



ODFW LIVESTOCK DEPREDAATION INVESTIGATION REPORT

Investigation ID: 140613 Umatilla

Date Investigated: 6/13/2014

General Area: Wildhorse Road area – private land

General situation and animal information: A livestock producer observed several dead sheep in a pen on the morning of 6/13/2014. The same sheep and pen had experienced confirmed wolf depredation by the Umatilla River Pack in 2012, and the situation initially appeared similar to the producer. Wolf predation was suspected and ODFW investigated the same day. Upon arrival ODFW observed 6 dead sheep (3 adults, and 3 lambs). In addition, 6 injured sheep and a single missing lamb was reported – and many of the injured sheep were observed as having injuries by ODFW. It was estimated the sheep had been dead less than 24 hrs with one lamb having been partially consumed and 5 sheep showing no consumption. The sheep pen is immediately adjacent to the ranch house and the owner reported last observing the sheep the previous evening

Physical evidence of attack by a predator: Upon initial investigation, many large-predator bite marks were easily observed on both the dead and wounded sheep within the pen, indicating predation of live animals by one or more large predators. In addition, 3 of the dead adult ewes were necropsied confirming premortem bite wounds.

Evidence that the predator was a wolf: The large number and location of bite wounds on the dead adult ewes was typical of wolf – hind end, medial and lateral surfaces of hind legs, behind front shoulders, brisket area, and throat. On hind-end bite wounds, severe subcutaneous hemorrhage and severe muscle tissue damage which showed a shredding of muscle fibers – commonly observed with other confirmed wolf depredations in this area. Size and spacing of the premortem bite wounds (i.e., canine tooth marks) that could be reliably measured were at least 1.5” spacing, though the extremely high number of bite wounds made accurate measurements difficult.

Evidence of wolf presence near the time of the animal(s) death/injury: Location data from wolf OR14 (adult male from the Umatilla River pack) confirmed at least his presence immediately adjacent (<10 yards, and within fladry enclosure) to the sheep which were depredated at 3AM the same morning of the investigation. Also, on the morning of the depredation, the property owner observed a single un-collared wolf feeding on a carcass in a field near the sheep pen which later was confirmed to be a sheep carcass – the description of the wolf indicates a likely yearling wolf. At the time of observation, the observer did not know what the wolf was feeding on.

Recent wolf depredation in the same or nearby area: ODFW confirmed sheep predation by the Umatilla River wolves in this same sheep pen in 2012.

Cause of death/injury:

Confirmed Wolf

Probable Wolf

Possible/Unknown

Other

Summary: The bite wounds were clearly identified as wolf -caused, and there was direct evidence of wolf presence (at least two wolves) in the immediate area of the penned sheep at the time of this incident. At the time of writing this report, ODFW is aware of 7 dead sheep (4 ewes, 3 lambs), 5 injured sheep (4 ewes, 1 lamb), and one missing lamb associated with this incident. It is acknowledged that more sheep may succumb to injuries.