

WOLVES KEEP YELLOWSTONE IN BALANCE



⬇️ **IN THE 1920S**, government policy allowed the extermination of Yellowstone's gray wolf — the apex predator — triggering an ecosystem collapse known as *trophic cascade*.

⬆️ **IN 1995** — through use of the Endangered Species Act — the conservation community reintroduced the gray wolf to restore balance.

The impact is dramatic.



⬇️ **Elk populations exploded** without their primary predator, resulting in severe overgrazing of willows and aspen needed by beavers for food, shelter and dam building.

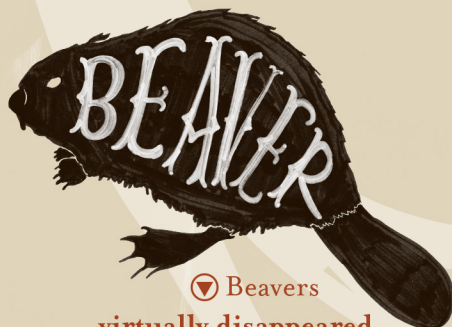


⬇️ **Various scavenger species suffered** without year-round wolf kills to feed on.

⬆️ **Today, biodiversity is enriched** and scavenger species reap the benefits of regular, wolf-supplied meals.



⬇️ **Without wolves**, the coyote became an apex predator, driving down populations of pronghorn antelope, red fox and rodents, and birds that prey on small animals.



⬇️ **Beavers virtually disappeared** in the northern range. Dams disintegrated, turning marshy ponds into streams. Massive loss of mature willows and aspens. Heavy stream erosion. Many plant and animal species affected.



⬆️ **After wolf reintroduction**, in the northern range, elk numbers drop and beaver colonies increase from 1 to 12. Insects, songbirds, fish, and amphibians thrive.



⬆️ **As the wolf returns**, coyote numbers drop by half, allowing antelope, rodent and fox populations to increase.

