

Imnaha Wolf Pack

Summary of non-lethal efforts (June 30, 2010 – April 30, 2011)

Russ Morgan, ODFW Wolf Coordinator

May 3, 2011

The following is a summary of preventative and non-lethal actions expended by ODFW, USFWS, USDA-WS, and area landowners in response to depredation and wolf activity in the Upper Wallowa Valley (Imnaha pack) since June 30, 2010.

1. Hazing/Harassment:

On August 5, 2010 wolves in Oregon were relisted as endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act. No general hazing of wolves by landowners was authorized under federal ESA during the period. However, on one occasion (April 12, 2011) ODFW hazed the pack from near livestock (Patton Ranch). On two occasions (April 21 and 30, 2011) the range rider employee hazed wolves from cattle operations (Nash and Shear cattle) in an attempt to prevent depredation.

2. Bonepile Removal:

ODFW completed four cooperative projects with area landowners to clean up five livestock bonepiles during the period. The bonepiles were identified as attractants and confirmed by repeated wolf use of the sites prior to cleanup. In addition, most landowners have voluntarily removed dead livestock carcasses throughout the winter and spring to reduce attractants to wolves in private land areas.

3. Radio-Activated Guard Devices

ODFW installed three radio-activated guard (RAG) devices during the period. On February 18, 2011 a RAG device was installed on the Patton Ranch due to GPS locations showing wolf use near cows that would soon start calving. On March 30, 2011 another was installed on the Grouse Creek Ranch to help protect a small pasture of calves. On April 20, 2011 a RAG device was installed on the Triple Creek Ranch after wolf activity was detected near livestock the previous night.

4. Range Rider

The purpose of a range rider is to help reduce or eliminate wolf depredation by increasing human presence in situations where wolves are in close proximity to livestock. ODFW initiated two cooperative range rider projects with landowners grazing livestock in the area of the Imnaha pack. The first was a cooperative project between ODFW and Defenders of Wildlife and a range rider was employed from July through October, 2010. The second project was initiated on April 19, 2011 and will extend at least until June 30, 2011, in which a range rider is employed to help guard private land calving areas. The rider uses a radio receivers and frequencies of collared wolves as well as contact with ODFW with the latest GPS locations to help determine areas to work on a nightly basis.

5. Fladry

In February, 2011 a cooperative fladry project was initiated between the USFWS and Wallowa Resources (and later, ODFW) to erect fladry around susceptible calving pastures in an effort to further prevent depredation. Fladry is electrified wire with attached flagging and has been shown to be an effective short-duration tool in the prevention of wolf depredation. However, because of the amount of area with livestock in the upper Wallowa Valley, only select pens/pastures could be effectively protected. Furthermore, as livestock have went from calving areas to spring pastures, fladry has had reduced usefulness. From February through April, 2011, approximately 11 miles of fladry were installed on 10 landowners.

6. Radio Receivers:

During the period, five radio receivers were issued to area landowners for the purpose of detecting radio collared wolves on private land livestock operations. In February, 2011 following the capture and radio collaring of new members of the pack ODFW issued new frequencies and reprogrammed their radio receivers. The receivers are an additional tool for livestock producers to maintain vigilance when collared wolves are nearby.

7. Agency Monitoring/Livestock Producer Contacts

During the reporting period, ODFW maintained a monitoring technician on an as-needed basis to specifically monitor the Imnaha pack. On many occasions throughout the winter, when wolves were detected in private land areas with livestock the technician would determine the specific location and landowners were notified. USDA-Wildlife Services personnel have also worked on a near-daily basis throughout the winter and spring locating radio collared wolf signals and notifying landowners when wolves were nearby. Two of the radio collars installed on wolves in February, 2011 were GPS collars which allow ODFW to receive daily location information of the wolves. ODFW makes daily contacts with area landowners when GPS data shows the wolves are using private lands with livestock. In addition, ODFW has produced a weekly map showing wolf location data that can be viewed by livestock producers in the area of the Imnaha wolves. This information has been important for livestock producers to improve monitoring and to make decisions on the timing and area of grazing to avoid wolf depredation.

8. Husbandry Practices:

Many landowners in the area of the Imnaha pack have changed grazing practices solely as a method to reduce depredation. ODFW is aware that during the spring season (2011) four ranchers changed the location of calving or the amount of time spent in calving pastures so that they could keep cows and calves within fladry protected areas. Also, several producers in the area delayed calf turnout on spring pastures due to wolf locations so that calves would be more protected from depredation.