

## **Salmon DAU (GMUs 21, 21A, 28, 36B)**

### Abstract

The Salmon DAU was occupied by 7 documented packs during 2008 (Figure 21; Table 13). Five packs were listed as border packs, 4 of which were claimed by Montana. All 4 documented reproductive packs qualified as breeding pairs; the reproductive status of the remaining 3 packs was not determined. Documented mortalities ( $n = 18$ ) included control (agency removal and legal take;  $n = 13$ ), other human (illegal take, vehicle collision, etc.;  $n = 4$ ), and unknown ( $n = 1$ ) causes. Confirmed ( $n = 11$ ) and probable ( $n = 2$ ) wolf-caused losses of cattle were attributed to the Buffalo Ridge, Jureano Mountain, and Moyer Basin packs; and unknown wolves. Probable ( $n = 4$ ) wolf-caused losses of domestic sheep were attributed to the Miner Lakes (MT) border pack. Four wolves were captured by Program personnel that resulted in the placement of 4 new radiocollars.

### Background

The Salmon DAU encompasses 4 GMUs (21, 21A, 28, and 36B). The topography within the Salmon DAU is characterized by steep, mountainous slopes interspersed by river valleys. The habitat consists primarily of timbered hillsides with grass understory, although lower elevations would best be described as arid rangeland comprised of sagebrush/bunchgrass vegetation. Land ownership is primarily public, with approximately 95% under U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, or State ownership. Cattle ranching, livestock grazing, mining, timber harvest, and recreation are the dominant human uses in this region.

### Management Direction

The Wolf Plan indicates current wolf-ungulate conflict levels as moderate and wolf-livestock conflict levels as high in this DAU. Therefore, wolf numbers in the Salmon DAU are slated to be decreased then stabilized at lower levels unless conditions change. With relatively high numbers of seasonal and year-round livestock on both grazing allotments and private pasture, livestock-wolf conflict potential within this DAU is high, as evidenced by the number of annual depredation incidents (see Figures 8 and 9). As such, reducing livestock depredations will continue to be an important objective within this DAU through implementation of 10(j) regulations or through regulated harvest once delisted.

### Documented Resident Packs

#### *Buffalo Ridge*

After being involved in multiple depredations in December of 2007, this pack was slated for removal when depredations continued through early winter of 2007/2008, and where incremental removal of wolves proved ineffective. The following control actions resulted in the lethal control of 6 wolves (5 in Salmon and 1 in Southern Mountains DAUs). Continued wolf activity within traditional areas used by this pack indicated multiple wolves remained following control (in August, a radiocollared wolf was shot in defense of livestock, and multiple wolves were heard howling, within an area commonly used by this pack; see B283). While not considered a

breeding pair, the presence of multiple wolves within this pack territory warranted their retention as a documented pack for 2008.

#### *Hoodoo*

Reproductive surveys determined that the Hoodoo pack shifted their den area from along the Middle Fork Salmon River to a tributary of Camas Creek, where 4 pups were confirmed. A capture effort in June was successful in adding two additional radiocollars in this pack; however, one newly collared wolf was legally shot in August under a Shoot On Sight (S.O.S.) permit while dispersing from its pack, and the second was illegally killed in early October. One pup was determined to have been struck and killed by a vehicle in October. A minimum of 11 wolves was counted in the pack during winter counts, and it was listed as a breeding pair for 2008.

#### *Jureano Mountain*

Program personnel verified this pack reproduced at least 6 pups at a traditional den site. A capture effort in June resulted in the recapture of wolf B328, caught in the summer of 2007 at the same trap location. Wolf B328 was first fitted with a GPS collar that later failed some time in fall 2007, leaving this pack unmonitored until his recapture in 2008. This wolf was found dead of unknown cause during a November monitoring flight (likely during a dispersal event), again leaving this pack without radiocollared members. Depredations on cattle during the summer prompted WS personnel to lethally remove one wolf. The Jureano Mountain pack was listed as a breeding pair in 2008, but the lack of radiocollared wolves prevented attempts to ascertain a year-end pack count.

#### *Morgan Creek*

The Morgan Creek pack was without radiocollared individuals and its status was unknown for all of 2008.

#### *Moyer Basin*

The Moyer Basin pack reproduced a litter of 5 pups near a traditional rendezvous site in 2008. A subadult female, trapped and fitted with a GPS radiocollar as a pup in 2007, was darted from the ground in July 2008 and refitted with a VHF radiocollar. While typically localized in the Panther Creek drainage for much of the year, this pack was located several miles south of their known home range in Morgan Creek during December telemetry flights. During this time frame, the pack was implicated in the depredations of multiple cattle. As a result, 4 wolves were lethally controlled. Unfortunately, during the control actions both radiocollared wolves were inadvertently killed. Aerial counts taken during control actions indicated 8 wolves remained in the pack, and was also considered a breeding pair for 2008.

#### *Owl Creek*

The Owl Creek pack was without radiocollared individuals and its status was unknown for all of 2008.

#### *Documented Border Packs*

##### *Battlefield (MT)*

See the respective State's annual report for information on this pack.

*Hughes Creek (ID)*

Agency personnel verified the presence of 5 pups during reproduction surveys in early summer of 2008. Unfortunately, the only radiocollared wolf's signal went undetected for the remainder of the year, leaving this pack unmonitored for much of 2008. As such, a year-end pack size count was not obtained. The Hughes Creek pack was considered a breeding pair for 2008.

*Miner Lakes (MT)*

See the respective State's annual report for information on this pack.

*Painted Rocks (MT)*

See the respective State's annual report for information on this pack.

*Sula (MT)*

See the respective State's annual report for information on this pack.

*Suspected Resident Packs*

*Iron Creek*

No reports of wolves or livestock depredations.

*Other Documented Wolf Groups*

*B160*

Wolf B160 was found illegally shot along Highway 75 east of Stanley, Idaho. This animal's radiocollar failed in 2006 as a member of the Morgan Creek pack, and his status was unknown until the carcass was discovered in April of 2008.

*B283*

Radiolocations from female wolf B283 in winter and spring 2008 indicated she had localized with an unknown mate within the Sawtooth National Recreation Area along the White Cloud Peaks range. In spring, a wolf believed to be the animal paired with B283 was killed by a vehicle. B283 was legally shot in defense of livestock with other wolves near Bayhorse Lakes in August, indicating she may have joined with remnants of the Buffalo Ridge pack (see Buffalo Ridge).

*B328*

Wolf B328 was found dead of unknown cause in Iron Creek following a November telemetry monitoring flight. Well south of the Jureano Mountain pack's home range, it is likely this wolf was dispersing from its natal pack at the time of its death.

*B383*

Trapped in June 2008, this wolf was legally killed in August under the authority of a S.O.S. permit, having dispersed from the Hoodoo pack some weeks prior.

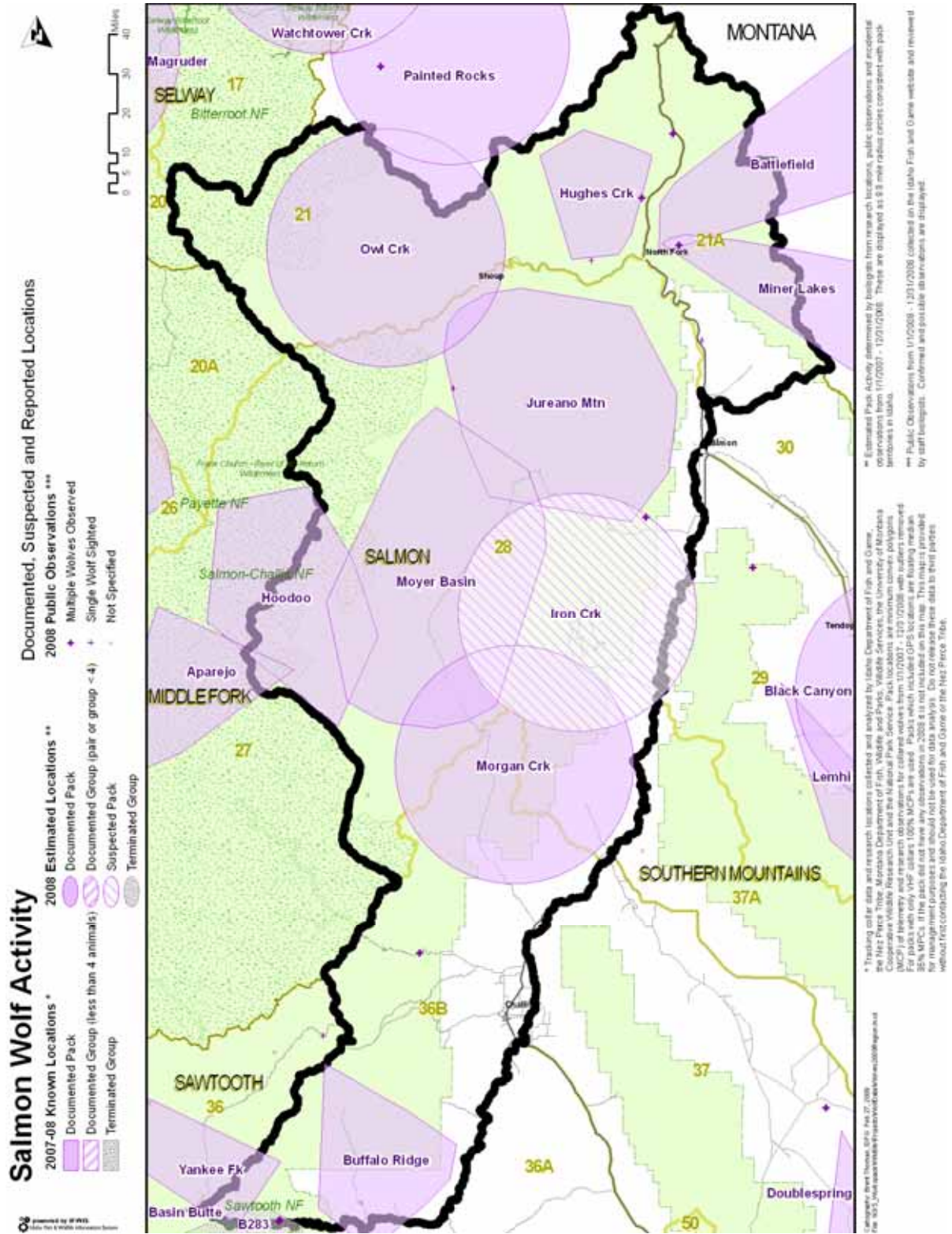


Figure 21. Distribution of documented and suspected wolf packs, other documented groups, and public wolf reports in the Salmon DAU, 2008.

Table 13. 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 Salmon Data Analysis Unit, 2008.

Wolf group <sup>a</sup>	Min. no. wolves detected <sup>b</sup>	Reproductive status			Documented mortalities				Known dispersal	Monitoring status			Confirmed & (probable) wolf-caused livestock losses		
		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>	No. wolves missing <sup>i</sup>	Cattle	Sheep	Dogs
			reprod. pack	breeding pair <sup>d</sup>											
<b>DOCUMENTED PACKS</b>															
Battlefield (MT) <sup>j</sup>															
Buffalo Ridge	?	0	NO	NO	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	0	0
Hoodoo	11	4(1)	YES	YES	0	0	2	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0
Hughes Creek (ID) <sup>j</sup>	?	5	YES	YES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Jureano Mountain	?	6	YES	YES	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	4(1)	0	0
Miner Lakes (MT) <sup>j</sup>														0(4)	
Morgan Creek	?	?	NO	NO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Moyer Basin	8	5	YES	YES	0	4	0	0	0	0	1	0	2(1)	0	0
Owl Creek	?	?	NO	NO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Painted Rocks (MT) <sup>j</sup>															
Sula (MT) <sup>j</sup>															
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20(1)</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10(2)</b>	<b>0(4)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>SUSPECTED PACKS</b>															
Iron Creek	?														
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>				<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>OTHER DOCUMENTED GROUPS</b>															
<del>B160</del>	0				0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<del>B283</del>	0				0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<del>B328</del>	0				0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<del>B383</del>	0				0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Border DAU (Yankee Fork)							1								
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>				<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>UNKNOWN</b>															

Wolf group <sup>a</sup>	Min. no. wolves detected <sup>b</sup>	Reproductive status			Documented mortalities				Known dispersal	Monitoring status			Confirmed & (probable) wolf-caused livestock losses		
		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>	No. wolves missing <sup>i</sup>	Cattle	Sheep	Dogs
			reprod. pack	breeding pair <sup>d</sup>											
GMU 36B					0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
DAU TOTAL	19	20(1)			0	13	4	1	2	1	4	2	11(2)	0(4)	0

<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 depredations by non-Idaho border packs that occurred within Idaho are presented here.