



# Wolves and Livestock in Oregon

Wolves in Oregon are protected by the state Endangered Species Act (ESA). West of Hwys 395/78/95, wolves are also protected by the federal

ESA. Wolves will remain listed until a population of four breeding pairs for three consecutive years is documented in eastern Oregon and the Fish and Wildlife Commission de-lists them.

The goal of Oregon's Wolf Conservation and Management Plan is to ensure the conservation of gray wolves as required by Oregon law while protecting the social and economic interests of all Oregonians. Minimizing wolf-livestock conflict and reducing livestock losses to wolves is an important part of the Wolf Plan.

## **Proactive steps to minimize wolf-livestock conflict**

One way to minimize wolf-livestock conflict is to reduce attractants. Preying on livestock can be a learned behavior and wolves that find an easy meal once may return. Where possible, take these steps:

### **Haul away, burn or bury carcasses promptly.**

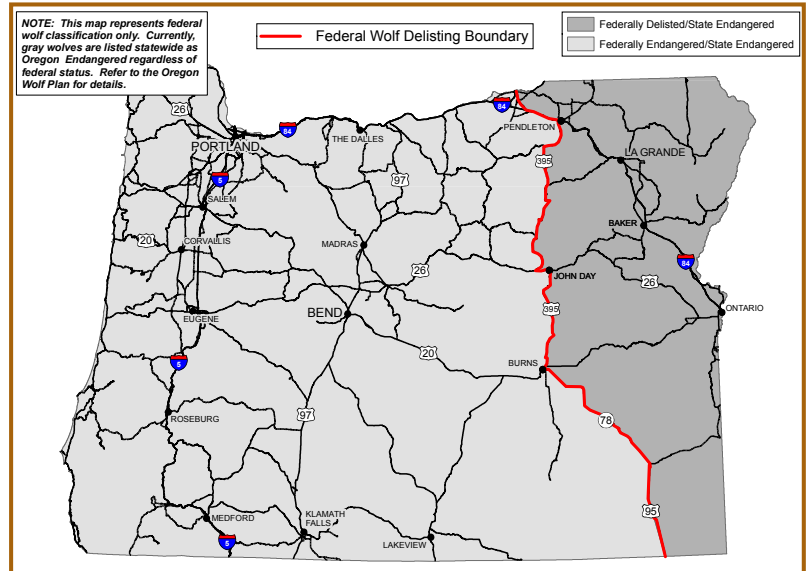
Wolves have a keen sense of smell and will easily find carcasses to scavenge. Getting rid of carcasses before wolves find them can reduce conflict. Wolves traveling through an area (e.g. not resident) are also less likely to stay if they cannot find an easy meal. If buried, carcasses should be covered with quicklime and by at least 4 feet of dirt.

**When livestock are giving birth, keep them close to outbuildings or other human presence,** which will often keep wolves away.

**Consider the use of guard dogs.** Talk to USDA, an extension agent, or ODFW for a recommendation on breeds.

- Remember dogs need human protection too so consider herders/range riders.
- More than one dog is recommended; multiple dogs are more likely to deter wolves. Single guard dogs can be vulnerable to wolf attack.
- Keep guard dogs and livestock away from den areas to reduce conflict. Wolves are especially territorial during breeding season (January-February), denning periods (April-May) or if wolf pups are nearby (new pups out of wolf dens April through June).

## Federal Wolf Classification in Oregon



**Erect barriers:** Consider fencing certain operations (portable options exist), penning animals (especially at night), the use of fladry (a series of red or orange flags hung on a rope) or turbofladry (flags hung on electrified fence line). Talk to ODFW, USDA, extension agent or other experts about the right barrier for your livestock operation.

**Be aware of wolf activity in your area:** Learn to recognize wolf sign (see page 3) and report it if you see it. ODFW regularly contacts livestock producers when there is resident wolf activity in their immediate area. You may also sign up to receive monthly updates about wolf activity by email at ODFW's wolf Web site (<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/wolves/reports.asp>).

**Investigate livestock behavior changes:** There are many causes for changes in livestock herd temperament. If you detect changes (e.g., bunching animals, animals breaking through fences, livestock reacting around working dogs) take the time to look for wolf sign and report it if found.

### **If you believe a wolf has killed or injured livestock, take the following steps:**

- Do not move or disturb evidence.
- Preserve wolf tracks, hair or scat by covering with plywood, weighted-down empty coffee cans or other material that won't ruin the evidence.
- Cover the carcass or any remains with a secured tarp to preserve them.
- Call ODFW or USDA Wildlife Services immediately so cause can be determined.

**Report all wolf sightings and wolf activity to ODFW, 541-963-2138 or online at [www.dfw.state.or.us/wolves](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/wolves)**

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## **Responding to wolf depredation or wolf activity**

The state's Wolf Management Plan provides livestock producers and wildlife managers with specific tools to manage any wolf depredation. Initially, these tools will emphasize non-lethal methods but may move to lethal control if non-lethal measures are ineffective. For more information including the complete Oregon Administrative Rule guiding responses to wolf depredation on livestock, visit [www.dfw.state.or.us/wolves](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/wolves) and click Livestock Owners.

### **No permit required**

If a livestock producer sees a wolf testing or chasing livestock or in close proximity, they may scare a wolf off by firing shots in the air, making loud noises or otherwise confronting the wolf provided no bodily harm is done to the wolf. Such incidents must be reported to ODFW (541-963-2138) within 48 hours. Livestock producers may not intentionally be looking for wolves under this scenario.

### **ODFW permit required Non-lethal control**

If persistent wolf activity around livestock occurs, producers may engage in additional harassment by permit:

- Harassment of wolves in ways that may cause bodily harm but not death (e.g., rubber bullets or bean bag projectiles).

- Intentional pursuit of problem wolves would be allowed under this permit to keep wolves away from livestock.
- If a wolf is captured, ODFW may relocate it. Before a permit is issued, ODFW will consider the location of den sites and any attractants that may lure wolves to the area. Wolf harassment under the permit must be reported to ODFW within 48 hours.

### **Permits for lethal control**

Permits for lethal control may be issued if non-lethal methods are deemed ineffective. This permit allows a livestock producer to kill a wolf "caught in the act" of attacking (but not testing or scavenging) livestock.

### **Lethal control for chronic damage situations**

ODFW and authorized agents may also conduct lethal removal of wolves after chronic depredations and ineffective non-lethal efforts.

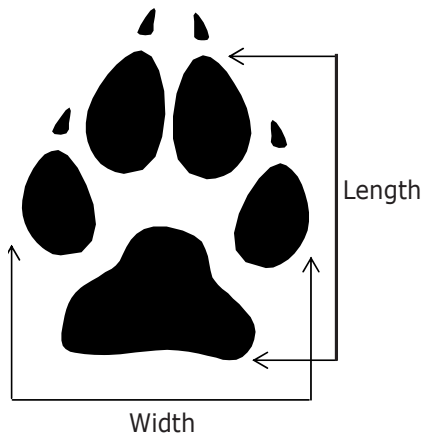


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# Wolf Tracks

## Track Identification:

- claws evident
- general oval shape
- track is longer than wide
- 4 toes, symmetrical
- single lobe on the front of the main foot pad

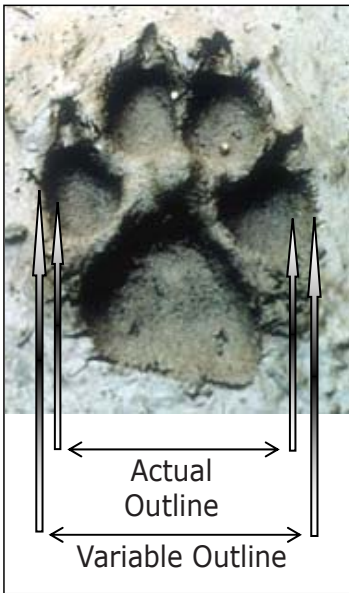


### Front (without claws)

- length: 3.8-4.6"
- width: 3.3-4.3"

### Hind (without claws)

- length: 3.4-4.2"
- width: 2.8-3.8"



### Measuring Tracks:

- measure the outline (inches)
- report length by width
- do not include claws
- measure several tracks

### NOTE:

Take into account the substrate. Soft mud or melted snow may make the foot size appear larger than it really is. Attempt to record the actual outline by measuring the bottom of the track.

### NOTE:

Measurement with claws adds about 0.5" to length



# Other tracks that may be confused for wolves

## Cougar Tracks

- generally no claws evident
- overall shape is round
- toes asymmetrical
- 2 lobes on front of main foot pad
- 3 lobes on back of main foot pad



### Cougar Front

- length: 3-4"
- width: 3-4"
- round

## Domestic Dog (not pictured):

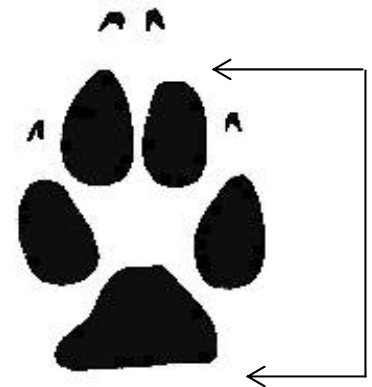
- similar to coyote and wolf
- vary greatly in size, but even large breeds often have smaller tracks than wolves
- travel path meanders around; route is not direct, energy efficient, or purposeful
- human tracks usually nearby

## Coyote Track

- similar in proportion to wolf, but much smaller
- claws evident

### Coyote Front (measurement without claws)

- length: 2-2.8"
- width: 2-2.4"
- oval



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