

Idaho Wolf Management Progress Report August 29 – September 12, 2008

Monitoring

Fish and Game efforts to collar wolves continued in the Bear Valley area, Panhandle and Salmon. Two wolves were collared by Idaho Fish and Game north of Lowman on a new pack and another wolf was collared in Unit 35. Pups were verified in a pack in Unit 6.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has asked the states to provide mid-summer population estimates. Idaho provided the Service with preliminary estimates that will likely be very different at the end of the year. So far in Idaho this year, Fish and Game and the Nez Perce Tribe estimate there are 771 adult wolves and 89 packs, and biologists verified at least 155 pups so far. Counting wolves is best done from November through mid- January before to peak dispersal and breeding times, and when snow covered ground provides better observations conditions from the air. Our end of year counts are finalized and published in the annual reports in March. You can see previous year's progress reports at:

<http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/wolves/manage/>

Management

From January 1 – September 12, agencies have documented 112 dead wolves in Idaho. Of those, 73 were depredation control actions by USDA Wildlife Services, five illegal kills, 13 legal kills, three natural kills, and 17 other. An additional nine wolves were suspected dead – reported road kills not verified, collars on mortality not picked up, etc. Depredation events are at record levels this year nearly doubling levels incurred last year at this time.

From January 1 – September 10, Wildlife Services confirmed that wolves killed eight cows, 73 calves, 189 sheep and 10 dogs; injured one cow, seven calves, six sheep and four dogs; probably killed five cows, 19 calves and 52 sheep; and injured one cow, three calves and one sheep.

Control

From August 30 – September 11, Wildlife Services confirmed eight wolf depredations and determined that another one was a probable wolf depredation. WS confirmed that wolves killed a cow, five calves, two sheep and a guard dog. WS also confirmed that wolves attacked and injured a hound being used to trail bears, and determined that another calf was a probable wolf kill. During the reporting period, WS killed 10 wolves in response to these and previously confirmed depredations. During the same time last year, WS investigated seven confirmed and one probable wolf depredation.

Non-lethal control efforts are ongoing as per the Idaho Wolf Population Management Plan in the area between Leodore and Yellowstone along the boundary with Montana. Radio collars have been placed on wolves in the area that have been implicated in depredations to further knowledge of wolf movement in the area and pursue non-lethal options prior to lethal control. Discussions of and use of non-lethal tools are ongoing with livestock producers to assist them in reducing livestock/wolf problems along this potential corridor.

Additionally, non-lethal efforts continue in a cooperative effort near Ketchum to reduce livestock/wolf conflicts. Four producers, U.S. Forest Service, Wildlife Services, Fish and Game, Blaine County Commission, and Defenders of Wildlife are experimenting with the use of paid non-lethal personnel (funded by Defenders) who use fladry and penning for sheep at night, and attempt to scare wolves away from sheep during the night. Wolves have been around the sheep on a regular basis but to date only one sheep has been confirmed killed by wolves.

Research

Nothing new to report.

Information and Education

The new Idaho Fish and Game Wolf web page is up and running. The new page includes information on the lawsuit and injunction that caused wolves to be temporarily relisted under the Endangered Species Act. It also has updated information on the new 10(j) rule under which Fish and Game is currently acting as the “designated agent” for the Fish and Wildlife Service, and conducting day-to-day wolf management. What the public can and can’t do under the new rules is discussed. The new web page is at: <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/wolves/>

Fish and Game also would like to remind people that when wolves are in the area, please be aware that they may attack or injure dogs. It often helps to keep dogs in kennels or inside buildings at night and to not let them roam freely when humans are not around. When fresh wolf sign is found, place dogs on restraints and keep supervised. The 10(j) rule allows individuals to harass or kill a wolf attacking or molesting their livestock and stock animals including pets. If you are having concerns or problems with wolves close to your residence, please inform the nearest Fish and Game office.

Please help us manage wolves by reporting wolf sightings on our Fish and Game observation form found at:

http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/apps/wolf_report/

FWS – Northern Rocky Mountain Wolf Status (WY, MT, ID): The U.S. District Court in Missoula, Montana, issued a preliminary injunction on Friday, July 18, that immediately reinstated temporary Endangered Species Act protections for gray wolves

in the northern Rocky Mountain, pending final resolution of the case. This includes all of Montana, Idaho and Wyoming, the eastern one-third of Washington and Oregon, and parts of north-central Utah. The Fish and Wildlife Service, the states, and Department of Justice are evaluating legal options regarding the court's order and the ongoing litigation over the agency's delisting of the northern Rocky Mountain wolf population. All wolves to the north of Interstate- 90 in Idaho are once again listed as endangered. All wolves in the southern half of Montana, all portions of Idaho south of Interstate-90, and all of Wyoming will be managed under the 2005 and 2008 Endangered Species Act nonessential experimental population 10(j) regulations. Idaho Fish and Game will once again act as the designated agent for the Fish and Wildlife Service in implementing day-to-day management of wolves under the MOU between the Secretary of Interior and Governor of Idaho signed January 2006.

Delisting wolves and assuring their proper long-term management is and has been of highest priority for the state of Idaho and the Fish and Game Department. We continue to work along with the Department of Interior, Department of Justice, and other states and interveners toward the eventual delisting of wolves in the Northern Rocky Mountains, and move toward state management under the Idaho Wolf Conservation and Management Plan and the Wolf Population Management Plan. You may hear deputy attorney general Clive Strong discuss the legal situation and what the state is doing at the following link: <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/wolves/court/>

You may review past wolf weekly publications on our wolf webpage and links along with all pertinent and updated wolf information and publications at: <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/wolves/>