

Deborah Liske

Subject: FW: Moratorium on Recreation hunting of wolves on Vancouver Island
Attachments: MT-Minister-Conroy-Moratorium-Wolf-Hunting.pdf; Letter to Mayor and Councils March 2021.pdf

From: Lisa Trotter
Date: March 29, 2021 at 5:38:56 PM PDT
To: Mayor and Council <mayorandcouncil@esquimalt.ca>
Subject: **Moratorium on Recreation hunting of wolves on Vancouver Island**

To Mayor Desjardins and Council,

The District of Oak Bay has made a Motion to the AVICC asking for a moratorium on the recreational hunting of wolves on Vancouver Island pending scientific studies. The issue of hunting wolves has been recently brought to light by the extermination of the wolf pack in Metchosin/East Sooke see: <https://www.focusonvictoria.ca/reporting/34/>.

On behalf of the Coexisting with Carnivores Alliance and the Wild Wise Society, we are requesting the Town of Esquimalt to write a letter of support to the Oak Bay Motion to Minister Conroy and the AVICC. Please see our attached letter.

I am attaching a letter of support written by the District of Sooke for your information. It is our hope that a number of municipalities will express their support for this resolution prior to the AVICC AGM on May 28, 2021.

Please contact us if you have any questions about this issue.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Lisa Trotter,
Wild Wise Society Volunteer

On behalf of...

Nitya Harris
Coexisting with Carnivores Alliance
coexcarnivores@gmail.com

CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT RECEIVED: <u>March 30, 2021</u> For Information <input type="checkbox"/> CAO <input type="checkbox"/> Mayor/Council Other _____ Referred to: <u>Rachel</u> For <input type="checkbox"/> Action <input type="checkbox"/> Response <input type="checkbox"/> Report For Agenda <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council <input type="checkbox"/> COTW <input type="checkbox"/> IC



File No 0400-01

March 8, 2021

Attention: Minister Katrine Conroy
BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development
Via email: FLNR.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Re: Moratorium on Recreational Wolf Hunting on Vancouver Island

Dear Minister Conroy,

I am writing today regarding the District of Oak Bay's Feb. 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 BC *"implement a moratorium on recreational wolf hunting on Vancouver Island, pending 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."*

I am contacting you directly to express my support for this resolution while also sharing some of the outrage expressed within the District of Sooke at last month's news that a Victoria big-game hunter was planning to "trap and kill an entire pack" in the Sooke Hills, according to a report that first appeared in the *Globe and Mail*.

Premier Horgan was duly concerned about this when he first learned of it at a press conference on Feb. 10. And many of us in Sooke were sickened by this callous threat, especially given how all levels of government and many NGOs are working so hard, effectively and strategically to protect wildlife and habitat.

We in Sooke are certainly encouraged to learn of your willingness to consult with the BC Wildlife Federation and the BC Trappers Association to "close the loopholes" in hunting legislation that allows the kind of behaviour illustrated by this regrettable situation. This said, a moratorium on hunting and trapping on Vancouver Island is urgent and essential until we learn more about the island's wolf population.

The Sooke organization Project HOWL (Help Our Wolves Live), founded by local teenagers Finn and Chloe Unger, has reported that no less than nine packs of the genetically distinct Vancouver Island "sea wolf" (*Canis lupis crassodon*) roam the Sooke Hills. The Ungers have documented the role of these remarkable wild creatures in creating a balanced ecosystem -- "if we let them," they add.

The Wild Wise Sooke Society, which receives annual funding from the District of Sooke, has been delivering public education campaigns focused on bears, cougars and other local wildlife, wolves included. Its new "Living with Wolves" working group is a collaboration with Coexisting With Carnivores' Nitya Harris and will involve 20 dedicated volunteers. "We are hoping to not only spread education on the importance of wolves as a keystone species but also encourage

others to support the moratorium on wolf hunting on the island," writes Wild Wise Sooke coordinator Sam Webb. The group intends to consult with First Nations and the BC-SPCA in moving ahead.

Sadly, Ms. Webb reports that one of the Sooke region packs identified by Project HOWL has now seemingly been eradicated according to anecdotal evidence from Sooke wildlife photographer Gary Schroyen. He has been closely studying wolves in East Sooke and Metchosin, and he believes one particular pack has been destroyed with the possible exception of a last remaining member. Wild Wise intends to honour this pack by posting videos and photos on its website as inspiration to protect our Sooke wolves before it's too late.

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.

Sincerely,



Maja Tait
Mayor

cc Premier John Horgan

cc Mayor Kevin Murdoch, City of Oak Bay mayor@oakbay.ca

cc Ian Morrison, President, AVICC ian.morrison@cvrd.bc.ca

cc Brian Frenkel, President, Union of BC Municipalities bfrenkel13@gmail.com

cc Sam Webb, Wild Wise Sooke Society wildwise123@gmail.com

cc Nitya Harris, Coexisting With Carnivores coexcarnivores@gmail.com

References:

- Wild Wise Sooke: <https://www.wildwisesooke.com>
- Project HOWL: <https://www.facebook.com/ProjectHOWL>
- Sooke Talks ~ Finn & Chloe Unger: <https://www.youtube.com/watch/VjEDue4pODc>
- Coexisting With Carnivores: <https://coexcarnivores.org>
- *The Globe & Mail* (Feb. 12, 2021): <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/british-columbia/article-bc-to-tighten-rules-for-trapping-wolves>
- *Victoria Times Colonist* (Feb. 12, 2021): <https://www.timescolonist.com/news/local/hunter-s-social-media-posts-prompt-outrage-calls-for-more-protection-for-wolves-1.24281261>

March 29, 2021

Dear Mayor and Council,

RE: Moratorium on recreational wolf hunting on Vancouver Island

On behalf of Coexisting with Carnivores Alliance (CwCA) and the Wild Wise Society, we are writing to express concern regarding the recreational hunting of wolves on Vancouver Island.

CwCA is a non-profit organization that promotes coexistence between people, bears, cougars and wolves on southern Vancouver Island. The Wild Wise Society is a wildlife educational program designed to reduce human-wildlife conflicts in various communities. Both organizations work closely with the Conservation Officer service, provincial government staff and local wildlife officers to teach people the tools needed to coexist so that we can share the landscape.

As a part of this work, we are concerned for the survival of the subspecies of Grey Wolf (*canis lupus nublus*) that live on Vancouver Island. In British Columbia wolves are killed by legal recreational hunting and trapping - the largest source of mortality for wolves. In many cases in BC, there is no limit to the number of wolves that can be killed daily. Wolves play an important ecological role as apex predators. They provide food to other species who scavenge on their kills, cycle nutrients through the environment and regulate populations of deer and elk leading to greater biodiversity and balance of the natural ecosystem. Healthy wolf populations support intact, functional and biodiverse ecosystems. We believe that it is possible for humans to coexist with wolves in a way that is beneficial to both species as well as the ecosystem. This would require a better understanding of wolves and their interactions with their habitat and with humans.

At present, there is very little information available regarding the population of wolves on Vancouver Island, and how the recreational hunting of such species affects the long-term survival of the species and their habitat. Without science-driven decision making there is concern that wolf numbers may drop significantly under current regulations, as experienced on Vancouver Island between 1950s and 1970s.

The District of Oak Bay has put forward a Motion to AVICC as follows:

“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 AVICC and UBCM 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 bio-diversity, wildlife ecology and sustainability of the resident wolf population."

The District of Sooke has provided a letter of support to this Motion (see attached). We request a letter from you to Minister Conroy and the AVICC in support of the Resolution by Oak Bay prior to the AVICC AGM on May 28, 2021. Please feel free to contact us at coexcarnivores@gmail.com for any further information.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Nitya Harris
Chair, Coexisting with Carnivores Alliance
coexcarnivores.org

Samantha Webb, BSc, RVT, WR
Wild Wise President
wildwise123@gmail.com