

Wolf Conservation Center



Annual Report 2020



Table of Contents

Protecting the future for wolves	01
Lessons from 2020	02
2020 at a Glance	03
Serving our Global Community	05
Reconnecting to the Wild World	06-07
Recovering Endangered Species	09
Preparing the Public for Action	11
Investing in the Future	11
In the News	13
2020 Highlights	14-15
Financials	17



A close-up photograph of a wolf's face, showing its eye and fur, positioned on the left side of the page. The wolf's fur is light brown and grey, and its eye is dark and looking towards the right.

Protecting the Future for Wolves

The Wolf Conservation Center (WCC), founded in 1999 by Hélène Grimaud, is a private, not-for-profit environmental education organization working to protect and preserve wolves in North America through science-based education, advocacy, and participation in the federal recovery and release programs for two critically endangered wolf species: the Mexican gray wolf and the red wolf.

Lessons From 2020

This year, people across the world faced bitter challenges in the midst of a global pandemic. Our heart goes out to those who struggled, lost loved ones, or dealt with pain and heartbreak.

But, amidst this tragedy came unity. Like wolves, we learned to come together and lean on each other during the hardest of times, to help one another, and to protect the ones we love.

Many people found the chance to reconnect with nature and to learn the role that we each play in the intricate balance of life on Earth. We are all connected, and the decisions that we make to protect and preserve Earth's inhabitants will ensure a bright future for all of us.

To our loyal supporters near and far, thank you for sticking by us through every journey.

After all, the strength of the wolf is the pack.



Maggie Howell

Executive Director



2020

at a Glance

10,951

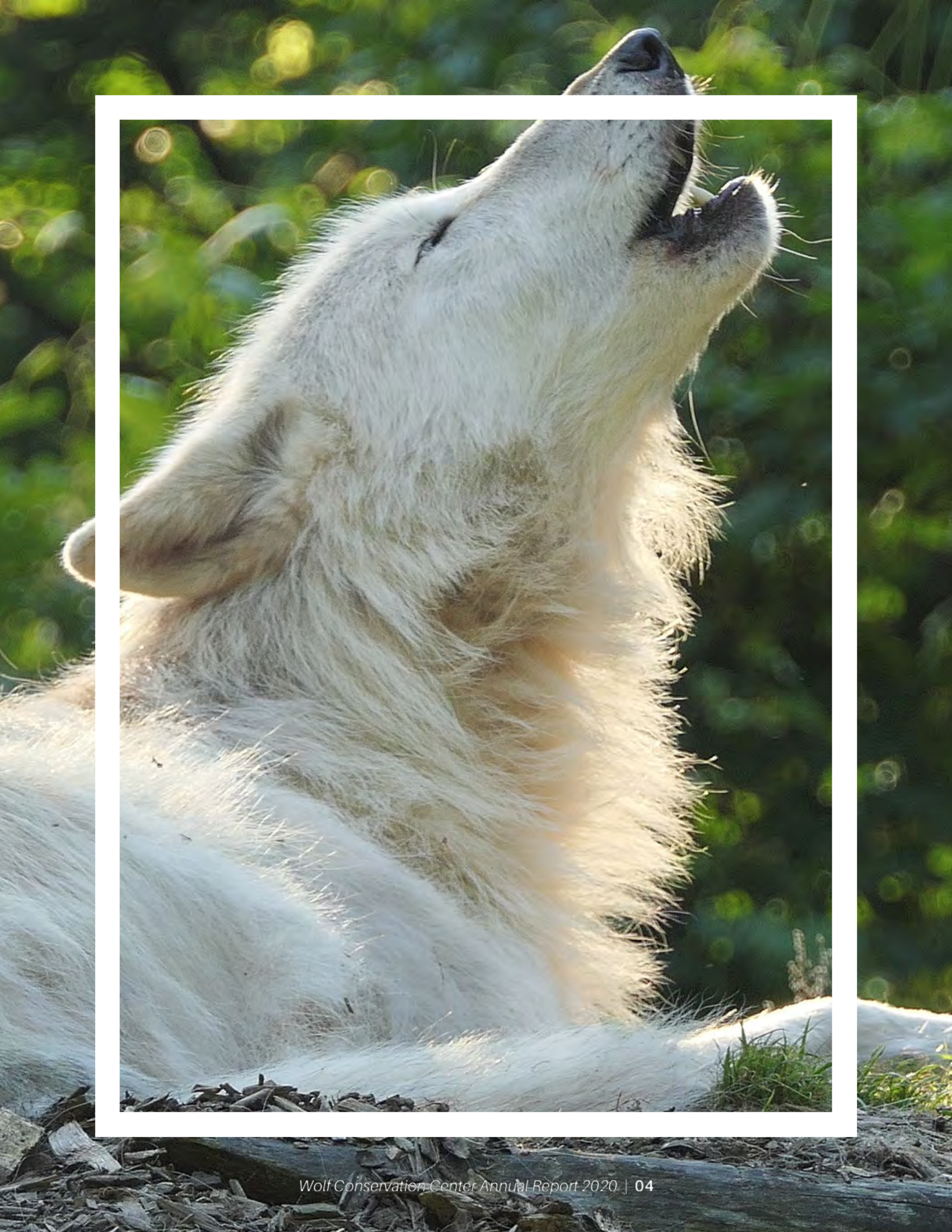
People were educated through onsite, offsite, and virtual education programs

7,424

Donors supported us through the year

44

Wolves were nurtured and cared for on our campus



Serving our Global Community

The Wolf Conservation Center's onsite and offsite education programs bridge public interest in environmental conservation with education to create informed action. The WCC's three education wolves reside on exhibit where they help teach the public about wolves and their vital role in the environment. Through wolves, the WCC teaches the broader message of conservation, ecological balance, and personal responsibility for improved human stewardship of our world.

Although COVID-19 closed our doors to the public in early 2020, we remained actively engaged with our global community. Inspired by the strong bonds maintained by wolf families even when miles apart, the WCC relied on new and innovative technology to help learners feel more connected to wolves than ever before. In March, we announced free distance learning programs to schools nationwide so that children could stay engaged and safe without sacrificing their education. Throughout nearly four months, free virtual programs were delivered to 67 classrooms and 3,135 people.



Our Wolves Have Neighbors

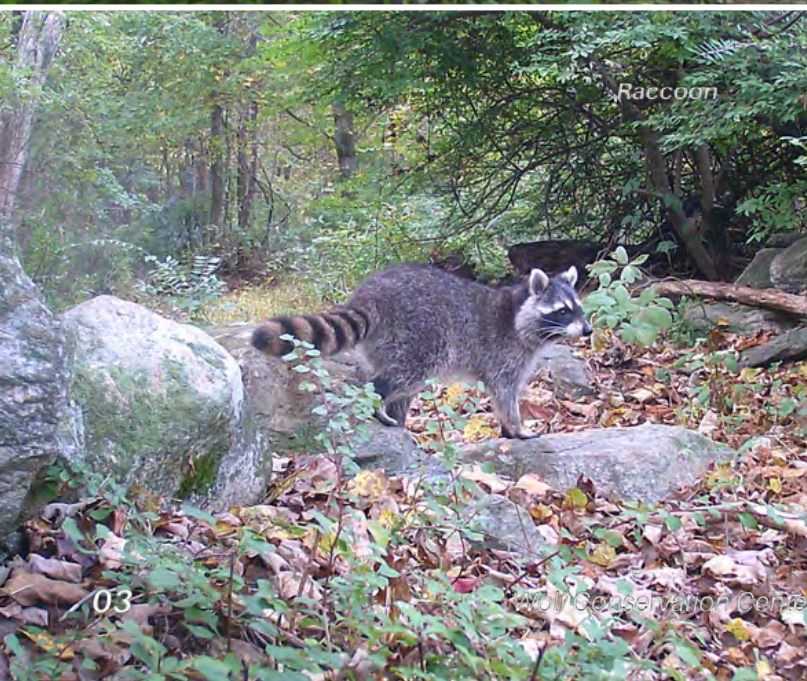
The natural, wooded campus of the WCC is home to an array of wildlife beyond the wolves we nurture within our gates. Bobcats, eastern coyotes, deer, raccoons, turkeys, hawks, and more are routinely spotted on the WCC's motion-sensored wildlife cameras.



Eastern coyote



Bobcat



Raccoon



White-tailed deer



Did You Know...

The eastern coyote, the charismatic canid native to the Northeast, is an adaptable hybrid. Research shows that the eastern coyote's genome contains DNA from coyotes, gray wolves, and even domestic dogs.

Reconnecting to the Wild World

In a Time of Physical Distancing

With the closure of public areas and many transitioning to remote work, 2020 became an opportunity to reconnect to nature. People all over the world discovered for the first time the fascinating ecosystems of their very own backyards.

Developed in 2019, the WCC's Wildlife Coexistence program is an initiative to teach the public about the ecological role of native species, and how to successfully coexist with local wildlife.

This initiative provides free programs for schools, nature centers, and libraries among other locations, to discuss the importance of local flora and fauna with particular emphasis on fostering peaceful interactions between humans and wildlife.

The unique nature of 2020 allowed this program to expand further into the virtual space, allowing the WCC to reach a broader audience that otherwise may have been excluded due to time and travel limitations.





Did You Know...

The red wolf is one of the world's most endangered species, with only 9 individuals known to be living in the wild on a small protected range in North Carolina.

Recovering Endangered Species

The Wolf Conservation Center participates in the federal Species Survival Plan (SSP) recovery programs for the Mexican gray wolf and the red wolf, two of the rarest mammals in North America. Both species at one time were extinct in the wild. As participants in these programs, the WCC houses and breeds endangered wolves, conducts critical conservation research, and makes recommendations for wild release.

What is a Species Survival Plan?

A Species Survival Plan is a breeding and management program under the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) designed to ensure the long-term sustainability of captive-based animal populations. The primary purpose of a SSP is to support the re-establishment of critically endangered, endangered, or threatened species through captive breeding, public education, research, and pre-release care.



©AMY SHUTT



Preparing the Public for Action

The WCC is a vocal and visible advocate in securing protections for wolves nationwide, utilizing its extensive online network to encourage supporters to speak up about issues that affect the recovery and success of wolves.

40K+ Weigh in on Mexican Gray Wolf Protections

On April 15, 2020, the US Fish and Wildlife Service opened a 60-day “scoping” period to receive public comments on needed changes to a management rule that would determine the recovery success of Mexican gray wolves in the southwestern United States. The WCC immediately released an action alert encouraging people across the country to submit comments to advocate for stronger protections.

In the days that followed, supporters of effective science-informed recovery of the critically endangered “lobos” submitted more than 40,000 comments. The large majority of these comments urged the USFWS to take all necessary measures to restore the endangered subspecies’ declining genetic health, allow unrestricted dispersal to critically important habitats, and remove the current population cap limiting the U.S. population to only 325 wolves.

Investing in the Future

In addition to its advocacy efforts, the Wolf Conservation Center provides funding to support research projects that advance the survival of wolf populations. By investing in conservation efforts through the **WCC Wildlife Conservation Awards**, the WCC integrates into its mission the expertise and knowledge of scientists advancing conservation in the biological, ecological, and social sciences.

In 2020, the WCC provided funding to support the Gulf Coast Canid Project, an effort to examine a recent discovery of red wolf hybrids along the Gulf Coast of Texas and Louisiana. The red wolf is one of the most endangered canids in the world, with only a handful of individuals remaining in the wild. Conservation efforts have focused exclusively on the reintroduced and captive populations, which have been assumed for 40 years to be the only red wolves left in the world. The recent discovery of extinct, or ghost, genes in the Gulf Coast region in hybrid coyotes demonstrates a distinct possibility that red wolf populations may continue to exist in Texas and Louisiana. The Gulf Coast Canid Project's work to unravel the untold history of these canids could change how red wolf conservation is approached in the future, leading to positive opportunities for conservation action and policy changes.







In the News

Gray Wolves Lose Federal Protections Nationwide

On October 29th, 2020, the Trump administration announced its decision to delist the gray wolf, stripping all gray wolves in the lower 48 states of their Endangered Species Act protections, save a small population of endangered Mexican gray wolves in Arizona and New Mexico.

The decision came despite robust opposition. In addition to the public's 1.8 million comments; 86 members of Congress, 100 scientists, 230 businesses, and 367 veterinary professionals all submitted letters to the USFWS opposing the wolf delisting plan.

Even the scientific peer reviews written at the behest of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) expressed significant concerns regarding the scientific integrity of the proposed rule and the biological report on which it was intended to be based. Moreover, the peer review concluded that the proposal contained several scientific errors, omissions, and misinterpretations.

With federal delisting comes the transfer of management authority from the federal government to the state agencies, most of which have shown little inclination to independently support gray wolf recovery at viable or ecologically effective levels. Since the rule went into effect in early 2021, states like Montana, Idaho, and Wisconsin have already unleashed cruel and brutal measures to reduce their wolf populations by any means necessary.

Change Starts with You

It is the loyal support of our friends and community that enables us to fight for wolf protections during one of the most uncertain and frightening times for North America's wolves in decades. We ask you to continue fighting with us to ensure a bright future for wolves - one where robust populations of wolves roam across North America's wild lands, where no species cowers on the edge of extinction, and where all people learn and understand the ecological role of these essential creatures.

2020

Highlights



Connecting People and Wolves Through Live-Streaming Webcams

Although the WCC's onsite programs came to a halt in 2020, wolf supporters stayed connected to their favorite WCC wolf families through an **extensive network of live-streaming webcams in each wolf enclosure**. These webcams allow an unobtrusive view into the lives of some of the world's most endangered wolves, helping people all over the globe open their minds and hearts to wolf conservation. Beyond fostering a peaceful connection between wolves and people, the WCC's webcams are a critical husbandry tool, allowing us to monitor wolves without frightening them or invading their space.



Uniting Global Supporters in a Virtual Running Challenge

In August 2020, the WCC held its first-ever **Run Like a Wolf 100 Mile Challenge**, a virtual challenge to complete 100 miles of running, walking, or hiking throughout the month of August. Over 1,200 supporters from 12 different countries put their feet to the ground in support of wolf conservation, raising over **\$70,000** for the WCC's efforts to protect and preserve wolves.



Wolf School with Raincoast Conservation Foundation

In August and September 2020, the WCC collaborated with Raincoast Conservation Foundation to deliver a series of educational webinars designed to deepen the public's understanding of wolves, wolf ecology and biology, and the issues that wolves face for their survival in British Columbia and around the world. The series featured several wolf and wildlife experts, including Co-Founder of Sea Legacy Cristina Mittermeier, Raincoast's Director of Science Dr. Chris Darimont, Dr. Heather Bryan, Dr. Paul Paquet, experts from the Wolf Conservation Center, and indigenous voices from the Tsleil-Waututh Nation, the Nez Perce Nation, and the Tla-o-qui-aht Nation.



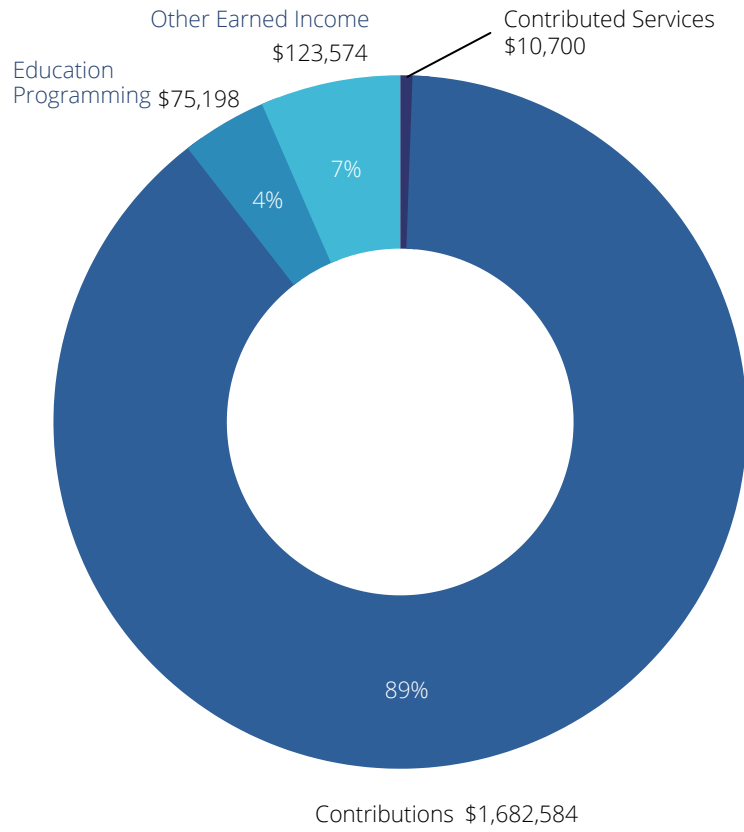
WCC's YouTube Channel in Action

Positive Videos of Wolves Linked to Higher Tolerance

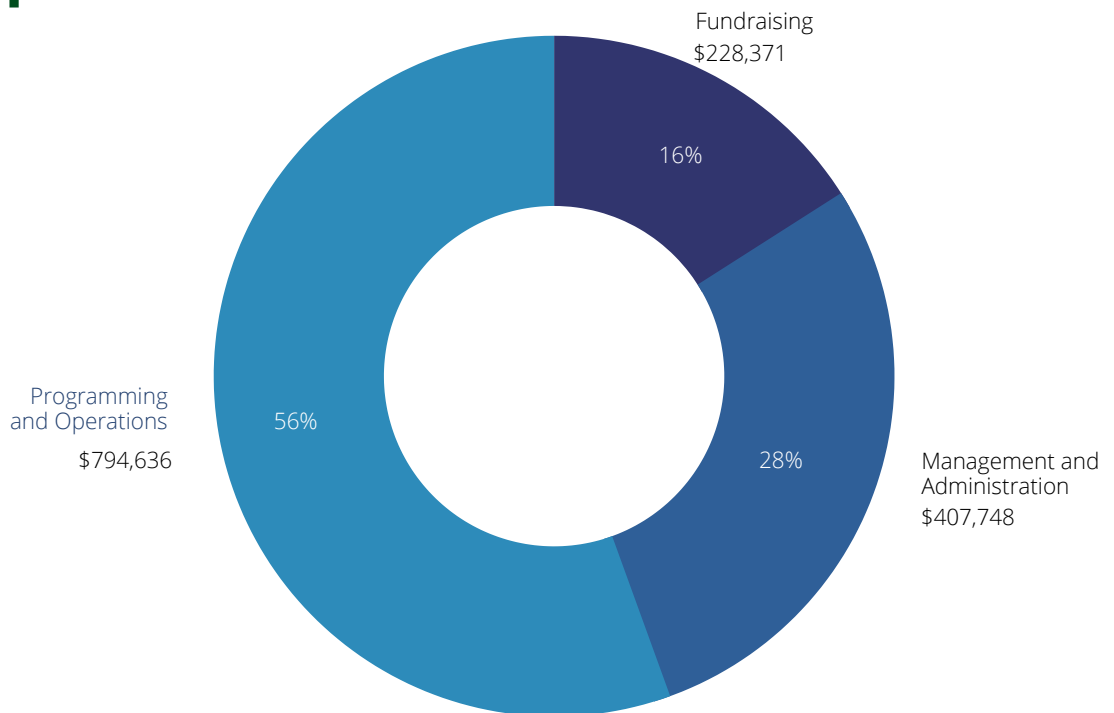
A recent study from North Carolina State University suggests that people have more tolerance for wolves after seeing positive videos about them, making YouTube an important wolf conservation tool. The WCC's YouTube channel shares intimate moments with critically endangered wolves caught on non-invasive live-streaming webcams, joyous howls from the Ambassador wolves, and other footage that gives viewers the chance to connect with wolf families from anywhere in the world. The WCC surpassed 100,000 subscribers in June.



Income



Expenses



*Excludes Capital Campaign

