



**Oregon Wolf Program  
April – May, 2009 Update**

Russ Morgan, ODFW Wolf Coordinator  
107 20th Street, LaGrande, OR 9850 (541) 963-2138

**Reports of Wolf Activity:** Thirty-eight wolf reports were received by ODFW in April and May as follows; eastern wolf management zone (28) and west wolf management zone (10). [*Note: beginning in April, wolf reports will be classified into two wolf management zones. These zones are defined on page 17 of the Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan*]. Types of wolf reports are categorized as follows; sighting reports (30), howling reports (4), and track reports (4).

**Field Investigations/Monitoring:** Snow track surveys were conducted in NE Oregon on two days in April/May. Tracking summary data is included in the table below:

Wildlife Management Unit *	Days	Transect Miles	Evidence Collected
Keating	1	16	No wolf sign found
Wenaha	1	33	No wolf sign found
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>49</b>	

\* The Oregon Wildlife Management Unit map can be viewed online at:  
[http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/hunting/big\\_game/units/index.asp](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/hunting/big_game/units/index.asp)

**Discussion of monitoring efforts:**

Snow track surveys were completed in early April. Spring snow conditions (soft and melting) prevented access to normal surveys routes and surveys were halted.



**Livestock Damage Reports/Concerns:**

Keating Valley wolf depredation: Penned lambs at a Keating Valley ranch (Baker County) were attacked the evening of April 10. A second depredation occurred at the same ranch April 13. On April 16, a calf was attacked at a nearby ranch on April 16. The calf died the following morning and necropsy of the animal showed clear evidence of wolf depredation. The associated tracks at both ranches indicated that two wolves were involved. The total loss of animals was 24 lambs and 1 calf. This represents the first confirmed wolf depredation of livestock since wolves began returning to the state in the late 1990's.

Initial response by Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and USFWS was to investigate the depredations and assist landowners. US Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services (Wildlife Services) and Oregon State Police (OSP) assisted with flights to look for the wolves. In addition, non-lethal control methods were implemented on the affected ranches. Fladry (electrified fence with attached flagging designed to discourage wolves) was placed around the sheep pens. Exposed cow carcasses associated with area ranches were covered to reduce wolf attraction. Area landowners were notified and asked to be vigilant in the area and to notify the department if problems were observed.

Trapping efforts were initiated on April 14 by ODFW, USFWS, and Idaho wolf expert Carter Niemeyer, and on May 3, 2009, one of the wolves, an 87-pound yearling male wolf, was trapped, radio-collared, and released. Tissue samples for genetic testing were collected and sent for analysis, but the results have not yet been returned by the end of this reporting period. At





the time of the capture a second, smaller wolf was also present. Following the radio-collaring, the wolves moved upslope into forested habitat for 8 days. Then, from May 12-May 18, both wolves were observed at low elevation in the Keating Valley on five mornings. In all cases, they were successfully hazed back upslope by aircraft and ground methods. Since May 18, the wolves have been located in upper elevation forest habitat, and on May 29, were located within the Eagle Cap Wilderness. Through visual confirmation, the second wolf appears to be a young female.

Radio-collaring does not in itself stop wolf depredation. However, it does allow for additional non-lethal tools to be used. Since collaring the young male wolf, and in addition to hazing, other non-lethal control efforts included the issuing of two radio receivers to affected landowners so that the radio-collared wolf could be detected if near ranch operations. A RAG (radio activated guard) box was also deployed on one of the area ranches. These devices detect a radio signal from the wolf collar and emit loud sounds and lights to scare the animal away.

No confirmed livestock depredations have occurred since radio-collaring the wolf. However, the pair will continue to be regularly monitored and area ranchers will be notified if the wolves return to the Keating Valley.

Oregon's [Wolf Management Plan](#) provides livestock producers and wildlife managers with specific tools to respond to wolf depredation. For more information, see [ODFW's wolf Web page](#) at ([www.dfw.state.or.us/wolves](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/wolves)) or call ODFW's La Grande office at (541) 963-2138.

ODFW wishes to acknowledge those individuals and agencies that provided assistance during the Keating Valley wolf depredation: Area landowners (who were very helpful and accommodating throughout the difficult situation), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Carter Niemeyer, Oregon State Police, Defenders of Wildlife (for assisting with non-lethal deterrents and monetary compensation for lost animals), USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services (Oregon and Idaho), and U.S. Forest Service.

**Aerial Monitoring:** Thirty aerial flights were conducted over a period of 28 days in May to monitor the new collared wolf near the Keating Valley. All but five locations were in forested habitat north of the Keating Valley.

#### **Education and Outreach:**

- On 4/25/09 a wolf update presentation was given to the High Desert Museum in Bend. Approximately 40 people attended.
- On 4/28/09 a wolf presentation was given to 185 people at the Oregon Zoo in Portland.
- On 5/11/09 ODFW participated in a OPB radio talk forum with Oregon Cattlemen's Association and Defenders of Wildlife. The discussion was primarily focused on the recent wolf depredation in the Keating Valley and current Oregon statutes regarding lethal take of wolves in depredation situations.
- On 5/21/09 ODFW met with Baker County livestock producers and local political representatives to discuss recent wolf depredation events and actions taken. Information was provided on Oregon's Wolf Management Plan and the tools that are available to ODFW and producers in response to wolf depredation.
- On 5/28/09 a wolf update presentation was given to 75 people in Salem. The event was the Straub Environmental Learning Center 2009 Lecture Series.

#### **Federal Delisting Update:**

As of May 4, 2009, wolves in the eastern portion of Oregon (east of highways 395, 78 and 95) are "de-listed," or removed from protection under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). Wolves in this area remain protected by Oregon's ESA, while wolves west of the boundary remain protected by both the federal and state ESA. More information on wolves in the Northern Rocky Mountains can be viewed at the following web address: <http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/species/mammals/wolf/>