

Oregon Wolf Program Update

June, 2011

Russ Morgan, ODFW Wolf Coordinator
Roblyn Brown, ODFW Assistant Wolf Biologist
107 20th Street, La Grande, OR 97850 (541) 963-2138

Reports of Wolf Activity: Nine wolf reports were received by ODFW during June: three wolf reports were from the west wolf management zone (all sighting reports), and six from the east zone (two track report, two sighting reports, and two howl reports).

Field Investigations/Monitoring:

Imnaha Pack: Thirteen days were spent in the field monitoring Imnaha pack wolves, primarily in response to depredation issues early in the month. Of the 664 location data points collected during the month, 654 (98%) were on public land and 10 (2%) were on private lands. These data confirm the transition of the pack to their normal summer range areas. Field observations and data collected from remote cameras in the area of the pack revealed five adult wolves (four radio collared wolves, one un-collared wolf). The radio-collared wolf OR-3 was not detected during the month and he is believed to have dispersed from the pack.

Wenaha Pack: ODFW conducted wolf surveys in the Wenaha Unit on four days during the month. Wolf tracks and scat were observed on three of those days. In addition, we continued with the use of remote cameras and captured photographs of four adult wolves on several days. In an attempt to document the presence of pups, one howling survey was conducted on 6/30 (12.5 mile route surveyed). No wolves were detected.

Aerial Monitoring: 12 aerial flights (approximately one hour each) were conducted in June to search for wolves in the Three Lakes/South Zumwalt area in response to depredation of livestock (see below).

Livestock Depredation, Investigations, and Livestock Producer Assistance:

ODFW performed seven wolf depredation investigations during June; one in Union County, and six in Wallowa County. A summary of each investigation can be viewed at the following link (which can be found off the main ODFW Wolf website) http://www.dfw.state.or.us/Wolves/livestock_loss_investigations.asp

One calf (cattle) was confirmed by ODFW as killed by wolves of the Imnaha Pack on June 4, 2011. In response to continued depredation by the Imnaha wolves, ODFW immediately started efforts to lethally remove at least one additional wolf from the pack (two wolves were already removed by ODFW in May). Data from the three GPS collars showed that radio-collared wolves were not involved with the depredation. To increase the likelihood of removing the individual wolf or wolves responsible for the depredation, lethal control efforts were focused on the private lands in the area of the June 4th depredation and on un-collared wolves only. Twelve early-morning flights (low elevation flights) were made to search for un-collared wolves in the prairie area and no wolves were observed. In addition, nine personnel-days were expended conducting on-the-ground track searches in the area. Though tracking conditions were excellent, no wolf sign was found. No traps were set due to lack of evidence that wolves were still using the area. By the end of June, no sign of wolf activity was detected in the target area and no wolves were killed.

Non lethal/preventative actions: The range rider program was continued in June through a direct agreement between an area livestock producer and Defenders of Wildlife. The range rider actively monitors wolves, patrols livestock and hazes wolves from livestock where necessary.

ODFW continued sending text messages seven days per week to livestock producers with livestock in the area of the Imnaha pack. A total of 1075 text messages were sent during June. As the wolves shifted to summer habitat areas, ODFW discontinued texting some producers and began texting new ones with livestock in the area of the wolves. However, all producers were informed that they would be notified if radio collared wolves returned to their private lands or area of livestock use. In addition to text messaging, ODFW made 42 personal contacts with area livestock producers regarding wolf management.

Correction: In earlier monthly reports, ODFW neglected to state that Defenders of Wildlife also played an important role in non-lethal efforts in the area of the Imnaha pack. Defenders generously provided radio activated guard devices and fladry to support efforts to reduce depredation of livestock. In addition, Defenders provided funding support to Wallowa Resources for the cooperative fladry project over the spring months. ODFW apologizes for the oversight in earlier reports and appreciates the help of Defenders of Wildlife in working toward wolf management solutions.

Media and Presentations:

Information staff were interviewed by one radio station and one print newspaper. Information staff also answered several inquiries from students researching wolves in Oregon.

Wolf Legislation:

On June 24, 2011 the Oregon Legislature passed House Bill 3560 which directs the Oregon Department of Agriculture to establish and implement a wolf depredation compensation and financial assistance program. The bill appropriated \$100,000 of the state General Fund to implement the program. Interested people may view the bill at

http://www.leg.state.or.us/bills_laws/home.htm.

Governor's statement on the bill: http://governor.oregon.gov/Gov/media_room/press_releases/p2011/press_062411a.shtml