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Wolf Got a Taste of Beef

The endangered Mexican gray wolf that is under orders to be trapped or shot for killing livestock scavenged on a cow carcass before he started killing cattle, environmentalists said Wednesday.

In early 2005, the reintroduction program field team spotted the wolf, M859, feeding on the carcass of a cow that had died during calving. Before that, the wolf had been preying on elk.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued an order last week to permanently remove the wolf, which is in the Gila Wilderness, from the wild for killing three cows this year.

"It appears lone wolf 859 learned to prey on livestock from at least one carcass he scavenged on," said Michael Robinson of the Center for Biological Diversity. "It's the same story we've seen over and over again."

The center asked the service for "a Thanksgiving pardon to this wolf who stayed away from cattle until he was tempted by a cow he did not kill."