

# Oregon Wolf Program Update

## January, 2011

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**Reports of Wolf Activity:** 21 wolf reports were received by ODFW during the reporting period as follows: east wolf management zone (20) and west wolf management zone (1). [Note: State's east and west wolf zones divided by Hwy 97/20/395.] Wolf reports received were categorized as sighting reports (11), track/scat reports (7), and howling reports (2).

**Field Investigations/Monitoring:** All or part of 21 days were spent investigating reports of wolf activity or monitoring known wolf activity during the month of January.

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)

**Imnaha Pack:** ODFW spent all or part of 14 days monitoring Imnaha wolves during the month. Wolves (or fresh sign) were detected on 10 of those days. Six of those days, wolves were detected using the greater Zumwalt area (north of Little Sheep Creek). Two active radio collars remain in the pack (OR-2, and OR-3). The radio signal of OR-5 (young wolf that had not been detected since 11/29) was discovered in the north Blue Mountains of Washington by WDFW personnel on 1/20/11. A subsequent flight by ODFW visually confirmed the young female wolf had dispersed and is now in Washington. This is the first evidence of dispersal from this pack.

**Wenaha Pack:** Wolf surveys in the Wenaha Unit were conducted over two days during January, both by snow machine (52 total miles surveyed). On 1/11/11 tracks of five wolves were located and followed in the north portion of the Wenaha Unit. This is the highest number documented in this pack since the death of the radio-collared wolf (OR-6) in September 2010. The pack appears to be using the same general area as last year during this period. Based on information ODFW collected in September 2010, we believe the pack contains a minimum of 2 adults and 3 pups at this time. Efforts will continue to monitor this pack by snow tracking and the use of remote cameras until a capture operation can be conducted to apply more radio collars on individual wolves within the pack.

**Walla Walla Unit (new):** Two days were expended in the Walla Walla Unit in January. On January 20, 2011 wolf tracks were observed by both ODFW and U.S. Forest Service personnel in the Cottonwood Creek area approximately 8 miles east of Milton-Freewater. Three distinct sets were confirmed and a possible fourth track was observed but unconfirmed. Wolf activity had been suspected but unconfirmed for some time in this area. Data collected from the nearby Wenaha Pack on the same day confirms these are different wolves. In addition, the close proximity of the tracks to Washington (approximately 3 miles) may indicate shared wolves between states. Area livestock producers were contacted and additional surveys are planned to determine the number of wolves, the area of use, and the possibility of future capture for the purpose of radio collaring individuals.

Other field surveys:

**Beulah Unit:** In response to a wolf report in the Beulah Unit, ODFW conducted 55 miles of transect in the north portion of the Unit. No wolf sign was found.

**Mt. Emily Unit:** In response to a wolf report in the Mt. Emily Unit, ODFW conducted a 39 mile survey route in the northeast portion of the Unit. As was reported, a single large wolf track was found and after following for a few miles it was determined that the track was of a male wolf. It had traveled over the top of the Summit Road and then down slope toward the west/southwest.

**Ukiah Unit:** On 1/19/11 a lone wolf track was located and tracked by Wildlife Services and ODFW personnel in the Ukiah area. It was tracked at various locations over a 13 mile distance (traveling southwest) and was last found at the North Fork John Day River. It is unknown if the track is related to the recent Pearson Creek wolf reports, or of it is simply a traveling lone wolf.

**Aerial Monitoring:** Two aerial flights wolf were conducted by ODFW wolf personnel in January. One (1/3/11) was to fly the upper McKay/Birch/Pearson Creek winter range area to look for newly reported wolves (none were found). As part of that flight the Mt Emily, Wenaha, and Sled Springs Units were also flown to search for the missing OR-5 Collar. The second flight was on 1/25/11 and was specifically for the purpose of confirming the location of OR-5 – she was found in Washington (as reported) and information was given to WDFW.

**Livestock Depredation and Investigations:** On 1/19/11, ODFW District Biologist Milburn (Ontario) responded to a report of a wolf eating a dead calf north of Ontario with a Malheur County Deputy Sheriff. The dead animal in question was determined to be the remains of a butchered hog that had been placed in a pasture. The only tracks observed were domestic dog tracks and a blue heeler was seen near the remains.

**Media and Presentations:**

- On 1/13/11, Morgan attended the Morrow County Livestock Growers annual meeting in Heppner and gave a presentation on Oregon wolf management.
- Gave three newspaper interviews regarding wolves in Oregon.
- On 1/27/11, Brown gave a wolf lecture to a natural resource class at Mt. Hood Community College.

**Agency Coordination/Miscellaneous:**

- Continued coordinating the 2011 Oregon wolf helicopter capture project – bids graded and selected a helicopter company.
- Attended an interagency coordination meeting with US Fish and Wildlife Service, Oregon Department of Agriculture, and ODFW.
- ODFW met with Wallowa Resources and decided a protocol for the Zumwalt elk hazers to monitor radio-collared wolves while hazing elk on Zumwalt Prairie. ODFW issued the elk hazers a radio receiver and instructed on proper use. The purpose is to increase detections of wolves if they use the Zumwalt private lands.