

## Radio Collars

The WPSR Working Group had a good discussion at the Aug 30 meeting on the values of continuing to maintain efforts for radio collaring wolves throughout geographic areas in Oregon. Roblyn Brown, ODFW Wolf Program Field Coordinator provided overview of the challenges to not only deploy the collars but also the reliability of individual collars with expected failure rates, and the caution to not over-rely on collars to address ongoing livestock management, target best management practices for non-lethal tools or as a critical tool for investigating wolf livestock conflict.

### Proposed Resolution to be reflected in the Plan update:

- As part of the Monitoring Wolves section of the Plan, radio-collaring will be identified as a priority action; collaring activities are recognized to have reasonable and practical limits with respect to budgetary, human health, and animal considerations.
- During Phase I and Phase II, continued efforts will be made to collar at least one member of known packs with emphasis on at least one breeding adult. Other pack members may be collared to the extent feasible and depending on circumstances or pack-specific monitoring needs.
- During Phase III, collaring is still important to generally monitor the wolf population (e.g., assists in counts of wolf packs as an indirect estimator of breeding pairs) and address situations of livestock depredation or other wolf-human conflict. While not all packs in Phase III areas will be expected to have collared wolves, managers will consider the proximity to livestock and history of wolf-livestock conflict when prioritizing collaring efforts.
- Dispersing wolves that appear to establish residency in new locations are also a priority consideration.
- GPS collars will continue to be used in select collaring situations where additional or more precise data is required. However, in some cases VHF radio-telemetry collars will be used to monitor wolves.

## Investigations

The Department conducts depredation investigations for the purpose of implementing the administrative rule requirements and to implement the Plan's management tools related to wolf-livestock conflict. The demands for wolf-related management activities on Department field staff has increased significantly and in several field offices has become very large, primarily a result of the increasing number of depredation investigations conducted. Consistent investigation protocols are especially important in situations of confirmed wolf depredation because of the potential management actions (e.g., lethal removal). Investigation results also link to compensation. Because of this, and regardless of who conducts the investigation in Phase 3, it is important to have a consistent protocol, training, and standards of confirmation.

### Proposed Resolution to be reflected in the Plan update

- Continue to utilize an evidence-based investigation process with field staff specifically trained in wolf depredation for determinations of wolf conflict.
- Continue to provide adaptive measures for local control to streamline the process and look for efficiencies where possible and appropriate.
- Develop certification training protocols for all wolf depredation investigators, which includes the required standards for confirmation of depredation as well as toolkit for non-lethal options.

## Other Sources of Mortality

Considerable information has been inserted into the Plan update, including potential conservation threats documented in Oregon and elsewhere in North America. Stakeholder requests regarding the identification of these potential threats were included in the draft update and the potential impacts are a focus for wolf conservation and management.

### Proposed Resolution to be reflected in the Plan update:

- As part of the next steps highlighted in the Plan, documentation of all known sources of mortality is a key component for spatial analysis and population modeling.
- Identifying and addressing sources of mortality (e.g., disease, poaching) and dispersal barriers (e.g. major roads lacking adequate wildlife corridor structures) is a recognized need for adaptive management.

## Compensation

As outlined in the Plan and supported through conversations at the August 30 WPSR meeting, continuing to have a Compensation program is important in the balance of Wolf Conservation and Management on Oregon. Since 2012, the ODA has implemented a wolf depredation compensation and financial assistance grant program (ORS 610.150) to assist livestock producers with costs associated with wolf depredation and non-lethal control measures. Funds from this grant program are awarded to counties to help create and implement county wolf depredation compensation programs.

The program is currently funded through a combination of federal grant funds, and funds in the Wolf Management Compensation and Proactive Trust Fund established by the Oregon Legislature in 2011 (ORS 610.155). ODFW assists with the implementation of this program through two primary roles: determining when wolf depredation occurs and delineating areas of known wolf activity. In addition, ODFW will continue to provide input to counties on appropriate non-lethal and preventative measures.

The first two initial topics (radio collars and investigations) directly support current actions available through the Compensation program.

### Proposed Resolution to be reflected in the Plan update:

- Maintain an integrated role with ODA, County Compensation Committees and producers to implement the Compensation program.