuisten's rules.

I am not a member of the group of individuals working on this project, but I do live by the railroad tracks and a crossing. I can tell you how many trains go by, day and night.

**Larry Smith**  
Baker City

## OTHER VIEWS

# World must continue to support Ukraine

### Editorial from The New York Daily News:

If a shrewd Kremlin military analyst had drawn up a list of objectives for Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the reality of this horrific misadventure is more or less the photo negative of that. Rather than a quick and decisive march to Kyiv, the Russian military has alternately been bogged down and repelled, received nothing but anger and derision from the locals, sustained heavy losses and lost a crop

of high-ranking officers. Meantime, the West's tightening vise around the Russian economy has made things increasingly hard on Vladimir Putin's regime domestically.

In the latest incredible turn of events, last week the Russian flagship Moskva was sunk by Ukrainian missiles. The ship was not only a warship but a symbol of its naval strength, featuring prominently in 2014's annexation of Crimea. It won't be participating in any more unprovoked

invasions from the bottom of the Black Sea.

Unfortunately, rather than taking their massive setbacks and casualties as a sign that his campaign is doomed to fail, Putin's forces responded with heavy-handed retaliation. Evidence of war crimes continues to mount as international investigators find proof of abductions, rapes, strikes on civilian infrastructure and the use of banned munitions. Following Russia's with-

drawal from the area around Kyiv, more than 900 civilians have been found dead.

At this pivotal juncture, the international community must continue supporting the Ukrainian defense, including with robust weapons and supply shipments. Russia's dark and indistinct warnings about the consequences — the CIA director, while cautioning that he's seen no "practical evidence" suggesting such an attack is imminent, says America can't

take lightly the possibility of Putin using "tactical" or "low-yield" nuclear weapons in Ukraine — should only stiffen our spines.

Putin's attack had the base objective of weakening NATO. On that front, like all others, he has failed miserably, as Sweden and Finland are moving to join the defense pact. The despot can make all the noise he wants about his nuclear weapons arsenal. The rest of the world sees that he must be contained.