

## **Panhandle DAU (GMUs 1, 2, 3, 4, 4A, 5, 6, 7, and 9)**

### Abstract

The Panhandle DAU was home to 5 documented resident packs, 12 border packs, 1 suspected pack and 2 other wolf groups (Figure 10; Table 2). Eight of 12 documented border packs were recorded as Idaho border packs and likely spend some time in Montana or Canada. Four border packs were tallied for Montana and likely spend some time in the Panhandle DAU. Eight of 13 documented packs tallied for Idaho produced litters, but only 2 qualified as breeding pairs. Estimates of wolf numbers, pup production, and breeding pairs were minimums as manpower and field season timing were insufficient to adequately survey all known wolf packs in the Panhandle DAU. No documented or probable wolf-caused livestock losses occurred in this DAU.

### Background

The Panhandle DAU encompasses GMUs 1, 2, 3, 4, 4A, 5, 6, 7 and 9, and includes the entire Idaho Fish and Game Panhandle administrative region. The climate is strongly influenced by Pacific maritime patterns that produce heavy late fall and winter precipitation and moderate temperatures. Spring sees prolonged periods of rain and summer months are warm and dry.

The Panhandle DAU is predominantly timbered, consisting of public forests managed by a variety of agencies, and large areas of private corporate timber holdings. Timber harvest is the prevailing land use and large tracts of roadless designation or remote access are scattered throughout the area. White-tailed deer, elk, mule deer and moose occur at varying densities throughout the DAU. Livestock grazing is minimal on public properties but exists in most areas of year-long human inhabitation.

The monitoring level of this DAU is considered low with only 2 of the 14 resident packs and one of the other documented groups having active radiocollars.

### Management Direction

As outlined in the Wolf Plan, wolf-livestock and wolf-ungulate conflicts are currently low in the Panhandle DAU but there is a potential for moderate levels of conflicts as wolf populations increase. Management direction for wolves in this DAU is to stabilize the population.

### Documented Resident Packs

#### *Avery*

There were no radiocollars associated with this pack in 2008. Biologists verified wolf activity, including the presence of pups, at two different rendezvous sites in July and August. Public observations of up to 10 wolves were reported. This pack was not implicated in any livestock depredations. There were no wolf mortalities documented for this pack. The minimum number of wolves for this pack was estimated at 3 based on the presence of adult and pup tracks, reproduction was verified but the pack was not counted as a breeding pair for 2008.

### *Fishhook*

There were 2 radiocollars associated with this pack in 2008 (female B217 and male B294). Biologists conducted ground surveys in August and determined the presence of multiple wolves and pups. During an aerial survey in September biologists observed 7 wolves, including 4 pups. This pack was not implicated in any livestock depredations. There were no wolf mortalities documented for this pack. The minimum number of wolves for this pack was 7, reproduction was verified and the pack was counted as a breeding pair for 2008.

### *Kootenai Peak*

This pack was previously classified as a “suspected pack” for 2007. Based on additional information collected in 2008, this pack status was retroactively changed to a documented pack for 2007. There were no radiocollars associated with this pack in 2008. This pack was not implicated in any livestock depredations, and there were no wolf mortalities documented for this pack. The minimum number of wolves for this group was not verified, though tracks of a minimum of 5 wolves was seen, reproduction was not verified and the group was not counted as a breeding pair for 2008.

### *Marble Mountain*

There were 2 radiocollars associated with this pack at the beginning of 2008 (female B314 and male B216). The carcass of B216, the suspected breeding male, was recovered in March and appeared to have died from natural causes, although the actual cause remains unknown. During an aerial survey in June biologists observed 1 adult wolf and a minimum of 2 pups. In November the carcass of a wolf pup was collected following a report from a local sportsman. Investigation of the carcass revealed puncture wounds and lacerations of the head and neck consistent with bite pattern of the same or another carnivore species; official cause of death is pending. This pack was not implicated in any livestock depredations. The minimum number of wolves for this group was estimated at 3, reproduction was verified, and the group was not counted as a breeding pair for 2008.

### *Tangle Creek*

There were no radiocollars associated with this pack in 2008. The 2007 radiocollared members of this pack, males B310 and B311, were located outside of the pack’s normal home range during 2007. B311 died in October, 2007, and B310 has been located south of Dworshak Reservoir since November 2007. The only information available relative to the Tangle Creek pack came from biologists conducting bear research who documented howling and took a photo of a single adult wolf in the pack’s traditional home range. This pack was not implicated in any livestock depredations. There were no wolf mortalities documented for this pack. The minimum number of wolves for this group was not verified, reproduction was not verified and the group was not counted as a breeding pair for 2008.

### *Documented Border Packs*

#### *Boundary (ID)*

There were no radiocollars associated with this pack in 2008. This pack was a documented border pack tallied by Idaho, and likely spends some time in Canada. In December 2007, agency personnel found the remains of a domestic calf (cause of death undetermined) that had been consumed by wolves and noted tracks indicating the presence of 5 wolves in the vicinity. Public

observations of up to 9 wolves were reported. This pack was not implicated in any livestock depredations. There were no wolf mortalities documented for this pack. The minimum number of wolves for this pack was not determined, reproduction was not verified, and the pack was not counted as a breeding pair for 2008.

*Calder Mountain (ID)*

There were no radiocollars associated with this pack in 2008. This pack was a documented border pack tallied by Idaho and likely spends some time in Montana. Biologist documented the presence of wolves in June and August. Public observations of up to 5 wolves were reported. This pack was not implicated in any livestock depredations. There were no wolf mortalities documented for this pack. The minimum number of wolves for this pack was not verified, reproduction was not verified and the pack was not counted as a breeding pair for 2008.

*Copper Falls (ID)*

This pack was newly documented in 2008. There were no radiocollars associated with this pack in 2008. This pack was a documented border pack tallied by Idaho and likely spends some time in Montana and Canada. Biologist documented the presence of wolves in August. Public observations of up to 7 wolves were reported and separate photos of an adult wolf and a pup were submitted to IDFG in July and August. This pack was not implicated in any livestock depredations. There were no wolf mortalities documented for this pack. The minimum number of wolves for this pack was estimated at 3 based on the presence of adult and pup tracks, reproduction was verified but the pack was not counted as a breeding pair for 2008.

*Cutoff Peak (ID)*

This pack was newly documented in 2008. There were no radiocollars associated with this pack in 2008. This pack was a documented border pack tallied by Idaho and likely spends some time in Canada. Agency personnel established the minimum pack size of 9 wolves, including 4 pups. Analysis of further information warranted a retroactive classification of documented pack for 2007. Trapping efforts were unsuccessful, in part due to the requirements of trapping wolves in grizzly bear country. This pack was discovered in the vicinity of cattle on a U.S. Forest Service grazing allotment although the pack was not implicated in any livestock depredations. There were no wolf mortalities documented for this pack. This pack was counted as a breeding pair for 2008.

*De Borgia (MT)*

This documented border pack was tallied by Montana in 2008. See the respective State's annual report for information on this pack.

*Mullan (ID)*

This pack was newly documented in 2008. There were no radiocollars associated with this pack in 2008. This pack was a documented border pack tallied by Idaho and likely spends some time in Montana. The pack was discovered as a result of wolves fighting with domestic dogs at a private residence in May. The landowner reported 5 wolves fighting with his dogs, and shot one wolf to protect his animals. Additionally, there was 1 wolf mortality that occurred in Montana that was likely associated with this pack and not recorded in the Idaho wolf mortality statistics.

The minimum number of wolves in this pack was estimated at 3, reproduction was not verified and the pack was not counted as a breeding pair for 2008.

*Pond Peak (ID)*

This pack was newly documented in 2008. There were no radiocollars associated with this pack in 2008. This pack was a documented border pack tallied by Idaho and likely spends some time in Montana. Numerous public observations reported up to 8 wolves observed, including pups. An IDFG employee documented howling, including pups. WS verified that a hunting dog was probably killed in this pack's suspected territory in October. This pack was not implicated in any livestock depredations. There were no wolf mortalities documented for this pack. The minimum number of wolves for this group was estimated at 3 based on the presence of adult and pup tracks, reproduction was verified but the group was not counted as a breeding pair for 2008.

*Silver Lake (ID)*

This pack was a documented border pack tallied by Montana in 2007. For 2008 this pack was tallied as an Idaho border pack as they had apparently moved to Idaho and there was no known activity in Montana associated with this pack. There were no radiocollars associated with this pack in 2008. IDFG personnel identified wolf tracks indicating the presence of multiple wolves, including pups, in August. Public observations of up to 7 wolves were reported. Trapping efforts in August were unsuccessful. This pack was not implicated in any livestock depredations. There were no wolf mortalities documented for this pack. The minimum number of wolves for this group was estimated at 3 based on the presence of adult and pup tracks, reproduction was verified but the group was not counted as a breeding pair for 2008.

*Snowy Top (ID)*

This pack was newly documented in 2008. There was 1 radiocollar briefly associated with this pack in 2008. This pack was a documented border pack tallied by Idaho and likely spends some time in Canada and Washington. Numerous observations by the public, IDFG and U.S. Forest Service biologists were reported from May through July indicating the presence of up to 5 wolves, including pups. Analysis of further information warranted a retroactive classification of documented pack for 2007. Trapping efforts in August resulted in the capture and collaring of a female pup that subsequently died in September. At the time the dead pup was recovered tracks were observed (1 adult and 1 pup) indicating that at least 1 pup was still alive at that time. This pack was not implicated in any livestock depredations. The minimum number of wolves for this group was estimated at 3, reproduction was verified but the group was not counted as a breeding pair for 2008.

*Solomon Mountain (MT)*

The Solomon Mountain pack was discovered by monitoring female B296, a dispersing member of the Boundary pack. This border pack, tallied for Idaho in 2007, was tallied as a Montana border pack in 2008 as most, if not all, locations for this pack occurred in Montana. A wolf believed to be associated with this pack died of natural causes, was recovered in Idaho and was reported in the Idaho mortality statistics. See the respective State's annual report for more information on this pack.

### *Superior (MT)*

This documented border pack was tallied by Montana in 2008. See the respective State's annual report for information on this pack.

### *Twilight (MT)*

This documented border pack was tallied by Montana in 2008. See the respective State's annual report for information on this pack.

### *Suspected Packs*

#### *Bathtub Mountain*

There were no radiocollars associated with this pack in 2008. Biologists conducting bear surveys observed multiple wolf tracks in August. This pack was not implicated in any livestock depredations. There were no wolf mortalities documented for this pack. The minimum number of wolves for this suspected pack was not verified.

### *Other Documented Wolf Groups*

#### *B308*

This potential breeding pair was newly documented in 2008. There was 1 radiocollar associated with this pair in 2008. Biologists monitored male wolf B308 as it dispersed from the Giant Cedar pack in the Palouse-Hells Canyon DAU and established residence in the Panhandle DAU. Aerial and ground surveys revealed the presence of 2 adult wolves in June and July. Telemetry locations indicated the radiocollared wolf remained in the area throughout the year. This group was not implicated in any livestock depredations, and there were no wolf mortalities documented for this group. The minimum number of wolves for this group was 2 wolves.

#### *GMU 2*

This wolf group was newly documented in 2008. There were no radiocollars associated with this group in 2008. Recurring reports from the public of 2 or 3 wolves in 2008 and an observation of 2 adult wolves by an IDFG employee indicate that this wolf group exists in the northern portion of GMU 2. This group was not implicated in any livestock depredations. There were no wolf mortalities documented for this group. The minimum number of wolves for this group was estimated at 2.





Wolf group <sup>a</sup>	Reproductive status				Documented mortalities				Known dispersal	Monitoring status			Confirmed & (probable) wolf-caused livestock losses		
	Min. no. wolves detected <sup>b</sup>	Min. no. pups prod. (died) <sup>c</sup>	Reported as							Natural	Control <sup>e</sup>	Other human <sup>f</sup>	Unknwn <sup>g</sup>	Active radio collars	No. wolf captures <sup>h</sup>
			reprod. pack	breeding pair <sup>d</sup>											
SUBTOTAL	4				0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
UNKNOWN															
SUBTOTAL	0				0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DAU TOTAL	41	16(2)			1	1	0	3	2	4	1	1	0	0	0(1)

<sup>a</sup> 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.

<sup>b</sup> Summing this column does not equate to number of wolves estimated to be present in the population.

<sup>c</sup> Number in parentheses indicates known pup mortality; pup mortalities tallied in the appropriate column in “documented mortalities.”

<sup>d</sup> 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...”.

<sup>e</sup> Includes agency lethal control and legal take.

<sup>f</sup> Includes all other human-related deaths.

<sup>g</sup> Does not include pups that disappeared before winter.

<sup>h</sup> Includes wolves captured for monitoring purposes during 2008. Most, but not all, were radiocollared.

<sup>i</sup> Radiocollared wolves that became missing in 2008.

<sup>j</sup> Border pack officially tallied to (STATE); territory known/likely shared with Idaho. Data on these packs can be found in Rocky Mountain Wolf Recovery 2008 Annual Report; data for mortalities and/or depredeations by non-Idaho border packs that occurred within Idaho are presented here.