



## Draft 2017 Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan Summary of Major Changes from the Current Plan

Note to Reader: This document is intended to assist reviewers of the Draft 2017 Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan (draft Plan) by summarizing major changes from the current Plan. However, the process of reviewing and updating the current Plan necessarily means there are many changes to the current Plan and this document does not include all of those changes. Reviewers are encouraged to read the draft Plan in its entirety.

### Overall

The draft Plan is based on the current wolf population and uses Oregon-specific data; the Original Plan and revisions were more predictive.

The draft Plan reflects a significant increase in the use of contemporary science to support and inform the review.

General structure, flow, and organization is unchanged. One notable organization exception is that the Literature Cited section is now contained at the end of the draft Plan instead of at the end of each chapter.

Some sections/chapters are combined, condensed, or simplified. For example, the Introduction and Chapter I of the current Plan were combined for this draft Plan. To assist flow and context, there was some reorganization of content within some chapters and sections of chapters.

Reduced the number of Appendices from sixteen to four.

Overall intent was to simplify the current Plan where possible while retaining or adding sufficient detail and clarification to those parts of the current Plan that are used regularly, controversial, or where new information is available.

### Chapter I. Introduction

Combined the Introduction and Chapter I of the current Plan, and reduced the overall content, thereby shortening the chapter. Remaining section headings are unchanged. The Department will continue to make earlier versions of the Plan available for reference.

### Chapter II. Wolf Conservation, Monitoring, and Game Mammal Status

Re-titled the chapter, but with same general components and focus.

#### **A: Wolf Distribution (Pages 6-11)**

1. Included Oregon-specific distribution data.
2. Page 6 – Added two chapter objectives; 1) identify potential conservation threats, and 2) wolves as special status game mammals (this is not a new section of the chapter, only a new objective).
3. Page 7 – Added a strategy that commits the Department to developing a spatial population model to inform future management actions.
4. Page 8 – Included a new subsection on dispersal and connectivity, derived from Oregon data.

## **B: Population Objectives and Management Phases (Pages 11-17)**

1. Removed the delisting-specific strategy since that strategy was achieved.
2. Page 11 – Reduced the number of objectives by including both zones into each objective.
3. Page 13 & 15 – Included language that commits the Department to development of a population model to assist in understanding effective zones, viability thresholds, population objectives, and the effects of different management options (including population caps) on the wolf population into the future.
4. Page 15 – Clarified language regarding the conservation population objective; it does not represent a desired population level nor does it indicate a minimum viable population in itself.
5. Page 15 – Added language that specifically commits the Department to analyze the population when moving from Phase I to Phase II in the western zone to determine if additional conservation measures are necessary to improve population performance and move toward the management objective.
6. Page 15 – Added specific language to clarify the minimum number of wolves needed to reduce the possibility of unwanted declines below the management objective level under the state’s current wolf management regime. Under this draft Plan, seven breeding pairs is not a sufficient population “cap” or threshold.
7. Page 16 – Reworded the sub-section “Strategies for Addressing Wolf Population Decline/Potential for Future State Relisting” while maintaining the Department’s commitment to formally evaluate any observed population declines and corrective actions on a case-by-case basis.

## **C. Potential Conservation Threats (Pages 17-24)**

1. Entirely new section. Based on information used during the 2015 biological evaluation, current scientific literature, and Oregon wolf data.
2. Page 23 – Disease section was stand-alone section in Plan, and now is contained within the Potential Conservation Section. Clarified that disease testing protocol will be developed and implemented on a responsive basis instead of preemptively.

## **D. Monitoring Wolf Populations (Pages 24-25)**

1. Pages 24 & 25 – Added a strategy and discussion that clarifies how radio telemetry will be used in Phase III.
2. Page 25 – Removed the requirement of a certain number and types of wolves to be collared in each pack in Phase I&II. Replaced with a clear expectation that the Department will attempt to have one collar per pack where feasible, and that GPS collars will continue to be used in select collaring situations. In some cases VHF radio-telemetry collars will be employed to monitor wolves.

## **E. Coordination with Other Governments, Agencies, and Organizations (Pages 25-26)**

1. Page 26 – Added a section to commit the Department to implement a citizen advisory group process for the purpose of improving overall management of wolves in Oregon.

## **F. Wolves as Special Status Game Mammals (Pages 26-29)**

1. Page 27 – Added more specific language to the existing game mammal standards to improve understanding of when take would be allowed.
  - Mandates that take will not impair population viability or reduce overall population health factors within the region.
  - Requires that the Department establish that wolves are a significant factor in an ungulate population not meeting established objectives and that the controlled take action is expected to improve the situation.
  - Requires the Department to monitor the results and evaluate the impacts of any wolf removal under this section.
2. Page 28 – Added a section specifying certification and procedures required before hunters and trappers could be utilized.

## Chapter III. Wolf-Livestock Conflicts

Shortened the initial portion of this chapter while focusing on the Department's mandate to address wildlife damage.

### **A. Livestock Depredation and Other Effects (Pages 30-33)**

1. Added Oregon-specific wolf depredation data.
2. Significantly increased the scientific background and factors related to wolf-livestock conflict.

### **B. Working Dog and Pet Depredation (Pages 33-34)**

1. Updated with Oregon-specific information and increased the scientific component

### **C. Tools for Minimizing Livestock Depredation (Pages 34-39)**

1. Entirely new section – Considerations and scientific background for non-lethal measures, lethal control, and compensation as part of an integrated management approach to reducing wolf-livestock conflict.

### **D. Strategies to Address Livestock Conflict (Pages 39-46)**

1. Removed one strategy regarding instilling fear of humans through injurious and non-injurious actions as redundant with other sections of the Plan.
2. Pages 41-43 – Converted currently used Phase 1 procedures and rule into this section without any change to application of the current Phase 1 rule.
3. Page 44 – Clarified that non-lethal injurious harassment is only allowed for the purpose of minimizing wolf-livestock conflict, and thereby requiring that livestock must be present for this action to be warranted.
4. Page 44 – Raised the minimum required level of depredation for consideration of lethal control in Phase 2 to at least three confirmed livestock depredations within a 12-month period, or one confirmed depredation and at least four “probable” depredation determinations within a 12-month period. Applies to Phase 3 also.
5. Page 45 – Regarding lethal take permits, replaced the requirement that wolves must routinely be present on a property with a requirement that any lethal take permit must be within the area of depredating wolves. Applies to Phase 3 also.
6. Page 45 – Requires that non-lethal measures used must be reasonable for the situation before lethal control may be employed. Applies to Phase 3 also.
7. Page 45 – Reduced the time for reporting taken wolves from 48 hrs. to 24 hrs. Applies to Phase 3 also.
8. Page 46 – Clarified the use of controlled take, and made consistent with Chapter II game mammal section.

### **E. Agency Response to Wolf Depredation (Pages 46-48)**

1. Page 47 – Removed two strategies as outdated (e.g., baseline of livestock losses) or redundant with other portions of Plan (e.g., allowing take of wolves for damage).
2. Page 47 – Added 2 new strategies; 1) requiring that investigations of livestock depredation are conducted using a consistently applied standard of evidence, and 2) committing to coordinate with the USFWS in reducing wolf-livestock conflict in federally listed portions of Oregon.
3. Page 48 – Added language that sets expectation of objectively conducted investigations regardless of who conducts them. In addition, the evidence associated with confirmed depredations will be considered when implementing response measures.
4. Page 48 – Added a special notification box regarding the status of USDA Wildlife Services actions in depredation situations.

### **F. Livestock Producer Assistance (Pages 49-50)**

1. Page 49 – Removed four outdated or redundant strategies.
2. Pages 49-50 – Added new information about the Oregon wolf depredation compensation and financial assistance grant program.

## Chapter IV. Wolf-Ungulate Interactions, and Interactions with other Carnivores

This draft Plan combines chapters IV and V of the current Plan and focusses on wolf-ungulate interactions and wolf-carnivore interactions. Combining of the chapters has the effect of eliminating the current Plan's Chapter V sections on hybrids (contained within Chapter II), other ESA species, and vegetation and ecosystem responses.

### **A. Potential Effects of Wolf Predation on Oregon's Ungulates (Pages 51-59)**

1. Entire section comprised largely of new information which adds a large body of scientific literature related to the understanding how wolves interact with ungulate species.

### **B. Elk and Mule Deer Populations since Wolf Re-establishment (Pages 59-60)**

1. This is an entirely new section that provides a general summary of changes in deer and elk populations in select Wildlife Management Units (WMU) with wolves.

### **C. Big Game Wildlife Management Units and Management Objectives (Pages 60-65)**

1. No substantive change to this section other than updates of all population figures.

### **D. Wolf Interactions with Other Carnivores (Pages 60-68)**

1. This is an entirely new section to provide science-based information.

### **E. Strategies to Address Wolf-Ungulate Interactions (Pages 68-69)**

1. Page 68-69 – Overall, updated Objective and Strategies to reflect Chapter II (game mammal) standards.
2. Page 69 – Added a strategy that commits the Department to implement situation-specific monitoring of any management actions used in this section.

## Chapter V. Wolf-Human Interactions

This chapter has been moderately reorganized and updated to reflect current information on wolf-human interactions.

### **F. Strategies to Address Wolf-Human Interactions (Pages 75-76)**

1. Page 76 – Removed one strategy regarding keeping pets vaccinated.
2. Page 76 – Added a strategy that maintains reported wolf-human interactions as a high priority for investigation.  
Note: this strategy contains a grammatical error that will be corrected in later drafts of this Plan.

## Chapter VI. Information and Education

This chapter has been reorganized and shortened to reduce redundancy with other portions of the Plan and direct the focus to specific actions regarding information and education.

1. Page 77 – Reduced the number of strategies from five to one by combining all strategies within this chapter are specific to the implementation of the communications Plan
2. Page 77 – Specifically commits the Department to maintaining the wolf web page as a primary information dissemination tool.

## Chapter VII. Evaluation and Reporting

This chapter is condensed, but with same general focus regarding evaluation and reporting.

1. Page 78 – Added two strategies; one acknowledging the continuation of the wolf web page as a means of disseminating regularly information and reporting, and one committing the Department will use feedback from the citizen advisory process (Draft Plan Page 26) when conducting periodic evaluation.

## Chapter VIII. Research and Information Management

Generally reworded and with expanded general information, Oregon-specific information, and scientific background regarding research and information management. Identifies that future research projects will be determined on a case-by-case basis and as financial and logistical resources allow.

1. Page 79 – Removed the “refinement of cost-benefit relationships based on Oregon data” as an in-text objective.
2. Page 79 – Added expectation that GPS-Collars will continue to be used for wolf research
3. Page 81 – Added one objective and five strategies (current Plan has no separately listed objectives or strategies) to incorporate the approaches discussed in the body of the chapter.

## Chapter IX. Budget for Implementation

Completely revised and condensed chapter related to budget for implementation of this Plan – based on current budget and costs of wolf management.