



Oregon Wolf Program June, 2009 Update



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Reports of Wolf Activity: Ten wolf reports were received by ODFW in June as follows; eastern wolf management zone (5) and west wolf management zone (5). [*Note: State's east and west wolf zones divided by Hwy 97/20/395.*] Types of wolf reports are categorized as follows; sighting reports (7), and track reports (3).

Field Investigations/Monitoring: Three days of field surveys (for wolf activity) were conducted in the Imnaha Unit during June. Wolf tracks and scat were located on June 10 in the same general area that wolves were snow-tracked last winter. However, a subsequent tracking/howling survey in the area yielded no sign. Efforts to locate and radio-collar these wolves will continue in July.

Livestock Damage Reports/Concerns: Two wolf reports related to livestock concerns were reported in June. The first was in the Ukiah Unit (Umatilla County) where wolves were reported to have been sighted in close proximity to a band of sheep on the Umatilla National Forest. One of the reported wolves was a pup which was observed going into a hollow log. Though no depredations were reported or suspected, a concern was raised about wolves in close proximity to grazing sheep. ODFW investigated the area early the following morning in cooperation with the potentially affected sheep operator and determined that the initial sighting report was 10 days old and was likely unfounded. Additional survey efforts were made to thoroughly search the area, including the hollow log where the pup was reported, and by howling the entire area through the night. No wolf sign (tracks or scat) was found and no wolf howl responses were heard. The area did have a high coyote population, and evidence collected at the hollow log was believed to be from coyote pups. No reports of wolf activity have been received since. One productive outcome of this effort was the positive discussion of wolf management and management options with the owner of the sheep.

The second livestock-concern report was from the Chesnimnus Unit (Wallowa County) in which the remains of a calf were discovered by an area rancher and suspected wolf scat was reported near the carcass. ODFW later learned that the scat was determined by USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services to be from a coyote.

Aerial Monitoring: Five aerial flights were conducted during June to monitor the collared wolf (OR-1) in the Keating Unit. All locations were in forested habitat north of the Keating Valley. The collared wolf occupies an area of approximately 233 square miles and readily travels from the Minam River drainage (Eagle Cap Wilderness) to the adjacent National Forest of the north Keating Unit.

Education, Outreach, and Media:

- One magazine interview was given to Western Livestock Journal regarding recent wolf activity in Oregon.
- On 6/26/09, the Oregon Cattlemen Association quarterly meeting in Baker City was attended to discuss the Keating Valley depredation situation, and to answer wolf-related questions.
- On 6/29/09 an interagency meeting was attended in La Grande to discuss encouraging livestock carcass disposal as a proactive way to reduce undesirable livestock/wolf interactions in wolf-occupied habitats. ODFW will take the lead at putting together helpful information for area livestock producers.



Wolf Legislation: The 2009 Oregon Legislative Assembly passed House Bill 3089 which changed the statutory definition of the gray wolf to a “special status” game mammal. Interested people can view the bill at the following website:

http://www.leg.state.or.us/bills_laws. This definition change was called for by the Commission in the 2005 Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan (Appendix P, pages 172-173). The plan can be viewed at <http://www.dfw.state.or.us/Wolves/index.asp>

Federal Delisting Update: On May 4, 2009, wolves in the eastern portion of Oregon (east of highways 395, 78 and 95) were “de-listed,” or removed from protection under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). **Wolves in all of Oregon remain protected by Oregon’s ESA**, and wolves west of the delisting 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/>