

Wolves in Oregon

With the recent confirmation of wolf depredation that has occurred in Oregon it is time to make sure that ranchers and other livestock producers understand what they can legally do, what they cannot do and what procedures they may need to follow if they encounter a wolf in or around their operation.

Wolf Status

The wolf is listed as endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). It is also listed as Endangered under the Oregon ESA. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has proposed that they be removed from the federal ESA listing and has published that rule in the federal register. That delisting will occur on May 4, 2009 barring any court action that would delay or suspend it. There has been several notices of intent to file a lawsuit to stop the delisting, however, at this writing it has not occurred.

Following a delisting from the federal ESA, wolves in the eastern portion of Oregon will continue to be listed endangered under the Oregon ESA. This delisting will affect all wolves in that portion of Oregon that lies east of Hwy 395 from the Washington line to Burns, then south along Hwy 78 to Burns Junction, and south along Hwy 95 to the Nevada border. For those producers west of the above described boundary, wolves will still be listed as endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act.

Actions While Federally Listed

Actions producers can take while wolves are listed under both federal and state ESA: (this includes producers east of above described line through May 4, 2009 and the rest of producers west of line until future delisting occurs)

Livestock producers may scare a wolf off (by making loud noises for example) but may not harm a wolf in any way, even one seen in the act of attacking livestock. Producers need to report any wolf **sightings or incidents** to:

- U.S Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) John Stephenson 541-962-8584 or 541-786-3282
- OR Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW) Russ Morgan 541-963-2138 or 541-786-5126

If you believe a wolf has killed your livestock (depredation): Do not move or disturb the carcass or the area surrounding it that might offer clues to cause. Preserve tracks, hair or scat by covering it with plywood, cans or buckets or anything that will not destroy the evidence. Cover the carcass or any remains with a tarp or other material that you might have. Weight it down so wind or other disturbances such as predators will not have access. When you have **depredation** contact the following:

- USFWS John Stephenson 541-962-8584 or 541-786-3282
- Wildlife Services (WS) Mike Slater 541-963-7947 or 541-805-9492)

Dave Williams 503-326-2346.

,

- ODFW Russ Morgan 541-963-2138 or 541-786-5126

Actions while listed only under Oregon ESA

After federal delisting occurs in the eastern part of the state, since wolves in this portion of Oregon will not be listed under the federal ESA, but are still listed under the Oregon Endangered Species Act, the Oregon Wolf Plan rules apply. The Oregon Wolf Plan establishes rules by Phases. Phase I rules apply until four breeding pair of wolves produce pups for a minimum of three years. At that time wolves will be delisted in Oregon and a new set of rules will apply during Phase II.

The rules regulating the actions a livestock producer can use when encountering a wolf around his operation are as follows during Phase I:

No permit required

If a livestock producer sees a wolf testing or chasing livestock or in close proximity, they may scare a wolf off by firing shots in the air, making loud noises or otherwise confronting the wolf provided no bodily harm is done to the wolf. Such incidents must be reported to ODFW (541-963-2138) within 48 hours and the rancher cannot be intentionally looking for a wolf.

ODFW permit required

If persistent wolf activity around livestock occurs, producers may engage in additional harassment by permit:

Harassment of wolves in ways that may cause bodily harm but not death (e.g., rubber bullets or bean bag projectiles)

Intentional pursuit of problem wolves would be allowed under this permit to keep wolves away from livestock.

If a wolf is captured, ODFW may relocate it to the nearest wilderness area.

(Before a permit is issued, ODFW will consider the location of den sites and any attractants that may be luring wolves to the area. Wolf harassment under the permit must be reported to ODFW within 48 hours.)

Permits for lethal control

Permits for lethal control will be issued if non-lethal methods are deemed ineffective. This permit allows a livestock producer to kill a wolf “caught in the act” of attacking (but not testing or scavenging) livestock.

Lethal control for chronic damage situations

ODFW and authorized agents may also conduct lethal removal of wolves after chronic depredations and ineffective non-lethal efforts.

Livestock producers can work with their local wildlife biologist on these issues or they may want to work with Russ Morgan, ODFW wolf coordinator 541-963-2138.

Remember to keep from attracting wolves to your operation bury or remove dead animals immediately.

Prepared by: John Williams, OSU Extension Service, Wallowa County in cooperation with OCA wolf task force. Significant information was taken from *the Federal/State Coordination Strategy for Implementation of Oregon’s Wolf Plan, April 2007* and ODFW’s document titled: *How to Respond to Wolf Depredation under the State’s Management Plan.*