

McCall – Weiser DAU (GMUs 19A, 22, 23, 24, 25, 31, 32, and 32A)

Abstract

The McCall-Weiser DAU encompasses an area including GMUs 19A, 22, 23, 24, 25, 31, 32, and 32A. This DAU was home to 12 documented packs during 2008, with three (Carey Dome, Orphan, Packer John) no longer extant by year's end (Figure 15; Table 7). Five of 7 reproductive packs qualified as breeding pairs; the Packer John pack produced a litter of 6 pups but was removed for repeated livestock depredations, and the Hornet Creek pack was disqualified because there was likely only 1 adult present by the end of the year. The reproductive status of 3 packs was undetermined. Documented mortalities ($n = 29$) included control (agency removal and legal take; $n = 22$), other human (illegal take, vehicle collision, etc.; $n = 6$), and unknown ($n = 1$) causes. Confirmed ($n = 18$) and probable ($n = 8$) wolf-caused losses of cattle were attributed to the Blue Bunch, Hornet Creek, Packer John, and Stolle Meadows packs and wolves believed affiliated with wolves B327 and B409. Confirmed ($n = 55$) and probable ($n = 13$) wolf-caused losses of domestic sheep were attributed to the Bear Pete, Blue Bunch, Hard Butte, Jungle Creek, Lick Creek, and Packer John packs. Confirmed ($n = 2$) wolf-caused losses of domestic dogs were attributed to the Hard Butte and Packer John packs. Three wolves were captured by Program personnel that resulted in the placement of 3 new radiocollars.

Background

Over 70% of the land area in GMUs 19A, 23, 24, and 25 is in public ownership and management. The Little Salmon River and North Fork Payette River valley bottoms comprise most of the private ownership. Private land in these GMUs is predominantly agricultural or rural subdivision in nature. Timber harvest and livestock grazing are prevalent. Several large fires have burned here in the last decade. Road densities are estimated at less than 0.25 miles per square mile in GMUs 19A and 25. Road densities in GMUs 23 and 24 are estimated at greater than 2.5 miles per square mile. Active timber harvest programs are anticipated to dramatically increase these road densities in the near future (IDFG 2007)

About 60% of GMUs 22 and 32A and 20% of GMU 32 is in public ownership and management. Private land predominates the western portion of GMU 32 and the Weiser River Valley of GMUs 22 and 32A. Timber harvest and livestock grazing are prevalent. Most forested habitat is in the early to mid-successional stage. Andrus Wildlife Management Area in the southwest portion of GMU 22 is managed for elk and mule deer winter range and encompasses about 8,000 acres. Active timber harvest programs are anticipated to increase already high road densities in the near future (IDFG 2007).

About 50% of GMU 31 is in public ownership and management. Private land predominates in the southern and eastern portions of the GMU. Higher elevations are timbered whereas lower elevations are primarily shrub-steppe or desert habitat types. Timber harvest, livestock grazing, and prescribed fires occur here. Active timber harvest programs are anticipated to increase road densities in the near future (IDFG Elk PR report 2007).

Management Direction

The Wolf Plan identifies current wolf-livestock conflict levels as height and wolf-ungulate conflict levels as low. Therefore, wolf numbers in the McCall-Weiser DAU are slated to be reduced and then maintained at stable but lower levels to alleviate conflicts with domestic livestock operations.

Documented Resident Packs

Bear Pete

Breeding wolves B157 and B331 produced their second litter, 4-6 gray pups, in 2008. Three wolves were lethally controlled from this pack for repeated depredations upon domestic sheep (14 confirmed and 2 probable losses) and a fourth wolf was legally shot while in the act of chasing/attacking sheep. Pack size was estimated at a minimum of 8 individuals based upon an aerial observation. This second year pack was reported as a breeding pair for 2008.

Blue Bunch

Probable breeding female B218 remained the sole radiocollared member of this pack. In late 2007, 7 wolves were observed during a monitoring flight, but only three were seen during February and March 2008 flights. The pack produced a litter of 4 pups. This pack was implicated in the loss of 2 cattle and probably killed 1 domestic sheep. Field and aerial observations indicated a minimum pack size of 8 individuals. The Blue Bunch pack was considered a breeding pair for 2008.

Carey Dome

By late autumn 2007 this pack was minimally comprised of breeding female B309 and her 4+ pups. During 2 monitoring flights in January 2008, only 2 wolves were observed. B309's signal was detected on mortality mode in February and an investigation was opened by USFWS Law Enforcement upon retrieval of the carcass. Historic rendezvous sites were surveyed in 2008, but no evidence of pups was obtained. The Carey Dome pack was considered extirpated during 2008.

Hard Butte

This uncollared pack was believed to have expanded its home range eastward, encompassing at least some of the former Carey Dome pack's territory. In March, a wolf was legally killed while harassing cattle on private property. Seventeen confirmed and 1 probable wolf-killed sheep were attributed to this pack, which resulted in lethal control of 2 wolves in late August. The pack also killed 1 livestock guardian dog. Investigations of areas where this pack was heard howling in 2007 discovered evidence of wolf presence, but sign was insufficient to warrant a capture effort. No estimate of pack size or evidence of reproduction was obtained. The Hard Butte pack was not reported as a breeding pair in 2008.

Hornet Creek

Missing female wolf B290's signal was detected by a biologist from Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) while surveying northeastern OR for missing Idaho wolves; B290's signal was located in ID. This wolf was radiocollared while a member of the Morgan Creek pack in 2006. She dispersed from that pack in late 2006 and her whereabouts were unknown until located

by ODFW in 2008. Field efforts yielded a minimum count of 3 pups verifying reproduction and first-year pack status. An adult male wolf, believed to be B290's mate was lethally controlled in July when 1 calf was confirmed to have been killed by this pack. Two aerial observations resulted in the official pack count of 5 wolves. We suspect the additional wolf in these later counts represented a missed pup, and the loss of the male wolf precluded this newly documented pack from breeding pair status for 2008.

Jungle Creek

There were no radiocollared wolves in this pack, which made monitoring difficult. This pack was implicated in depredations on domestic sheep near Josephine Lake in 2007, and wolves, presumably the Jungle Creek pack, were confirmed to have killed 11 sheep at Squaw Meadows approximately 4 miles (6 km) from Josephine Lake in 2008. This pack was not reported as a breeding pair for 2008 and there was no information pertaining to pack size.

Lick Creek

The Lick Creek pack's den area was located in June, where 4-5 pups were observed. Suspected breeding female B288 remained as the sole radiocollared individual. This pack was implicated in confirmed depredations on 3 sheep and probably killed another. Minimum pack size was estimated at 10 wolves based upon an aerial observation. The Lick Creek pack was considered a breeding pair for 2008.

Orphan

With no radiocollared wolves to assist biologists, monitoring was difficult. Male wolf B327 (see Other Documented Wolf Groups), captured in 2007, continued to be located in the Orphan pack's home range. Pack and reproductive statuses of the Orphan pack were unknown at the end of 2008, and have not been determined since 2006, so this pack was removed as a documented pack.

Packer John

A litter of 6 pups was verified at a new den site in 2008. First established in 2004, this pack had gone without a verified sheep depredation until 2007, despite domestic sheep grazing within their home range. During 2008, members of this pack were confirmed to have killed 10 sheep (8 reported in this DAU and 2 in the Sawtooth DAU), 1 cow, and 1 livestock guarding dog, and probably killed another 10 sheep (8 reported in this DAU and 2 in the Sawtooth DAU). The sheep depredations from this pack occurred in 2 separate DAUs. Because of the chronic nature of their depredations, 7 wolves were removed. This pack was not reported as a breeding pair and is considered extirpated.

Snake River

Missing female wolf B315's signal was detected in ID by a biologist from ODFW while surveying for missing Idaho wolves in northeastern Oregon. This wolf was radiocollared during a control action north of McCall, ID in October 2006. Her signal was not heard from January 2007 until September 2007, at which time she was located in the Lick Creek pack's home range. B315 disappeared again after November 2007 until she was rediscovered by ODFW in March 2008. Ground-tracking efforts led to a rendezvous site and a count of 6 pups. Minimum

estimated pack size was 5 wolves from an aerial observation. The newly documented Snake River pack was considered a 2008 breeding pair.

Stolle Meadows

This pack made a major shift in home range following the November 2007 aerial locations of female B249 and male B259. In January 2008, both radiocollared wolves were observed amongst a group of seven on the east flank of Jughandle Mountain (approximately 13 miles [21 km] northwest of their previously defined territory). They did not return to their former home range, producing a litter of at least 3 pups in the territory formerly occupied by the Gold Fork pack. In May, subadult female B380 was fitted with a Global Positioning System (GPS) radiocollar. The presence of livestock, both sheep and cattle, in their new area led to depredations that resulted in 3 confirmed and 2 probable losses of cattle. During control actions 3 wolves were killed, including suspected breeding female B249. In December an adult wolf was illegally killed in this pack's territory. The Stolle Meadows pack was counted as a breeding pair for 2008.

Thunder Mountain

Program efforts to document continued wolf occupancy of this pack's territory were successful when wolf tracks and scats were located in the vicinity of Stibnite Mine and Mule Hill. A capture effort in September was unsuccessful. No evidence of reproduction was obtained, so the Thunder Mountain pack was not reported as a breeding pair for 2008 and there was no estimate of pack size.

Other Documented Wolf Groups

B192

Female B192 was radiocollared as an 11-month-old member of the Soldier Mountain pack in 2004. She remained with that pack until June 2007, after which her signal was not detected. B192 was detected, through genetic tests, from a scat collected in the Bear Valley pack's territory in July 2007. Her signal was re-located, and she was observed with another black wolf, in the Brush Creek drainage north of McCall, ID, in May 2008. She seemed to have settled into a home range east of Payette Lake during the summer, but it was not determined if she was affiliated with a pack. A mortality signal was detected during the September monitoring flight and the carcass subsequently located; cause of death was not determined from field examination.

B327

Male wolf B327 was captured by WS during a control action and fitted with a GPS radiocollar in 2007. Repeated efforts to determine his affiliation with other wolves were unsuccessful, but multiple sightings indicated he was alone. The GPS radiocollar was scheduled to detach in August, but the collar was irretrievable due to premature failure of the radio beacon. B327 was legally shot, within his normal area of use, in December while chasing livestock; he was accompanied by 2 other wolves at that time. Due to the fact that the detachment mechanism also failed, the collar was still on the animal at the time of the shooting; data from the radiocollar indicated that B327 was at, or in very close proximity, to carcasses of some of the 9 confirmed and 3 probably killed cattle in his home range.

B344

After dispersing from the Coolwater Ridge pack in mid-winter, wolf B344 went undetected until September when she was observed alone near Brundage Mountain near McCall, ID; approximately 84 miles (135 km) from her last location within the Coolwater Ridge pack's home range. Subsequently, B344 has been seen with another wolf and was considered a potential breeding pair for 2009.

B409

Female wolf B409 was captured during a control action in September. This group of wolves (denoted as suspected Sweet Ola pack in 2007) was implicated in 1 confirmed and 2 probable cattle losses during 2008. A subsequent aerial observation indicated that at least 1 other wolf was present.

McCall - Weiser Wolf Activity

2007-08 Known Locations *

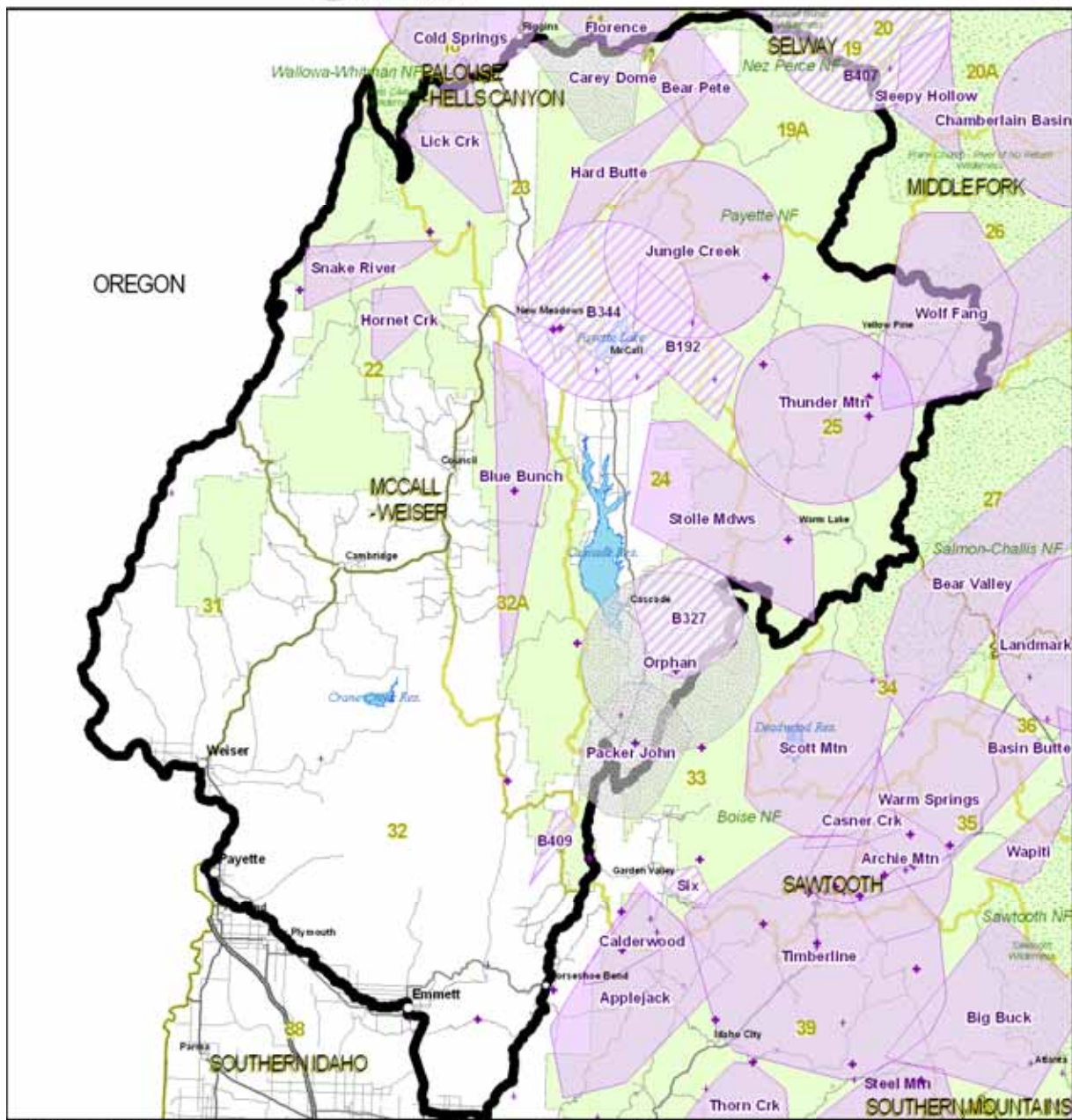
2008 Estimated Locations **

Documented, Suspected and Reported Locations
2008 Public Observations ***

- Documented Pack
- Documented Group (less than 4 animals)
- Terminated Group

- Documented Pack
- Documented Group (pair or group less than 4 animals)
- Suspected Pack
- Terminated Group

- Multiple Wolves Observed
- Single Wolf Sighted
- Not Specified



Cartography: Brent Thomas, GIS, Mar 3, 2009
File: 1023_1008_wolf_activity_locations_kml@weiser2008.apr.mxd

0 2.5 5 10 15 20 Miles

powered by WRI
View this map in a web browser

* Tracking collar data and research locations collected and analyzed by Idaho Department of Fish and Game, the Nez Perce Tribe, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Wildlife Services, the University of Montana Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit and the National Park Service. Pack locations are minimum convex polygons (MCP) of telemetry and research observations for collared wolves from 1/1/2007 - 12/31/2008 with outliers removed. For packs with only VHF collars 100% MCPs are used. Packs which included GPS locations are floating median 95% MCPs. If the pack did not have any observations in 2008 it is not included on this map. This map is provided for management purposes and should not be used for data analysis. Do not release these data to third parties without first contacting the Idaho Department of Fish and Game or the Nez Perce Tribe.

** Estimated Pack Activity determined by biologists from research locations, public observations and incidental observations from 1/1/2007 - 12/31/2008. These are displayed as 9.8 mile radius circles consistent with pack territories in Idaho.

*** Public Observations from 1/1/2008 - 12/31/2008 collected on the Idaho Fish and Game website and reviewed by staff biologists. Confirmed and possible observations are displayed.

Figure 15. Distribution of documented and suspected wolf packs, other documented groups, and public wolf reports in the McCall-Weiser DAU, 2008.

Table 7. End of year summary of estimated pack size, natality, mortality, dispersal, monitoring status, wolf captures, and livestock depredations for documented and suspected wolf groups within Idaho Department of Fish and Game McCall-Weiser Data Analysis Unit, 2008.

Wolf group ^a	Min. no. wolves detected ^b	Reproductive status			Documented mortalities				Known dispersal	Monitoring status			Confirmed & (probable) wolf-caused livestock losses		
		Min. no. pups prod. (died) ^c	Reported as		Natural	Control ^e	Other human ^f	Unknwn ^g		Active radio collars	No. wolf captures ^h	No. wolves missing ⁱ	Cattle	Sheep	Dogs
			reprod. pack	breeding pair ^d											
DOCUMENTED PACKS															
Bear Pete	8	4	YES	YES	0	4	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	14(2)	0
Blue Bunch	8	4	YES	YES	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0(1)	0
Carey Dome	0	0	NO	NO	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hard Butte	?	?	NO	NO	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17(1)	1
Hornet Creek	5	3	YES	NO	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Jungle Creek	?	?	NO	NO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	0
Lick Creek	10	4	YES	YES	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3(1)	0
Orphan	?	?	NO	NO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Packer John	0	6(1)	YES	NO	0	7	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	8(8)	1
Snake River	5	6	YES	YES	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Stolle Meadows	6	3	YES	YES	0	3	1	0	0	2	1	0	3(2)	0	0
Thunder Mountain	?	?	NO	NO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SUBTOTAL	42	30(1)			0	18	2	0	0	8	2	0	7(2)	53(13)	2
SUSPECTED PACKS															
SUBTOTAL	0				0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
OTHER DOCUMENTED GROUPS															
Border DAU (Florence)							2								
B192	0				0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B327	2				0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	9(3)	0	0
B344	2				0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
B409	2				0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1(2)	0	0
SUBTOTAL	6				0	1	2	1	0	2	1	0	10(5)	0	0

Wolf group ^a	Min. no. wolves detected ^b	Reproductive status			Documented mortalities				Known dispersal	Monitoring status			Confirmed & (probable) wolf-caused livestock losses		
		Min. no. pups prod. (died) ^c	Reported as		Natural	Control ^e	Other human ^f	Unknwn ^g		Active radio collars	No. wolf captures ^h	No. wolves missing ⁱ	Cattle	Sheep	Dogs
			reprod. pack	breeding pair ^d											
UNKNOWN															
GMU 19A	?				0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GMU 22	?				0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
GMU 23	?				0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GMU 32	?				0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0(1)	2	0
SUBTOTAL	0				0	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	1(1)	2	0
DAU TOTAL	48	30(1)			0	22	6	1	0	10	3	0	18(8)	55(13)	2

^a Documented packs = territorial groups of wolves usually consisting of an adult male and female and their offspring from one or more generations, and has the potential to reproduce (2 adults of opposite sex). Suspected packs = geographic areas where wolf pack presence was suspected but not verified, or where wolf presence was verified but did not meet documented pack status. Other documented groups = verified groups not meeting either documented or suspected pack status (e.g., lone wolves, potential mated pairs, etc.). Unknown = geographic areas where wolf presence was previously unverified and/or no data on group status was known.

^b Summing this column does not equate to number of wolves estimated to be present in the population.

^c Number in parentheses indicates known pup mortality; pup mortalities tallied in the appropriate column in “documented mortalities.”

^d Breeding pairs are the measure of Federal and State wolf recovery and management goals. A breeding pair is defined as “an adult male and a female wolf that have produced at least 2 pups that survive until December 31 of the year of their birth...”.

^e Includes agency lethal control and legal take.

^f Includes all other human-related deaths.

^g Does not include pups that disappeared before winter.

^h Includes wolves captured for monitoring purposes during 2008. Most, but not all, were radiocollared.

ⁱ Radiocollared wolves that became missing in 2008.