

THE C.A.S.H. COURIER

THE COMMITTEE TO ABOLISH SPORT HUNTING

A DIVISION OF WILDLIFE WATCH, INC.

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Spring/Summer2025

MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of C.A.S.H. - Committee to Abolish Sport Hunting - is to accomplish what its name says in the shortest possible time. Understanding that abolishing hunting entails a process, a series of steps taken and not a single action that would effect our goal overnight, a time frame cannot be established. We hope for building a succession of wins, and if not wins immediately then at least a succession of stirrings of consciousness. We hope to encourage those who are still silent to speak out, awakening community after community about the heavy hand of state and federal wildlife management agencies. We hope to alter whatever belief still exists that sport hunters are conservationists and champions of the environment to a realization that they are destroyers of wildlife and ecosystems in the narrow and broad sense. Where the natural feeling for wildlife doesn't exist, we strive to engender among citizens outrage that their own rights are violated by legal hunting and their quality-of-life diminished.

Luke A. Dommer was the founder of the Committee to Abolish Sport Hunting. He was its president from 1976 until his passing in August 1992. Mr. Dommer's research and publications served as the foundation for the anti-hunting movement. He remains, through this organization, an invaluable and dedicated warrior in the battle to save wild animals, the environment, and general public from the silent economy that encourages and preys on the passion of a few to kill the wildlife that belongs to all.

Wildlife Watch Inc.

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Contributions are tax-deductible.

C.A.S.H. Courier

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CRITICAL CORNERSTONE OF A CRUMBLING CASTLE *by Jim Robertson*



PHOTO © JIM ROBERTSON

Please take a short multiple-choice quiz to test your knowledge of our fellow animals.

Instructions:

Choose the animals that best fit the descriptions in the questions below. Although some species may share several of the characteristics, they must meet all the criteria in order to qualify as a correct answer.

1.) Which two animal species fit the following description?

- Highly social
- Live in established communities

- Master planners and builders of complex, interconnected dwellings
- Have a language
- Can readily learn and invent new words
- Greet one another by kissing

- A.** Humans
- B.** Prairie Dogs
- C.** Dolphins
- D.** Penguins

Answer: A. and B.

Continued on page 3

Letter from the President

Dear C.A.S.H.
Members
and Supporters,



I hope you all wintered well, and the effects of the visiting Polar Vortex didn't get you down too far. As I write this, much of the winter's snowpack has melted off here in the Inland Northwest and, according to all the birds searching the newly bared ground for nesting material, Spring is definitely in the air.

As you may have found, my article *Critical Cornerstone of a Crumbling Castle* focuses on the plight of prairie dogs—one of the species, like coyotes and other “undesirables,” that hunters can target throughout the Summer, without even a thought of waiting for any traditional autumn hunting season. Unfortunately, some readers of that article might find the assessment of our own species a little off-putting at first, especially if taken out of evolutionary context.

Inarguably our species, *Homo sapiens*, has made some staggering achievements over the ages. No other animal has ever harnessed fire, split the atom, invented a religion or come up with a way to leave Earth's atmosphere, travel through the vast void of space and land on the lifeless dust ball we call the moon. Yet, none of our bestial kin can be credited with singlehandedly changing the planet's climate or causing a mass extinction (like the one we're currently experiencing).

And it can all be traced back to that fateful day when the first pre-human took to hunting, killing and eating other animals.

At that point in our distant past, early human ancestors, running around unclothed, with no more worldly possessions to their name aside from maybe a bone or sharpened rock, would not have been considered by anyone to be anything except bipedal primate mammals. But modern-day hunters, (often wearing head-to-toe camouflage even while riding noisy off-road vehicles), want to be seen as vastly superior specimens than our ancient ancestors.

Part of our task at C.A.S.H. is to de-glamorize sport hunting (which used to be an easy task before the likes of the media darlings from “Duck Dynasty” started making headlines every time they stubbed their toe or fell out of a rowboat).

However, the Committee to Abolish Sport Hunting spreads the word for the animals and against hunting with our Courier (like the one you're reading now), C.A.S.H. keeps a daily blog, Facebook page and website chock-full of the most recent *Hunting Accidents* and *Hunting Violations* to inform and entertain even the most ardent anti-hunters and hunting abolitionists like yourselves. So, stick with us and we'll keep you informed and enlighten you on all things pro-the wildlife and anti-the sport of hunting.

Until next time,

Jim

Jim Robertson

CRITICAL CORNERSTONE OF A CRUMBLING CASTLE

Continued on page 1

2.) Which two species fit the following description?

- Practice communal care for the offspring of their group
- Beneficial to all other species who share their turf
- Essential to the health of their environment and without whom an entire ecosystem unravels
- Vegetarian
- Have been forcibly reduced to less than 3% of their original population

- A. Humans
- B. Prairie Dogs
- C. Bison
- D. Hyenas

Answer: B. and C.

3.) Which two species fit the following description?

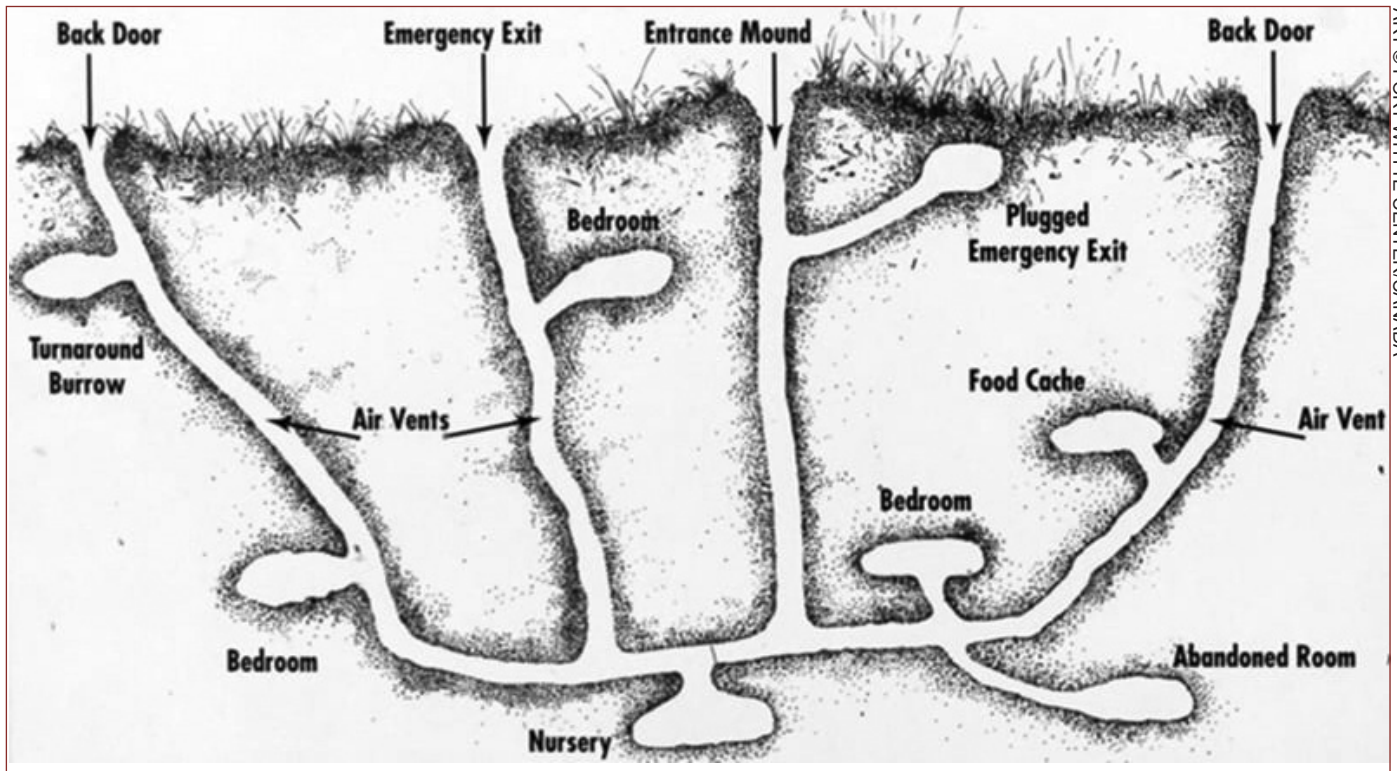
- Out of control pest
- Nonessential in nature's scheme

- Multiplying at a phenomenal pace and overrunning the planet
- Rapidly destroying habitats for all other life forms and physically crowding them off the face of the Earth
- Characterized by a swellheaded sense of superiority, convinced they are of far greater significance than any other animal
- Make sport of killing gifted, gregarious beings whom they regard as "lower," "varmints" or "vermin"

- A. Humans
- B. Prairie Dogs
- C. Cockroaches
- D. Sewer Rats

Answer: Trick question. The only species fitting all the criteria is A.

If this seems a harsh assessment of the human race, don't forget we're talking about the species who, single-handedly and with malice aforethought, blasted, burned and poisoned the passenger pigeon—once the most numerous



ART © FORT WHITE CENTER/CANADA

Continued on Page 4

CRITICAL CORNERSTONE OF A CRUMBLING CASTLE

Continued from page 3

birds on the entire planet—to extinction and who nearly wiped out the blue whale—the largest animal the world has ever known. Under the gravely mistaken impression that prairie dogs damage grasslands usurped by cattle ranchers, the U.S. government began a poisoning campaign in the 1920s that led to the demise of prairie dog colonies throughout most of their ecosystem.

The few remaining scattered colonies now occupy only 1% of their original range, yet prairie dogs are still senselessly shot by hunters on public lands to this day.

When the dust settles on their reign of terror, the human species will be best remembered as squandering ingrates who turned their noses up at nature's gifts and goose-stepped on toward mass extinction, despite warnings from historians and scientists and pleas from the caring few. Professor Paul R. Ehrlich, author of The Population Bomb, written in 1968 (when humans numbered "only" 3.5 billion) and, more recently,

The Population Explosion, written in 1991 (when 5.3 billion humans walked the Earth) has spent decades trying to get the word out. In 1970, he told National Wildlife Magazine, "It isn't a question of people or animals—it's got to be both of us or we're finished. We can't get along without them. They could get along without us." Today, the human population has erupted to over 8.2 billion (as of this writing), and yet most people still aren't listening.

All across the globe, humans have enslaved those animals they deemed worthwhile and set out to eliminate the rest. As John Muir noted, "The world, we are told, is made especially for man—a presumption not supported by the facts. A numerous class of men are painfully astonished whenever they find anything...which they cannot eat or render in some way useful to themselves."

To the vast majority of people living in their realm, prairie dogs fall into the category of "not useful" and so have suffered the wrath of the gods.



He's telling his sibling to watch out for the humans

PHOTO © JIM ROBERTSON

Continued on Page 6

SPRING IS THE SEASON FOR NESTING AND NURTURING -- NOT KILLING

By Jim Robertson

Ahh, Spring! It's the time of birth for wild animals and re-birth for the natural world. A time of emergence—an American robin hatching from a powder blue egg; a black bear, followed by her newborn cubs, leaving their cozy birthing den—spring is a sacred time of life-giving celebration.

So, who, in their right mind, could imagine that spring would be a good time to declare open season on bears, turkeys or any species of animal? Well, no one. But we're talking about sport hunters, so the "in their right mind" part may not apply here.

Majestic, bold and faithful is how founding father Benjamin Franklin would have described turkeys and yet today's "sportsmen" seem overly intent on going after "gobblers" (as well-thumbed hunting magazines are fond of calling turkeys) in the spring. Gobblers is an over-used epithet aimed at objectifying and degrading the birds in much the same way that the N-word was meant to de-personalize slaves in centuries past.

As a "sport," spring turkey hunting is getting so popular that it threatens to overtake baseball as a new American tradition. To be clear, baseball is a sport, and along with football and basketball, it's a team sport, played by two evenly matched teams. But hunting doesn't qualify as a sport for the simple reason that deer don't practice archery



PHOTO © JIM ROBERTSON

against hunters and turkeys don't carry shotguns for self-defense. And unlike hunters, neither of those species has a misguided sense of what kind of behavior constitutes a sport.

Spring hunting season is nothing more than a tweaked and twisted notion that needs to be exposed and squelched before it becomes yet another "tradition" in the name of animal exploitation.

We're not just talking about the mindless slaughter of one incidental individual turkey for the sake of someone's sport. Turkeys are social birds, so the perverse pleasure hunters get from crouching in the bushes, fully camouflaged, hoping their imitation mating call draws an unsuspecting turkey into their firing zone is the sort of behavior a civilized society should discourage, rather than promote.

Continued on Page 7

CRITICAL CORNERSTONE OF A CRUMBLING CASTLE

Continued from page 4

PHOTO © JIM ROBERTSON



Yet, as Dr. Jane Goodall observes, “Nine different wildlife species depend on the prairie dog and their habitat for their survival. The prairie dog is a critical component to healthy North American grasslands.” And Terry Tempest Williams adds, “If the prairie dog goes, so goes an entire ecosystem. Prairie dogs create diversity. Destroy them and you destroy a varied world.”

The black-footed ferret is one species who cannot survive without a stable population of prairie dogs. Once thought extinct, ferrets are among the most endangered animals on the continent, numbering only in the low 100s. Ferrets, coyotes, badgers, swift foxes and others use abandoned prairie dog holes for denning. In a region so arid trees can’t grow, burrowing owls and mountain plovers have adapted to nesting in old prairie dog tunnels. (Despite their name, burrowing owls aren’t heavy excavators; they depend on prairie dogs to do the grunt work for them.)

Like renters scrambling for a recently vacated Manhattan apartment, anyone lucky enough to secure a former prairie dog home finds themselves living in the lap of relative luxury. Accommodations include multiple rooms on different levels, branching off from a passageway dug sometimes 15 feet deep and traveling horizontally for up to 100 feet or more.

By moving massive amounts of dirt in the construction of their elaborate abodes (which include a level just inside where they listen for danger, year-round sleeping quarters, birthing chambers and a designated restroom) prairie

dogs spread nutrient-rich soil and compost onto the surface, acting as nature’s organic gardeners. Deep layers of aerated, fertile soil are tilled up and the resulting nitrogen-rich grasses and forbs associated with prairie dog towns are preferred by grazers, such as bison, pronghorn...and even cattle.

Prairie dog colonies were once a central feature throughout their range—the short-grass region of the Great Plains—which ran from the east slopes of the Rockies through Southern Alberta, the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas and south to Texas and Northern Mexico. Their burrows not only housed extended families, or coterie, but in larger colonies, included an elaborate and lengthy tunnel system connecting one home to the next. One such aggregation in Texas stretched for 100 miles, covered over 25,000 square miles and housed 400 million prairie dogs. Words like ‘subdivision’ have been used to describe prairie dog colonies, but while urban sprawl— notorious for miles of blacktop and coal-fired power plants—X’s out wildlife habitat, prairie dog dwellings are a positive boon to the environment.

So cooperative are prairie dog settlements that mothers even practice communal nursing, but not because they can’t keep track of their own offspring. Unlike many rodents, prairie dogs have a low birth rate—a would-be mother only comes into estrous one day per year. And litter size is relatively small, usually three to four young who remain in the household until maturity, at which time the males disperse.

As you might imagine, any animal evolved to be this social will have developed their own form of communication, and prairie dogs have become quite the little conversationalists. Who would have thought the prairie dog “barking” to others from the edge of his burrow was actually a skilled orator reciting an animal version of the Gettysburg Address? Northern Arizona biology professor and prairie dog linguist, Con Slobodchikoff, has identified a boundless array of words with specific meanings, as well as signs of sentence structure and the ability to invent new words describing things they had previously never seen before, within the varied sounds of prairie dogs.

Continued on Page 7

CRITICAL CORNERSTONE OF A CRUMBLING CASTLE

Continued from page 6



PHOTO © JIM ROBERTSON

According to Slobodchikoff, "We're chipping away...at the idea that animals don't have language," adding, "So far, I think we are showing the most sophisticated communication system that anyone has shown in animals." A few years back, wildlife researchers in Africa caused a stir in the scientific community with their earth-shattering discovery that vervet monkeys had their own language. They were found to have three categories of warning calls: one each for leopard, eagle and snake. Well, our home team has that beat. Slobodchikoff, with the aid of a computer that creates a sonogram, has analyzed recordings of prairie dogs and identified words for potential predators such as coyote and red-tailed hawk, as well as for fellow grass-eaters like pronghorn, deer and elk. They also have words differentiating between curious human onlooker and aggressive human with bad intent.

Unfortunately, the latter is the rule. People in "cattle country" entertain themselves by using the few remaining prairie dogs as living targets. Taking sick pleasure in shooting a watchful, cooperative grass-eater as she pops up from her burrow to

see if it's safe for her youngsters to come out, the noble hunters are completely unconcerned about leaving dependent infants to starve. They've even devised a clever name, "double tap," for a shot that kills both a mother and her adoring baby. "Tap" is a particularly twisted label, considering the hollow point bullets they use cause the victims to literally explode on impact, a sight that must really get the shooter's blood up.

Ladies beware—there's a well-established link between cruelty to animals and domestic abuse and other crimes along the violence continuum. One such thrill-killer describes his sport this way: "Prairie dog hunting is a blast...on both private and public lands. I like to start by clearing everything within 50 yards with an AR-15, then switch to my .223 Remington for anything out to about 150 and finally trade up to the bull barrel .22-250 for the longer shots." The only thing stopping people with this much bloodlust is the melting point of their gun barrels and perhaps the cost of ammunition. Going through 500 rounds a day can get expensive. Yet, these vacuous, pathetic excuses for human beings will

Continued on Page 10

SPRING IS THE SEASON FOR NESTING AND NURTURING -- NOT KILLING

Continued from page 5

But promoting spring hunting is the rule, not the exception. It makes no difference whether it's a red state, a blue state, pink, green or purple, every state's game departments are pushing for new or expanded spring turkey hunting seasons this year after having planted the highly prized "game" birds just about everywhere they could possibly think of—including many regions which never supported turkeys in the past.

But what difference does it make? If people want to hunt turkeys or bears in the spring, shouldn't that be the right of every taxpayer? Well, if you can't see the wrong in allowing and encouraging the targeting of non-human animals for the simple pleasure of taking a life for recreation, perhaps the threat that said sport poses for the average citizen would put things into perspective for you.

Today's headlines announced that two people—in two separate incidents—were struck in the neck, face and/or head with 12-gauge shotgun pellets. The first such case took place in Indiana after a landowning hunter blasted a passing hunter as he walked by his property with his son. The 41-year-old hunter was airlifted to the hospital where he survived (by the skin of his teeth). Meanwhile another, very similar turkey hunting accident happened in New York state yesterday. Names and specifics have been withheld in

Grizzly Yearling

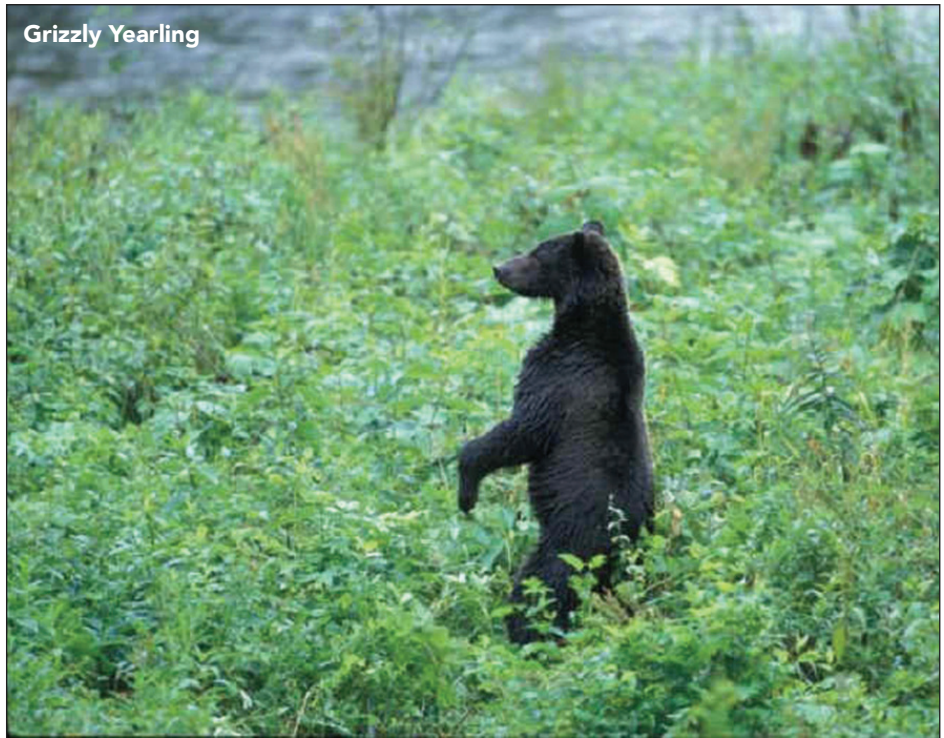


PHOTO © JIM ROBERTSON

that incident, except for the fact that the victim also ended up in the hospital.

Close calls like these, as well as fatal hunting accidents, are common occurrences during spring hunting seasons and as more non-consumptive recreationists head to the woods for hiking, mountain biking, bird watching, etc., eventually they too will become victims of all the senseless blasting that game departments are actively encouraging.

One group of non-target victims who are continually being killed during hunting seasons like the spring hunting frenzy are America's endangered grizzly bears. On May 9th, a young female grizzly in northern Idaho's Bonner County was illegally shot to death by an

otherwise "law-abiding" spring black bear hunter. Though grizzly bears are threatened with extinction in the lower 48, the killer wasn't charged with any type of crime, but was merely reminded by Fish and Game that as of January 1st 2025, hunters are required to pass a bear identification test to differentiate between black bears and endangered grizzly bears to avoid mistaken identity.

Of course, the surest way to avoid hunting accidents such as being shot in the face by a turkey hunter, or bear hunters mistakenly killing the wrong species, would be to simply put an end to spring hunting seasons. Then the animals won't have to add avoiding armed hunters to their already stressful springtime routine of birthing and raising their young.

PHOTO BY MARIO AMARAL ON UNSPLASH



HEAR YE HEAR YE!

CANADA GEESE WILL NOT BE GASSED IN MICHIGAN THIS YEAR!

Karen Stamper has been in the forefront of swan and Canada goose protection in Michigan. She, and the many others who joined her, were able to stop the gassing of Canada geese!

Karen sent the following email to the people who participated in bringing this good news about. She wrote:

Hi Everyone,

We have amazing news to share, if you have not heard already. On Friday, the DNR officially paused all goose gassings for this year!

This is a surprising and hard-fought victory—for the geese, and for every single one of you who took action to help stop this plan of theirs. It's proof that

our voices do matter, legislators will help, and haters do not always win.

Karen Stamper can be reached at: savemigeeseandswans@gmail.com

See the above Michigan Department of Natural Resources letter to the legislators who stated their objection to the gassing.



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
LANSING



May 9, 2025

The Honorable Dayna Polehanki
State Senator
5th District
P.O. Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909-7536

Dear Senator Polehanki and Co-Signatories:

Thank you for your letter dated April 22, 2025 expressing concerns regarding the Michigan Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) capture and euthanasia program and your call for a moratorium on the program.

The DNR understands your concerns about this program. One of the Wildlife Division's objectives is to develop, recommend and implement policies and regulations to manage wildlife and human-wildlife interactions. We have been working with the public to resolve human-goose conflicts for over 40 years, and our attempt to implement this pilot program was an additional effort to further that goal.

After further consideration and consultation with our Wildlife staff, we have decided to pause the program for this year and will not be issuing any permits or conducting this work on any sites, including Belle Isle Park. We will continue to research alternative options for managing human-goose conflicts and health and human safety concerns for areas with overabundant Canada Goose populations.

We will continue to encourage and prioritize non-lethal techniques for landowners, including habitat modification, elimination of feeding, scare tactics, repellents, and nest/egg destruction. It is important for the health and safety of our citizens and the management of our natural resources that we continue to use the goose management tools at our disposal.

If you have any further questions regarding this matter, please feel free to contact Mr. Chris Semrinec, DNR Legislative Liaison at 517-643-2033; semrinecc@michigan.gov; or you may contact me.

Sincerely,

M. Scott Bowen
Director

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CRITICAL CORNERSTONE OF A CRUMBLING CASTLE

Continued from page 7

PHOTO © JIM ROBERTSON



pay upwards of \$1,200 for a couple of days at one of the private ranches that advertise prairie dog hunts. One enticing ad describes their typical day as follows: "We approach the edge of a prairie dog town and set up and shoot for an hour or two or until the prairie dogs start getting scarce, then we pull up and drive over the hill and continue prairie dog hunting...after you get tired of the carnage, it's also fun to try shots over 1,000 yards."

Longtime candidates for protection under the Endangered Species Act, black-tailed prairie dogs were removed from the waiting list in 2004, their fate left up to the states which manage them for "recreational shooting opportunities." This glib game department jargon, loosely translated, means states like Wyoming have an open season on prairie dogs, allowing for unregulated, year-round shooting, without limit or regard for their future.

Wherever I've lived in the West, I have been fortunate enough to locate or stumble upon the rare or secretive species indigenous to the area—be they wolves, grizzly bears, cougars, lynx, fishers, mink or pine martens, even coming across the shadowy wolverine on three separate occasions. So it was with confidence that I set out across eastern Montana and Wyoming in search of the amicable, diurnal rodents that call the prairie their home. Surely, they must be thick everywhere in the open plains. How hard could they be to discover? It's not like I was searching for Bigfoot this time.

I combed hundreds of miles of what should be prime prairie dog habitat, scouring the gravel back roads—through over-grazed cattle allotments and between active and defunct oil rigs—yet found almost no sign of them. All I discovered were a few prairie dog ghost towns and a lot of lonely,

parched and denuded ground desperately in need of the cornerstone species who was once synonymous with the treeless grasslands.

Finally I stopped at the headquarters of the Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area and asked the National Park Service spokesperson why there were no prairie dogs anywhere in the vicinity. She replied with a shrug, "Uh...Target practice?" Apparently, unregulated shooting has taken its toll. No one at that government compound could point me to a single place where prairie dogs still thrived, yet these vanishing symbols of the plains remain unprotected by the federal ESA. Needless to say, no state or local law safeguards them either. What will good ol' boys shoot at when they run out of prairie dogs and ground squirrels—each other? Okay, fair enough, but let's hope they don't target anyone who doesn't deserve it.

On the way back home to southwest Montana on Interstate 90, I spotted a sign for Greycliff Prairie Dog Town State Park. Just as the name implies, there is an active prairie dog town there—one of the last of its kind. The tiny park, located right along the interstate with a railroad just beyond, is however, a surprisingly good place to see prairie dogs living otherwise undisturbed. But with the constant whirr of a busy freeway, punctuated by locomotives dragging eternal black streams of overflowing coal cars, it's also a great place to get a glimpse into what has happened to the world of prairie dogs and why there are so few left of their besieged and embattled species.

If we ever completely decode prairie dog language, we're likely to find that the word for human is unflattering at best. Edward Abbey (author of such inspirational works as *The Monkey Wrench Gang* and *Heyduke Lives*) wrote, "We are obliged...to spread the news, painful and bitter though it may be for some to hear, that all living things on earth are kindred." No doubt many prairie dogs, embittered by the cruel treatment their families have endured, would find it painful indeed to claim any kinship to the human race.

Jim Robertson is the president of C.A.S.H. Text and photos for this article were excerpted from his book, *Exposing the Big Game: Living Targets of a Dying Sport*. You can find Jim Robertson's book on [Amazon](#).

In Memoriam

DR. HOLLY CHEEVER

A personal note by Anne Muller:

So much has been written about Holly that it's hard to say more, but I want to express my deep sorrow over the passing of this precious person and animal advocate.

We all know that veterinarians are busier than MDs, but Holly was known for going the extra mile, and that she did, both figuratively and literally.

Thirty years ago, when I first moved to New Paltz, home of the famous Mohonk House and Mohonk Preserve, I was told by a rock climber that hunting was allowed on the property.

We reached out to a number of organizations and to Holly to join a meeting we had set up with board members and the DEC to appeal to Mohonk to discontinue their hunting "program."

Holly immediately agreed to attend. She was such a powerful voice for why hunting should be discontinued. Just the fact that she was a veterinarian gave her the gravitas needed in this meeting.

Did it result in the discontinuation of hunting? No. But I will always remember Holly for that meeting as well as the other meetings and events that she attended to keep animals from institutionalized harm.

Animals sadly have lost a precious advocate. Holly will always be in my heart.



NEWHAVEN NEWS

Karen Schumaker, the founder and director of the **Newhaven Private Wildlife Sanctuary**, and publisher of the *Newhaven News*, has been "protecting private lands for non-human indigenous plants and animals since 1992."

Karen is a true blue defender of wildlife and land. She publishes her typed newsletter several times a year. In her publication, she meticulously describes every color, feather, scale, twitch, eye-contact, posture, condition, of the animals who grace her land.

To receive her publication, write to Karen Schumaker, Founder/Director, POB 217, Deary, ID 83823.

IOWANS NEEDED!

Herman Lenz is a farmer in Iowa who adamantly opposes hunting. He has lived with deer peacefully for many decades and reports that "Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds signed Senate File 106 into law on May 6, 2025, authorizing the lawful possession of loaded firearms while operating or riding snowmobiles and all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) under specific conditions."

Frighteningly Iowa is moving closer to allowing the discharge of firearms from moving vehicles.

If you live in Iowa and can work with Herman to prevent more liberalization of firearms use and hunting. Please contact wildwatch@verizon.net.

KILLING THE BARRED OWL TO “SAVE” THE SPOTTED OWL



Spotted owl, painted by Barry Kent MacKay.

Text and Painting by Barry Kent MacKay

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In watching the American TV series, Boardwalk Empire, one hears, in almost every rural night scene, the call of an owl that sounds, to me, something like “hoo...hoo-hoo, hoo-hoo-herrrrr” with the last syllable slurred and a little guttural. The call can be heard in many American night scenes of movies and TV shows and very

appropriately, since it is characteristic of rural night in much of North America, especially in the south-east. They occur north into Canada and are often one of the more easily seen owls here in Ontario. My first painting is in oils and is very recent, while the second one is in acrylics and was done many years ago.

They are medium-sized owls, the northern subspecies that I have painted range from about 620 grams to over 800 grams while females are distinctly larger, up to over 900 grams. They eat mostly small mammals but will take any prey they can overcome. While they normally pounce on animals from above (having excellent night vision and hearing and a very silent flight) they have been seen catching birds and bats in flight. They will take large invertebrates, and have been seen dining on carrion, albeit rarely.

THERE IS A HUGE CONTROVERSY RAGING IN CONSERVATION CIRCLES

Spotted Owl

The Barred Owl’s range is moving west, and now overlaps that of a species native to mostly old growth forests of North America, south into Mexico, the Spotted Owl (*Strix occidentalis*), which is endangered (virtually gone from B.C.) I have included an oil painting I did of that species many years ago.

Historically the prairies were an effective barrier to Barred Owls, who require trees, but humans changed the environment giving them numerous

habitat pathways westward. They are bigger and more successful as hunters than the Spotted, so out-compete them. Sometimes female Barreds will mate with male Spotted, and perhaps the odd large Barred Owl will even prey on the Spotted but the main problem is that the Barreds out-compete the Spotted whose native forests have often been over-“harvested” by the timber industry.

Barred Owl

It’s a human-caused problem but the Barred are scapegoated, with the U.S. killing large numbers of them. The problem will be exacerbated now that the U.S. is freeing up previously protected forest for cutting.

The current plan is to kill more than 2400 Barred Owls.



Barred Owl painted by Barry Kent MacKay

Barred Owls have much broader habitat preferences than the Spotted and for the old growth forests needed by Spotted Owls to recover would take centuries if it could even happen. Killing Barred Owls would have to continue in perpetuity. Biologists are proficient at telling the two species apart, but a grant has been awarded the Hoopa Valley Native Americans in California to kill up to 1,500 Barred Owls, and sport hunters may also be recruited. **The two species are too similar to assume Spotted won’t accidentally be killed as well. I’ve seen the Spotted Owl in the wild, a most beautiful species that I want to survive, but this plan can’t make that happen.**

The Spotted Owl painting was done in oils and all three are approximately life-size.

Barry Kent MacKay

Bird Artist, Illustrator

Studio: (905) 472 9731

fineartamerica.com/profiles/barry-mackay

mimus@sympatico.ca

In an email message, Barry hit the nail on the head when he said:

I agree that wildlife management is a disaster...really it’s an oxymoron...we just have to manage us.

PENNSYLVANIA STARTS A PROGRAM TO HELP HUNTERS GAIN PERMISSION TO HUNT ON PRIVATE LANDS! *By Anne Muller*

Allow me to provide some context for the Clive Goddard cartoon that appears on Page 15:

As Mr. Goddard was researching hunting for C.A.S.H.'s next cartoon, he discovered a shocking article about a program to help Pennsylvania hunters gain permission to hunt on private land.

The **Article** appeared in GoErie and was written by Brian Whipkey, the PA Outdoors Columnist for GoErie.

The gist of the program is that Pennsylvania hunters can earn a "Master Hunter" certificate if they haven't committed a hunting crime and can prove that they can shoot straight.

The game department confesses that, over the years, they have received complaints about hunters who fire in unsafe directions, fire too close to residences, ignore property lines, and litter.

To encourage property owners to open their lands to hunters, they feel that anyone who earns this esteemed certificate should be welcomed with open arms.

Further, the names of the hopeful hunters who earn the certificate will be put into a database, thus making it easy for the property owner to allow them on the property.

(We haven't checked to see if renters would approve of the scheme or not.)

The PA Game Commission wants to get hunters out on private property to protect farmers' crops, calling it a "win-win."

They say it's a win for the farmers who don't want their crops eaten by deer, and a win for the hunters who want to access to those properties to "provide food for their families or to the communities."



PHOTO © BERND DIRICH ON UNSPLASH

The game commission doesn't mention that it's their management of deer for hunting that has created any overpopulation of deer!

Working in tandem with the game commission, the PA Farm Bureau wants a program like this to help agricultural landowners to be able to connect with "ethical" hunters.

Additionally, a Farm Bureau representative would like the removal of the Sunday hunting ban.

Why is the Master Hunter program needed? They say "It comes down to communication."

Over the years, the Game Commission has received complaints of safety zone violations, hunters hunting too close to residences, hunters not recognizing where a neighbor's property starts, firing in unsafe directions, littering, traveling in vehicles across fields.

All of the above has rightfully caused property owners to post their property to keep hunters off their land.

The underlying lie is that The Game Commission is PRODUCING DEER FOR HUNTERS! THE GAME COMMISSION IS, IN FACT, THE CAUSE OF ANY DEER DEPREDATION OF CROPS!

The PA Farm Bureau, rather than playing ball with the Game Commission, should be suing PA Game Commission.

A wink and a nod is extremely costly to the loss of crops for food or ethanol, cruel to the wildlife, potentially dangerous to the families that are in harm's way from hunters with high-powered weapons.

See Clive Goddard's cartoon on Page 15.

ASK Uncle Jim



By Jim Robertson

GOT A QUESTION FOR UNCLE JIM? You can e-mail it to: wildwatch@verizon.net

WOULD YOU RATHER SNAIL MAIL YOUR QUESTION?

Send it to: C.A.S.H., POB 562, New Paltz, NY 12561

Uncle Jim gets a lot of mail so don't be offended if he cannot answer your question in the Courier.

*Dear Uncle Jim,
Don't you people at C.A.S.H. at least agree with hunting seasons to keep animals like deer from becoming a road hazard?
Chester Boswell,
Reedspart, Connecticut*

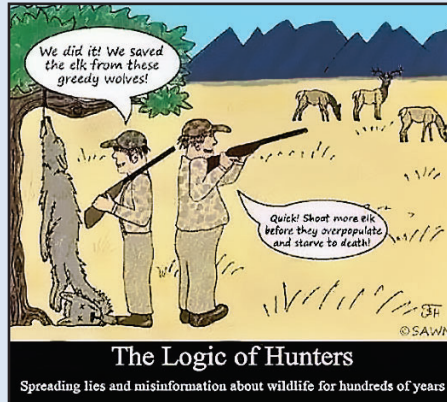
Dear Chester,

Driving late for work early one morning, I came within inches of hitting a bull elk who decided, at the last minute, to run across the highway right in front of me. Fortunately no one else was on that lonely stretch of road at the time, for if I hadn't stomped on the brakes and cranked the wheel, we would probably both be dead. I saw up close and personal how hitting an animal as large as that could do lethal damage. But the experience did not change my attitude on whether migratory wildlife should be considered a road hazard.

There's no doubt that we humans—in our full metal jacketed projectiles, lumbering headlong 60 mph through the former wilderness—are the real hazards. We're the ones breaking nature's rules by inventing machines that can go so fast they can put an end to anyone they run into. But we drive like we're saying, "We have important places to go—everyone else beware or be damned! No lowly animal better get in our way!"

If this incident had proven fatal for us, I would have wanted my epitaph to read: "I'm sorry beautiful creature. There's nowhere I had to be that was

worth the risk of ending your precious life."



*Dear Uncle Jim,
I've been a Montana hunter for the past 27 years, but lately I've found that the wolves have made the other game too hard to hunt. It used to be a cinch to shoot a deer above a cut bank and roll it into the back of your rig. Can you give me one good reason we should allow predators in this state when hunters were doing a fine job controlling deer and elk populations before wolves were reintroduced?
Hank Chapman,
Livingston, Montana*

Dear Hank,

I can think of a lot of good reasons to have wolves around (not to mention the fact that you don't have the right to decide which species should exist or not).

To give you a reason you should be able to relate to, wolves are just doing their job of preventing deer and elk from over-grazing. The fact is, wolves keep browser and grazer populations healthy precisely by keeping them on the move, making sure they don't get too complacent. As with human beings, inertia can set in from staying in one place,

causing individuals or entire populations to get fat and lazy.

(Note to C.A.S.H. members: The next time you hear hunters complaining about wolves, remember, it's not because they really think wolves are going to eliminate all "their" elk—they just don't want to have to walk too far from the pickup truck to make their kill.)

*Dear Uncle Jim,
Why do you hate hunters so much?
Denton Kirby,
Gary, Indiana*

Dear Denton,

I'm sorry if some of my writing is leading you to believe that I hate all hunters. Not so, what I hate is the act of hunting and its end results. It's the ignorance and the killing I hate, not necessarily the people.

I know that many hunters are just doing what they do to animals because it's the popular thing to do if they want to fit in with the people they associate with. In that case I hate the peer pressure that seduces them and their weakness to resist it. But I don't outright hate those people because I know if they were influenced by peer pressure to take up hunting, there's a chance they'll respond to social pressure against hunting one day and join their fellow hunters who have turned away from the sport.

Then there are those hunters who sadistically enjoy killing or making animals suffer. That's a different story.

C.A.S.H. CATALOG

A Voice in the Wilderness

Videotape approximately
20 minutes.

\$12.00 and \$8 for
members.



Luke Dommer

This video is an expose of wildlife management by Luke Dommer, founder of C.A.S.H. It was produced by Focus on Animals, CT. Esther Mechler of Focus has generously given C.A.S.H. the right to sell this videotape. Copies have been donated by Nancy Gordon, founder of the former audio-visual company, HAVE.

HUMOR



ARTWORK © CLIVE GODDARD

"I don't care if you *do* have permission to hunt on private land!"

PLEASE SEE RELATED ARTICLE ON PAGE 13.

HOW YOU CAN HELP US DO MORE:

- ✓ Become a member
- ✓ Include WILDLIFE WATCH, INC. in your will (you may earmark bequests for C.A.S.H.). Please include Wildlife Watch Inc. in your Will or Trust, and/or make Wildlife Watch one of the beneficiaries of your life insurance policy.
- ✓ Donate shares of stock, avoid capital gains, and get a tax deduction! Notify your broker or the company whose stock you hold. Ask them to transfer stock to Wildlife Watch, Inc. Federal Tax Identification Number: 13-3076705

A copy of our latest annual report may be obtained from Wildlife Watch, Inc., or from the Office of the Attorney General, Charities Bureau, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271.

*C.A.S.H. is grateful to
the Mary J. and Frank
L. Hoffman Family
Foundation for hosting
the C.A.S.H. website.*

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