Man sentenced for seeking to poison wolves

By **Reuters**

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By Laura Zuckerman

SALMON, Idaho (Reuters) - An outspoken critic of the U.S. government's push to restore wolves in the Northern Rocky Mountains was sentenced on Thursday in U.S. District Court to six days in jail and banned from public lands for two years for trying to poison the protected species.

Former Salmon, Idaho, resident Tim Sundles, 49, had pleaded guilty in November to planting tainted meatballs in the Salmon-Challis National Forest in central Idaho in 2004 with the aim of killing western gray wolves.

The pesticide-laced meatballs instead killed a coyote, a fox and magpies and sickened pet dogs, according to court records.

Sundles, a custom ammunition maker who moved to Montana last year, had publicly railed against the 1995 release of wolves into Idaho and Yellowstone National Park to re-establish an animal hunted and poisoned to near extinction.

Sundles was considered a hero by wolf foes in Idaho, where the animal has provoked fierce debate. Many in the state say wolves pose a threat to livestock.

In 2001, Sundles killed a wolf he said had attacked him and his wife while they were camping in the Idaho wilderness.

"Wolves are the worst wildlife disaster in the history of managed wildlife. You have to kill the living daylights out of them," Sundles told Reuters during an interview in November.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in January proposed removing western gray wolves from the federal threatened and endangered species list because of their strong comeback in Idaho, Montana and Wyoming.

In the mid-1990s the U.S. government released 66 of the animals into the region's remote mountains. They now number approximately 1,300, according to estimates by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service officials.

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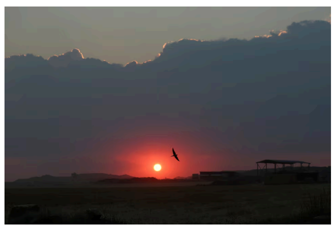

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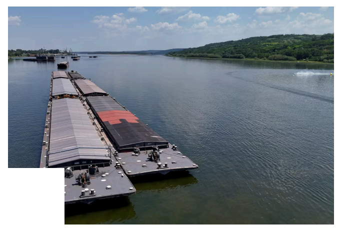

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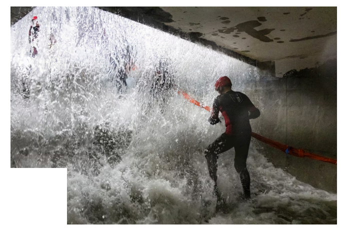

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