

Oregon Wolf Program

November 2008 Update



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

Note: This is the first monthly update for Oregon's wolf program. This effort will provide updated information on the status of wolves in Oregon and wolf management activities conducted by ODFW.

Wolf Reports: A total of 23 wolf reports were received by ODFW during November as follows: NE Oregon (17), remainder of Oregon (6). It is notable that 7 of the NE Oregon reports are from the Wenaha Unit in the vicinity of previously confirmed wolf activity. Nearly all wolf reports in November were generated by hunters who were in the field during fall hunting seasons. Types of wolf reports are categorized as follows: tracks (4), sightings (12), and howling (7).

Field Investigations/Confirmations: A total of 15 field days were spent investigating wolf activity during November; howling surveys (2 nights), field tracking (1 day), trapping (11 days), and aerial telemetry (1 day). All November field efforts were in the Wenaha Unit.

Howling surveys. Surveys were conducted by ODFW and USFWS personnel during two nighttime sessions in the Wenaha Unit over a distance of approximately 28 miles. Staff received a howling response from two adult wolves. A third wolf may have been heard but was undetermined. Based on proximity, these wolf howls are likely from the same wolves that were detected last July. No pup howls were heard.

Track surveys. ODFW personnel conducted tracking surveys by walking and driving one day in the Wenaha Unit. Tracks made by a pair of adult wolves traveling together were located in new snow. In an effort to determine if pups were present, the tracks were followed for approximately 3 miles. No pups were detected.

Trapping. Following the howling response by wolves in the Wenaha Unit, an effort to live trap and radio-collar individual wolves from this group was initiated. This was a joint effort between ODFW, USFWS, and Umatilla National Forest. Trap sets were made and checked daily for 11 days with no wolves captured. Wolf tracks were detected around traps on a single night during the 11-day trap session, and one trap had been triggered by a wolf, without capture. In order to follow strict trapping protocols, traps were pulled on November 29th due to impending cold weather. No further wolf detections were made. Efforts to closely monitor these wolves will continue.

Aerial monitoring. A 2 ½ hour flight was conducted to aurally monitor the radio-collared female wolf (B300) in the Imnaha Unit. The signal was not detected. However, recent reports of wolf activity in the same general area suggest that B300 may still be present. Efforts will continue to locate this wolf and determine the status of the radio-collar.

Livestock Damage Reports/Concerns: None

Meetings and Presentations:

- Oregon Cattlemen's Association annual meeting, Redmond, Ore. ODFW provided an update of recent wolf activities and information on the recent ESA listing status changes.
- Enterprise High School. One hour presentation about wolves to the science and math program.

Miscellaneous Coordination Activities:

- Continued coordination with USFWS and Tribal staff regarding Oregon using own radio frequency band for Oregon wolves. The lack of available frequencies from neighboring wolf states necessitates that ODFW use own frequencies on Oregon collared wolves. All other radio specifications will remain unchanged.
- Coordinated with, and received assistance from Umatilla National Forest personnel for purpose of using Forest Service field stations while conducting field work in the Wenaha Unit.
- Discussion with Oregon State University regarding future joint wolf research opportunities in NE Oregon.