

# Oregon Wolf Program Update

## October, 2011

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**Reports of Wolf Activity:** 50 wolf reports were received by ODFW during October, most coming from Oregon's hunters. 12 wolf reports were from the west wolf management zone (11 sighting reports, 1 howling report), and 38 from the east zone (28 sighting reports, 9 track/scat reports, 1 howling report).

### **Field Investigations/Monitoring/Capture:**

**Imnaha Pack:** ODFW continues to intensely monitor the Imnaha pack with GPS radio-collar locations every three hours on OR4, the alpha male. The GPS radio-collar downloaded 239 GPS location data points in October. The pack continues to spend the majority of its time on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest and Hells Canyon National Recreation Area with 183 (77%) of the GPS locations. In October, the pack was on private lands for 56 (23%) locations. The pack spent time in two counties, 173 (72%) locations were in Wallowa County and 66 (28%) were in Baker County.

**OR7:** The 2 ½-year-old gray male that dispersed from the Imnaha pack in September has continued to travel west. From Oct. 4 through 27 the wolf travelled through portions of Grant, Harney, Crook, Deschutes, Lake, Klamath, and Douglas Counties. At the end of the month he was in NE Douglas County (north of Crater Lake) and is approximately 280 straight-line miles from where he was born in Wallowa County. A map illustrating the travel of this dispersing wolf can be viewed at [http://www.dfw.state.or.us/Wolves/images/internet\\_wolf\\_map\\_OR7.jpg](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/Wolves/images/internet_wolf_map_OR7.jpg). Though dispersal is a natural function within all wolf populations, this specific wolf dispersal has generated significant interest from Oregon's public.

**OR3:** OR3 is a 3 ½-year-old black male that dispersed from the Imnaha pack in May. He was last located by USFWS personnel in the Ochoco Mountains in central Oregon on Sept. 30 but was not found in October. He has a VHF radio collar which does not allow for continuous tracking. ODFW and USFWS will continue to attempt to locate this wolf.

**Snake River Pack:** ODFW conducted a three-day survey of the northern portion of the Snake River Unit, after receiving reports and trail camera photographs from area hunters indicating wolves were in the area. On Oct. 20, ODFW confirmed a new wolf pack for Oregon when tracks of five wolves were documented in the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area. In addition, photographs provided to ODFW indicate that at least one pup was produced in this area. Wolf scats were collected and submitted for DNA analysis. ODFW will continue to monitor this area to determine if the pack will be counted as a breeding pair for 2011 (determined by having two or more pups documented in December).

**Wenaha Pack:** ODFW conducted a wolf survey in the Wenaha Unit on one day during the month and a photograph of a single wolf was collected by remote cameras. Reproduction has not yet been confirmed in the Wenaha pack this year, though fall/winters surveys have not been completed.

**Walla Walla Pack:** All or part of 20 personnel days was spent in the Walla Walla Unit. A minimum of six wolves have been documented in the pack through tracks and remote photos captured by trail cameras. Trapping was implemented as a method of capturing wolves to place radio-collars and on Oct.21, a gray female pup was captured and released with a standard (VHF) radio-collar. On Oct. 25, a black male pup was also radio-collared and released. Photographs of these wolves can be viewed at [http://www.dfw.state.or.us/images/photo\\_gallery/wolves\\_in\\_the\\_news/index.html](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/images/photo_gallery/wolves_in_the_news/index.html). Though there are advantages to placing GPS radio-collars on wolves, it was not an option on these pups due to the additional weight of the GPS collar. The pups have been located several times and have been in the same general area where they were trapped.

**Mt Emily Unit:** All or part of six personnel days were spent in the northern part of the Mt Emily Unit – north of the Umatilla

River. Wolf sign (tracks and scat) were found. A brief, unsuccessful attempt to trap and radio-collar a wolf was made. At this time, it is not known if these wolves are part of a new pack, or if they are part of the Walla Walla pack. ODFW will continue to monitor wolf sign in this area.

Starkey: Part of one day was spent investigating a wolf report in the unit and no wolf sign was found.

**Aerial Monitoring:**

No aerial monitoring was conducted in October.

**Livestock Depredation, Investigations, and Livestock Producer Assistance:**

ODFW performed two wolf depredation investigations during the month in Wallowa County on private land in the Imnaha Pack area. Both investigations resulted in confirmed wolf depredations; one was a dead calf, the other was a severely injured cow that was euthanized as a result of wolf-caused injuries. A summary of each investigation can be viewed at the following link [http://www.dfw.state.or.us/Wolves/livestock\\_loss\\_investigations.asp](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/Wolves/livestock_loss_investigations.asp).

**Non-lethal/preventative actions:** The range rider program was continued in October through a direct agreement between an area livestock producer and Defenders of Wildlife. The range rider monitors wolves, patrols livestock and hazes wolves from livestock when necessary. ODFW continued to send text messages to Wallowa County livestock producers with livestock in the area of the Imnaha pack. During the month at least 379 text messages were sent on 26 days of the month. On Oct. 27, ODFW met with representatives of Wallowa County Stockgrowers Association, Defenders of Wildlife, and Wallowa Resources. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss current and future non-lethal actions in relation to the Imnaha pack. It was requested that ODFW increase the frequency of daily text messages (to twice daily) to area producers when the wolves are known to be in the area of livestock. (When wolves are known to be in the area, livestock producers can increase their presence around livestock, which can deter wolves.) ODFW agreed to this request, but will text less frequently when wolves are in areas without livestock.

**Lethal Control Actions:**

The lethal control action which began on Sept. 24 was halted on Oct 5, 2011 as a result of a stay issued by the Court of Appeals of the State of Oregon. No wolves were killed as a result of lethal control efforts. A lawsuit challenging the proposed lethal removal of the alpha male and a sub-adult of the pack was filed by three environmental groups (Cascadia Wildlands, Center for Biological Diversity, and Oregon Wild). The stay order can be viewed at the following link: [http://www.dfw.state.or.us/Wolves/docs/StayOrder\\_100511.pdf](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/Wolves/docs/StayOrder_100511.pdf)