

NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS GRAZING CAMPAIGN

Livestock Versus Wildlife

Grazing Competition with Wildlife

Forage Allocation

- In one study, scientists found that domestic livestock grazing consumed 88.8 percent of the available forage (cattle and [domesticated] horses 82.3 percent, free-roaming horses 5.8 percent, sheep 0.7 percent), leaving 11.2 percent to wildlife species (mule deer 10.1 percent, pronghorn 0.9 percent, bighorn sheep 0.1 percent, elk 0.1 percent).¹

Forage Use

- It is a simple concept: forage (grass, forbs [wildflowers], shrubs) consumed by domestic livestock is not available as food and cover for native wildlife—species that are important to healthy ecosystems, admired by wildlife enthusiasts, and prized by hunters. Range managers use the rather imprecise animal unit month or AUM to measure and allocate forage. An AUM is the amount of forage necessary to sustain a cow and calf for one month (approximately 650 pounds, although some estimates are more, between 800-1000 pounds²). Below are generally accepted AUM equivalents.

Native Wildlife	Animals Per AUM ³	Domestic Livestock	Animals Per AUM ⁴
Bighorn Sheep	6.9	Cow	1
Pronghorn	10.8	Bull	1.25
Mule Deer	7.8	Horse	1.25
Elk	2.1	Goat	5
Bison	0.8	Sheep	5
Moose	1.2		

- The threatened desert tortoise eats less vegetation in one year than a cow eats in one day.⁵
- Percentage of prairie dog towns eliminated for ranching in the 20th century: **98 percent**.⁶
- Number of species, including ferrets, hawks, owls, mice and snakes, dependent on prairie dogs and their burrows: **170**.⁷

Predator Control to Protect Livestock

Predators Killed by USDA Wildlife Services FY1999⁸	
Animal	Number
Coyote	85,938
Fox	6,182
Bobcat	2,435
Badger	601
Black bear	359
Mountain lion	347
Total	95,862

Percent of cattle and calf losses attributed to predation (1995): **2.7 percent.**⁹

Percent of cattle and calf losses attributed to digestive problems, respiratory difficulties, calving complications, weather and other causes (1995): **97.3 percent.**¹⁰

¹ Cited in R. R. Kindschy, C. Sundstrom, and J. D. Yoakum, 1982, Wildlife habitats in managed rangelands—the Great Basin of southeastern Oregon: pronghorns, Gen. Tech. Rep. PNW 145, USDA-Forest Service; USDI-BLM, Portland, OR: 6.

² GAO. 1988. Public rangelands: some riparian areas restored but widespread improvement will be slow. RCED-88-105. General Accounting Office. Washington, DC: 12.

³ Willers, B. 2002. Where bison once roamed: the impacts of cattle and sheep on native herbivore. Pages 241-244 *in* G. Wuerthner and M. Matteson (eds.). WELFARE RANCHING: THE SUBSIDIZED DESTRUCTION OF THE AMERICAN WEST. Foundation for Deep Ecology/Island Press. Covelo, CA. (p. 243, *citing* U.S. Dept. Agric., 1976, National Range Handbook; and Wyoming Game and Fish Dept., 1998, internal data); and other sources.

⁴ Willers, B. 2002. Where bison once roamed: the impacts of cattle and sheep on native herbivore. Pages 241-244 *in* G. Wuerthner and M. Matteson (eds.). WELFARE RANCHING: THE SUBSIDIZED DESTRUCTION OF THE AMERICAN WEST. Foundation for Deep Ecology/Island Press. Covelo, CA. (p. 243, *citing* U.S. Dept. Agric., 1976, National Range Handbook; and Wyoming Game and Fish Dept., 1998, internal data); and other sources.

⁵ Forest Guardians. undated. Grazing to extinction (factsheet). Forst Guardians. Sante Fe, NM.

⁶ Baskin, Y. 1997. THE WORK OF NATURE: HOW THE DIVERSITY OF LIFE SUSTAINS US. Island Press. Washington, DC: 165.

⁷ Miller, B., G. Ceballos, R. Reading. 1994. The prairie dog and biotic diversity. *Cons. Biol.* 8(3): 678 (citing R. Reading, 1993, Toward an endangered species reintroduction paradigm: a case study of the black-footed ferret. Ph.D. Diss., Yale Univ., New Haven, CT).

⁸ Predators killed in 17 western states. Predator Conservation Alliance. 2001. Wildlife "Services?" A presentation and analysis of the USDA Wildlife Services Program's expenditures and kill figures for fiscal year 1999. Predator Conservation Alliance. Bozeman, MT: 7.

⁹ USDA-NASS. 1996. 1995 cattle and calf losses valued at \$1.8 billion. USDA-National Agricultural Statistics Service, Agricultural Statistics Board. (released May 17, 1996). Available at <http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/reports/nassr/livestock/pct-bbpl/>. More livestock are killed by domesticated dogs than mountain lions, bobcats, bears, and wolves, *combined*.

¹⁰ USDA-NASS. 1996. 1995 cattle and calf losses valued at \$1.8 billion. USDA-National Agricultural Statistics Service, Agricultural Statistics Board. (released May 17, 1996). Available at <http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/reports/nassr/livestock/pct-bbpl/>.