

Sawtooth DAU (GMUs 33, 34, 35, 36, 39)

Abstract

The Sawtooth DAU includes GMUs 33, 34, 35, 36, and 39. During 2008, the Sawtooth DAU was home to 14 documented wolf packs (Figure 17; Table 9). Three other wolf groups were documented. Eleven documented packs were counted as breeding pairs. Twenty-nine mortalities were documented (23 lethal control, 4 other human, 1 natural, and 1 unknown). Confirmed livestock or dog losses were attributed to Applejack, Archie Mountain, Basin Butte, Galena, High Prairie, Moores Flat, Packer John, Steel Mountain, Timberline, and unknown wolves. Twenty-three wolves were removed in total from Applejack, Basin Butte, Galena, High Prairie, Steel Mountain, and unknown wolves. Thirty wolves were captured and radiocollared.

Background

Access to this DAU ranges from heavily roaded urban, forested, and agricultural areas to road-less wilderness areas. The vast majority of this DAU is under the management authority of the Boise and Sawtooth National Forests. However, significant portions of private agricultural land also exist in the Mayfield and Horseshoe Bend areas. The Treasure Valley, Idaho's largest metropolitan area, is also in this DAU. The climate tends to be warm and dry in the summer time and wet and cold in the winter. Lower elevations tend to receive more rain in the winter trending to heavy snow in higher elevations.

Management Direction

As outlined in the Wolf Plan, current ungulate and livestock conflicts with wolves are moderate in this DAU. The current harvest strategy is to stabilize the wolf population in the Sawtooth DAU at the 2005-2007 levels. The wolf population in this DAU did not appear to increase substantially from 2007 to 2008. Thus, appears to be meeting management objectives.

Documented Resident Packs

Applejack

Breeding female B306 was being monitored by radio-telemetry at the onset of 2008. Biologists counted a minimum of 2 pups in this pack. 3 wolves were killed during a control action in response to livestock depredations. This second year pack had a minimum of 4 wolves in November 2008, was reproductive, and was counted as a breeding pair for 2008.

Archie Mountain

Breeding female B341 was being monitored by radio-telemetry at the onset of 2008. During winter 2008, 4 additional wolves (B364-367) were captured by aerial darting and fitted with ARGOS/GPS collars. Biologists counted a minimum of 4 pups in this pack. Pup B410 was captured and fitted with a VHF collar during a control action in response to a depredation event. An additional wolf, B364, was recaptured and fitted with a new ARGOS/GPS collar as it had slipped its first one. Two other mortalities were documented as a result of other human mortality when 2 pups were hit by a vehicle. B366's collar was found in the spring and was either slipped

or the wolf was poached. This second year pack had a minimum of 11 wolves in December 2008, was reproductive, and was counted as a breeding pair for 2008.

Basin Butte

Reproductive surveys indicated the Basin Butte pack denned in the foothills northwest of Stanley, Idaho, with a minimum of 2 pups documented. This pack was implicated in a number of livestock depredations, and as a result, 7 wolves were lethally controlled. Another wolf was shot illegally. Aerial observations indicated at least 13 wolves remained in this pack, and was confirmed as a breeding pair.

Bear Valley

Female B215 and male B332 were being monitored by radio-telemetry at the onset of 2008. B332 dispersed from this pack later in the year. Biologists counted a minimum of 4 pups visually and a fifth pup through DNA analysis. This pack was not implicated in any livestock depredations. This fifth year pack had a minimum of 13 wolves in December 2008, was reproductive, and was counted as a breeding pair for 2008.

Big Buck

Breeding female B255 was being monitored by radio-telemetry at the onset of 2008. In February her collar was detected on mortality mode. A subsequent investigation revealed a member of the public had found and collected her collar. She is suspected to have died. Biologists did not attempt to document reproduction in this pack. Several brief investigations did not reveal wolf sign in the traditional summer area of this pack. This pack was not implicated in any livestock depredations. This third year pack was not documented to have reproduced, and was not counted as a breeding pair for 2008.

Calderwood

Breeding female B141 was being monitored by radio-telemetry at the onset of 2008. During winter 2008, B376 was captured and B141 was re-captured via aerial darting. Both were fitted with VHF radiocollars. Other wolves chewed B376's collar off several months after capture. Biologists counted a minimum of 2 pups in this pack. This fifth year pack had a minimum of 9 wolves in December 2008, was reproductive, and was counted as a breeding pair for 2008.

Casner Creek

This pack was newly documented in 2008 when B400 was captured and fitted with a VHF collar and subsequent ground and aerial monitoring indicated pack status was warranted. Biologists counted a minimum of 4 pups in this pack. This pack was not implicated in any livestock depredations. This pack had a minimum of 7 wolves in December 2008, was reproductive, and was counted as a breeding pair for 2008.

Galena

The Galena pack reproduced and raised a litter of 6 pups in the Sawtooth Valley. Depredations on cattle and sheep during the summer resulted in the lethal control of 2 wolves, and one pup was captured and fitted with a radiocollar. Depredations late in the year led to the removal of 4 additional wolves. Reproduction was documented but this pack did not qualify as a breeding pair for 2008.

High Prairie

Breeding female B170 was being monitored by radio-telemetry at the onset of 2008. Her signal was last detected in February 2008. Biologists did not attempt to document reproduction in this pack because it was essentially removed by pup-rearing time. One wolf was killed during a control action in response to livestock depredations. This second year pack had a minimum of 3 wolves in February 2008, however, with the confirmed death of 1 and missing status of B170, this pack is assumed to no longer be extant and not counted as a documented pack in 2008.

Scott Mountain

No wolves were being monitored by radio-telemetry at the onset of 2008. During winter 2008 suspected breeding male B375 was captured via aerial darting and fitted with a GPS collar. During summer 2008 female B404 and female B406 were captured via ground trapping and fitted with an ARGOS/GPS and VHF collar respectively. Biologists counted a minimum of 3 pups in this pack. This pack was not implicated in any livestock depredations. This eighth year pack had a minimum of 5 wolves in December 2008, was reproductive, and was counted as a breeding pair for 2008.

Steel Mountain

Suspected breeding male R241 and suspected breeding female B189 were being monitored by radio-telemetry at the onset of 2008. As part of a summer 2008 control action, B390 was captured via ground trapping and fitted with a VHF radiocollar. Biologists counted a minimum of 2 pups in this pack. Six wolves (including B390 and 1 pup) were killed during control actions in response to livestock depredations. Four of these mortalities occurred in and were recorded for this DAU, and the other 2 occurred in and were recorded for the neighboring Southern Mountains DAU.. This sixth year pack had a minimum of 7 wolves in December 2008, was reproductive, and was not counted as a breeding pair for 2008.

Thorn Creek

Female B340 was being monitored by radio-telemetry at the onset of 2008. During summer 2008, female B389 was captured via ground trapping and fitted with an ARGOS/GPS collar. In order to collect stored data and replace the battery, this collar was intentionally blown off of the wolf in late fall 2008. Biologists counted a minimum of 2 pups in this pack. This pack was not implicated in any livestock depredations. This third year pack had a minimum of 4 wolves in December 2008; however, a complete count may not have been obtained. It was reproductive and was counted as a breeding pair for 2008.

Timberline

Female B322 was being monitored by radio-telemetry at the onset of 2008. During winter 2008, 5 additional wolves (B364-372) were captured and B322 was re-captured via aerial darting and fitted with an ARGOS/GPS and a VHF collar respectively. During summer 2008 a female wolf was captured via ground trapping and fitted with a ARGOS/GPS collar. Biologists counted a minimum of 4 pups in this pack. This pack was implicated in a depredation event which had confirmed sheep losses. One wolf, B372, was observed to disperse from this pack. This wolf was observed with 2 other wolves in the McCall-Weiser DAU. This seventh year pack had a

minimum of 11 gray wolves in December 2008, was reproductive, and was counted as a breeding pair for 2008.

Wapiti

This pack was newly documented in 2008. B385 was captured via ground trapping and fitted with a VHF collar and subsequent ground and aerial monitoring indicated pack status was warranted. Biologists counted a minimum of 6 pups in this pack. This pack was not implicated in any livestock depredations. This newly documented pack had a minimum of 12 wolves in January 2009, was reproductive, and was counted as a breeding pair for 2008. This pack was retroactively added as a pack for 2007.

Warm Springs

Female B109 was being monitored by radio-telemetry at the onset of 2008. During winter 2008, 3 wolves (B361-363) were captured via aerial darting and fitted with ARGOS/GPS collars. In early spring newly collared female B362 was killed by other wolves. A necropsy revealed multiple fetuses. Multiple efforts were unsuccessful in verifying reproduction despite the presence of the breeding female B109. Suspected breeding male B361 shed his collar in May and male B363 was last located in October. One uncollared wolf was documented to have been illegally killed in this pack. This pack was not counted as a documented pack for 2008 because only 1 wolf was left in December 2008.

Yankee Fork

The only radiocollared wolf in the pack went missing in January 2008. Public reports of wolf activity in the Yankee Fork River drainage in summer led to a trapping effort that resulted in the capture and radiocollaring of an adult male wolf. This wolf was found dead of unknown causes approximately one month later, initiating a second trapping effort that resulted in the placement of a radiocollar on a subadult female. While trapping in the area, Program personnel documented a minimum of two pups based on howling, qualifying this pack as a breeding pair. An adult male wolf, believed to belong to this pack, was illegally shot along Highway 75 near the Yankee Fork River. This mortality was recorded under the Salmon DAU, as the carcass was found just inside this neighboring DAU. Aerial counts indicated a minimum of 4 wolves in this pack.

Other Documented Wolf Groups

B109

This wolf was the breeding female of Warm Springs until they disbanded in late 2008. She roamed widely, but continued to primarily occupy Warm Spring's traditional territory. This group had a minimum of 1 wolf and was not implicated in any livestock depredations,

GMU 39

Agency personnel observed 2 black wolves in an area that was frequently used by High Prairie before they were removed. This group had a minimum of 2 black wolves and was not implicated in any livestock depredations.

Six Pair

This group was newly documented in 2008. Male B373 and female B374 were captured in the winter of 2008 via aerial darting and fitted with a VHF and GPS radiocollar respectively. B374

slipped her GPS collar in early spring and data downloaded from the collar was consistent with denning behavior. However, multiple attempts by biologists to document reproduction were unsuccessful. End of year aerial surveys documented only 2 wolves in this group which provided further evidence they did not successfully reproduce. This group was not implicated in any livestock depredations and had a minimum of 2 wolves in December 2008.

Sawtooth Wolf Activity

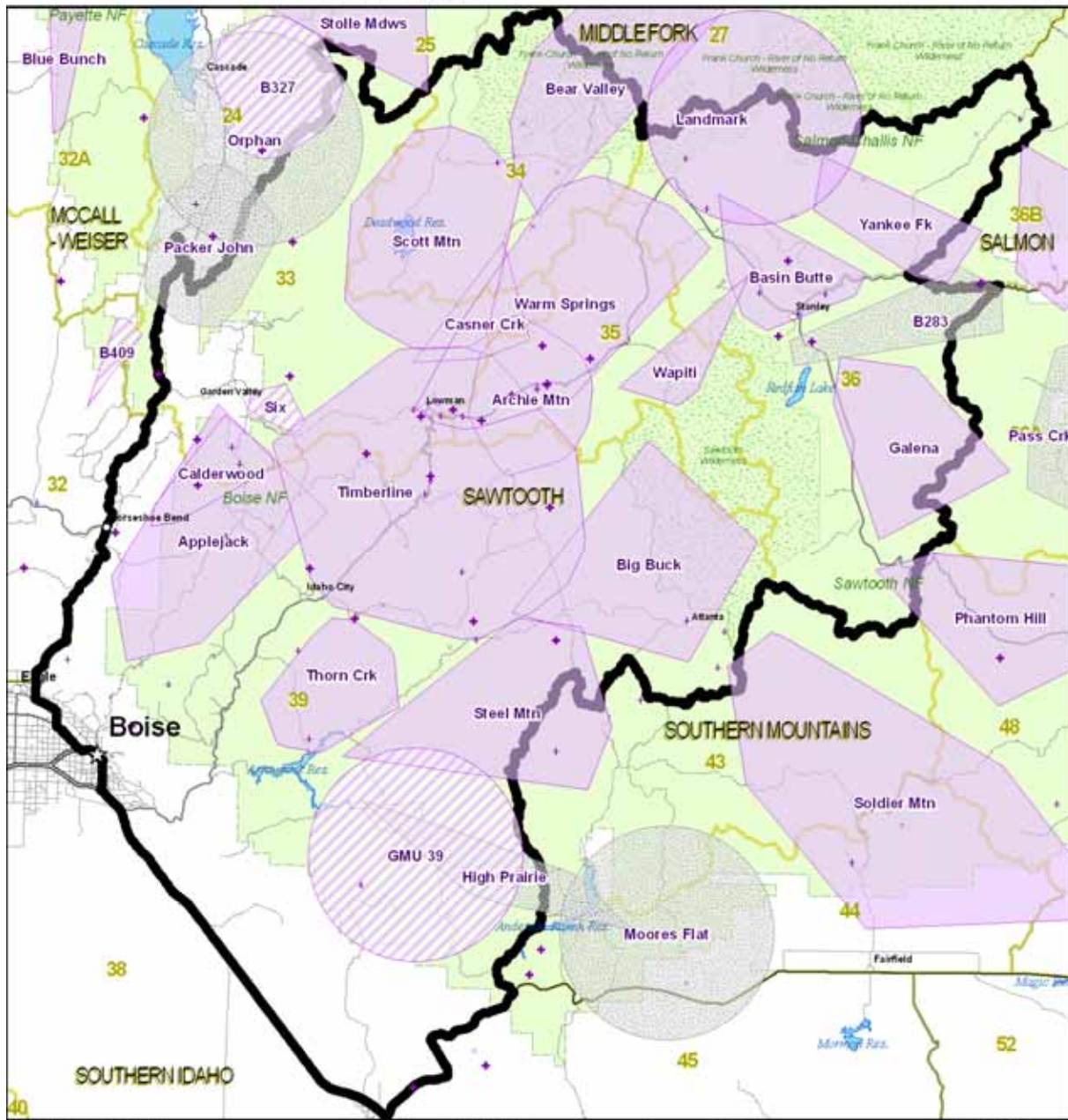
2007-08 Known Locations *

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)
- Terminated Group
- + Multiple Wolves Observed
- + Single Wolf Sighted
- o Not Specified



* 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 17. Distribution of documented and suspected wolf packs, other documented groups, and public wolf reports in the Sawtooth DAW, 2008.

Table 9. 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 Sawtooth 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															
Applejack	4	2	YES	YES	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	1(2)	5	1
Archie Mountain	11	4(2)	YES	YES	0	0	2	0	0	4	6	0	0	(1)	1
Basin Butte	13	2	YES	YES	0	7	1	0	0	2	0	0	8(2)	36	0
Bear Valley	13	5	YES	YES	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Big Buck	?	?	NO	NO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Calderwood	9	2	YES	YES	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0
Casner Creek	7	4	YES	YES	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Galena	3	6(3)	YES	NO	0	6	0	0	0	2	1	0	4(1)	0	0
High Prairie	0	?	NO	NO	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	4(1)	0
Scott Mountain	5	3	YES	YES	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0
Steel Mountain	7	2(1)	YES	NO	0	4	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	3(4)	0
Thorn Creek	4	2	YES	YES	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Timberline	11	4	YES	YES	0	0	0	0	1	6	7	0	0	5	0
Wapiti	12	6	YES	YES	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Warm Springs	0	0	NO	NO	1	0	1	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0
Yankee Fork	4	2	YES	YES	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	1	0	0	0
SUBTOTAL	103	44(6)			1	21	4	1	2	26	28	3	16(5)	53(6)	2
SUSPECTED PACKS															
SUBTOTAL	0				0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
OTHER DOCUMENTED GROUPS															
B109	1				0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
GMU 39	2	0	NO	NO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Six pair (B373)	2				0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	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											
Border DAU (Moores Flat)												1			
Border DAU (Packer John)													2(2)		
SUBTOTAL	5				0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	1	0	0
UNKNOWN															
GMU 39					0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	33	0
SUBTOTAL					0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	33	0
DAU TOTAL	108	44(6)			1	23	4	1	2	28	30	3	17(5)	88(8)	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.