



## Oregon Wolf Program February, 2009 Update

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

**Wolf Reports:** Eleven wolf reports were received by ODFW in February as follows: Eastern Oregon (9) and western Oregon (2). Four of the reports (36%) were of more than one wolf. Types of wolf reports are categorized as follows: Sighting reports (6), and reports of wolf tracks (5).

**Field Investigations/Monitoring:** Snow track surveys were conducted in NE Oregon over a period of 12 days in February. These surveys are conducted using snow machines over designated routes and areas. Surveys will be repeated over the winter months as weather and snow conditions allow. Tracking summary data is included in the table below.

Wildlife Management Unit *	Days	Transect Miles	Evidence Collected
Mt. Emily	1	10.9	No wolf sign observed
Imnaha	2	72.8	Pair of wolf tracks
Catherine Creek	1	26.6	No wolf sign observed
Starkey	1	40	No wolf sign observed
Wenaha	7	174.2	Pair of wolf tracks
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>324.5</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:

Tracks were again located in the Imnaha Unit in the same general vicinity that the radio-collared female wolf B300 frequented over the past summer. Follow-up field surveys in later February confirmed the presence of a male-female pair of wolves using the area. In addition, tracking evidence clearly showed the presence of male and female wolves with signs of female estrous (e.g. in heat). While B300's collar has not been detected since September of last year, it is possible that she is part of this newly formed pair. Anecdotal information through wolf reports in this area suggests a third wolf may also be present. However, no clear evidence of this has been documented. Efforts will continue to monitor these wolves throughout the remainder of the winter.

Tracks of the Wenaha Unit wolves were also relocated again this month, and again no sign of last year's pups was found. However, there is evidence of a male and female pair, and sign of estrous was documented with this pair.

While the Santiam-area wolf report of January served to elevate both public and media interest of wolves in the Central Oregon area, no additional evidence of this animal has been found. However, the Department has received a large number of phone inquiries and varying amounts of follow-up discussion about the animal reported. The origin and status of this animal is still unknown.





**Aerial Monitoring:** No aerial telemetry flights were conducted in February.

**Livestock Damage Reports/Concerns:** On 2/9/09, ODFW received a wolf-depredation complaint from a north Malheur County landowner. The report was of a dead 3 ½ week old calf and Department biologists responded immediately to investigate. That investigation, combined with a next-day follow-up investigation and 15 subsequent days of camera operation on the remaining carcass resulted in the following findings:

- No wolf sign was found on the property, around the carcass, or in the area of the report. Given snow conditions on the day of the report, and on subsequent investigations, it is expected that wolf sign, if present, would have been observed. Coyote sign, however, was readily detected in the snow.
- Remote camera photographs taken over a 15 day period only showed coyotes.
- There was no indications or evidence that depredation by any predator occurred, and the cause of death of the calf was undetermined. Evidence of scavenging by coyotes was observed.

The Department will continue to maintain regular contact with this landowner and will continue to work diligently in the area if evidence of wolves is detected. While no wolf sign was found during this investigation, wolves may be present in north Malheur County and area residents are encouraged to report any wolves or wolf sign if found.

**Media Contacts and Presentations:**

- Provided five wolf related newspaper interviews in February. Subjects discussed were the Santiam-area wolf report, potential wolf legislation, local area wolf sightings, and the hybrid/captive wolf issue.
- Presented an Oregon wolf update presentation to the Oregon Chapter, The Wildlife Society in Lincoln City. This presentation included a brief history of wolves in Oregon, current Oregon wolf status, and a summary of the Oregon Wolf Plan.
- Gave a wolf lecture to wildlife students at Eastern Oregon State University.

**Federal Delisting Update (no change from last month):** The decision by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to delist wolves in the Northern Rocky Mountains (which included a portion of eastern Oregon) was put on hold, pending a review by the new administration. The decision was scheduled to be published on January 27<sup>th</sup> and would have gone into effect 30 days later. Following a legal and policy review, the delisting could be allowed to go forward, be modified, or be held indefinitely. It is unknown how long the review will take. [Note: On March 6, 2009, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar affirmed the decision by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to remove gray wolves from the list of threatened and endangered species in the Northern Rocky Mountain states of Idaho and Montana and parts of Washington, Oregon and Utah. More information will be available in ODFW's March wolf report.]

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/>



---

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

