

Idaho Wolf Update

June 15 - 27, 2008

Monitoring

Jason Husseman, Idaho Fish and Game wolf biologist, attempted to trap and collar a wolf in the Jureano Mountain pack in the vicinity of where a field crew from the University of Montana observed six pups. After six nights, he caught and recollared the Jureano Mountain wolf wearing a GPS collar that went belly up last October. He caught him in the exact same spot where he was caught about one year ago. This collar is a store on board collar that will hopefully provide daily locations of the animal for the three to four months it was working. The GPS collar was replaced with a VHF collar.

On June 16, University of Montana research project crewmembers walked in on B385 in Wapiti in the Grandjean area. They stumbled into a set of holes under a fallen tree and were growled at by an adult down in the hole. They were barked at and eventually left the area. Dave Ausband walked in on June 18 and no adults were present. He observed one pup at the den site and after it dove into the hole he gave a little whimper and it came back out and howled for three to five minutes, but no other pups emerged and no adults responded. He then sat on a nearby ridge for three hours, but no other wolves ever showed up.

On June 17, UM researcher Dave Ausband checked out suspected den location for Archie Mt.. The den was under a pile of yarded logs. One to two pups is suspected based on evidence at the site.

On week of June 23, Michael Lucid and Dave Ausband attempted to locate Bear Valley pack unsuccessfully. Michael also attempted to catch a wolf in the Thorn Creek pack.

Carter Niemeyer worked the Timberline pack with Nate Borg and found the wolves near a flock of sheep. They spoke with the herder as best they could and communicated about the wolves. The herder was aware of them, but for the time being these wolves had not depredated. They decided not to trap in the area due to the presence of horses, dogs, sheep and people.

On June 9, Jim Holyan of the Nez Perce Tribe obtained a pup count on the Eldorado Creek pack; he saw four gray pups.

On June 19 Holyan and Kari Holder of the Tribe, observed a minimum four pups (three gray and one black) with the Earthquake Basin pack.

On June 23 Holyan and Holder observed four to five gray pups of the Lick Creek pack.

Efforts to document the pack/reproductive status of the White Bird Creek and Florence packs were unsuccessful.

Control

On June 16, the USDA Wildlife Services (WS) was able to examine one ewe and one lamb that were reported being attacked by wolves. All of the wounds were consistent with wolf bites. The ewe is not expected to survive, the lamb might. This was not a new depredation, but the same depredation where WS confirmed one ewe as a wolf kill a week earlier and attributed to the

Double Springs pack. The producer is also missing another 23 sheep that he believes were victims of wolf depredation.

On June 16, a WS fixed-wing aircrew shot and killed one black wolf from the Double Springs pack on BLM land in the Pahsimeroi.

On June 17, a WS fixed-wing aircrew found two black wolves running with B-379, the only collared animal in the Double Springs pack on BLM land in the Pahsimeroi. The aircrew shot and killed one of the black wolves. Unless there is another depredation, control efforts on the Double Springs wolves are done.

On June 17, WS investigated a report that wolves had killed a calf on private land near Salmon. While there was not enough evidence to confirm the depredation, WS did find enough to call it "probable."

On June 18, WS investigated a report that wolves killed a calf on private land near Grangeville. While there was not enough evidence to confirm the depredation, WS did find enough to call it "probable."

WS also captured and killed a sub-adult, black male wolf from that may have joined the High Prairie pack east of Anderson Ranch Reservoir. Unless there is another depredation, control efforts at this site have concluded.

WS shot and killed one gray wolf that was running with B-378, the only radio collared animal from the Pass Creek pack from a helicopter.

On June 22, WS confirmed that wolves from the Pilot Rock pack killed a Walker hound that was being used to run bears. The depredation occurred on Nez Perce Forest land near Clearwater.

On June 24, WS investigated a report that wolves attacked and injured some sheep on private land west of McCall. WS was able to examine one lamb and was able to determine that it was probably attacked by a wolf. A more thorough examination would be required to confirm a depredation which would involve killing the lamb. Since the lamb appears like it should survive, the examination was not more invasive. This particular band of sheep has seven guard dogs which may explain the minimal injuries.

On June 26, WS confirmed that a wolf had attacked and injured a calf on private land in Bighorse Canyon near Kooskia. The calf is expected to survive.

On June 26, WS investigated a report that wolves had attacked and injured a calf on private land west of Donnelly. No evidence of wolf involvement could be found.

On June 26, WS investigated a report that wolves had killed a calf on a Sawtooth National Forest grazing allotment north of Stanley. WS could not determine a cause of death.

On June 26, WS confirmed that a wolf killed a calf on a private ranch near Stanley. The wolf responsible may be a member of, or disperser from, either the Basin Butte pack or the Galena pack. Signals from radio collared animals from both packs were picked up quite a distance from the kill site.

Management

No word as of yet regarding the injunction court hearing on wolf delisting held May 28 in Missoula.

On June 16 Jason Husseman retrieved the carcass of a wolf shot under the 36-1107 provision Northeast of Stanley; as in all wolf shootings, this incident is being investigated.

On June 24, a 25 pound male and 23 pound female wolf pup were found dead along Highway 21 near Lowman, apparently hit by a vehicle. These pups are believed to be from the Archie Mountain pack.

The collaborative among several producers, Idaho Fish and Game, Wildlife Services, U.S. Forest Service, Blaine County Commissioners, and Defenders of Wildlife is ongoing in the Ketchum area. Nonlethal efforts involving use of fladry, penning at night, hazing with hired trained technicians are ongoing to reduce conflicts between wolves and sheep in the area.

Research

University of Montana research telemetry crew got started on June 2 and began work in the Salmon and Lowman study areas. Their job is to get pack counts, locate uncollared packs and test the howlboxes. To date they have obtained pup counts in Jureano, Hoodoo, Wapiti, and have documented reproduction in Archie as well. They placed howlboxes at three pack homesites in Salmon and the howlboxes only worked properly and ran their entire schedule at 1 site. The howlbox recorded responses at that site.

The scat survey crew began on June 11 and is currently in the McCall area conducting rendezvous site surveys. Some survey work has been hampered by snow at higher elevations. They made some subtle changes to protocol from last year and the results are promising because they collected more samples in the first two days than they did the entire first field stint (nine days) last year.

Information and Education

On June 17, Steve Nadeau gave a wolf management presentation to about 150 members of the Idaho Cattlemen's Association at their annual meeting in Jackpot, Nev.

On June 20, a story on Idaho wolf management was aired on national television on ABC Nightline.

On June 25, Steve Nadeau was interviewed about wolf management by Boise State President Bob Kustra for his radio show.

We 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 state law allows individuals to harass or kill a wolf attacking or molesting their domestic animals including pets. If you are having concerns or problems with wolves close to your residence, please inform the Fish and Game office nearest you.

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/

Wolves in the Northern Rocky Mountains were removed from the endangered species list on March 28. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service successfully recovered and delisted the population with the help of state, federal, tribal and nongovernment partners. Management of these wolves now resides with the states of Idaho, Montana and Wyoming. The 2002 legislatively approved Wolf Conservation and Management Plan along with the March 2008 Idaho Fish and Game Wolf Population Management Plan, as well as the laws and policies of the state now govern wolf management in Idaho. Wolves are now listed as a big game animal in Idaho and protected under the laws and policies of the State of Idaho.

Once wolves were delisted, the USFWS decided to discontinue the publication of the NRM wolf weekly. Instead, for the time being, Idaho will continue publishing the Idaho specific updates. Along with the USFWS, contributors to the weekly historically have included the USDA APHIS Wildlife Services, the Nez Perce Tribe, and the states of Idaho and Montana. Wyoming was reported on by the USFWS. You may review past wolf weekly publications on our wolf webpage and links to wolf information and publications at: <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/wolves/>