

Wildlife flourishes in irradiated, human-free Chernobyl zone

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis.

The sound was like nothing Tom Hinton had ever heard before: a chorus of baleful wolf howls, long and loud and coming from seemingly every direction in the darkness. The predators yipped and chirped and crooned to one another for what seemed like forever, sending a shiver of awe and intuitive fear down Hinton's spine.

"It was a primordial experience," he said, something most of humanity hasn't felt for tens of thousands of years, "back to when humans were prey."

It was only possible because of where Hinton was standing, a remote area along the Belarus-Ukraine border uninhabited by humans for decades.

They all left in the wake of a very different sound: the massive explosion of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in 1986 that left dozens dead and that spread a cloud of radiation driving more than 100,000 people from their homes across a 1,600-square-mile swath of Ukraine and Belarus.

No one lives in the post-apocalyptic setting – no one human, that is. Wildlife populations there — shaggy-haired wild boar, long-legged elk, the choruses of wolves that so captivated Hinton in August — are flourishing.

That's according to a study published recently in the journal *Current Biology*, which found that mammal numbers in the radiation-tainted exclusion zone are as high, if not higher, than in even the most protected parks in Belarus.

Read full, original post: [Chernobyl's human-free zone teems with wildlife, study finds](#)