

Idaho Wolf Management Progress Report October 18 - Nov 3, 2008

Delisting Update

On October 24, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced it is reopening the public comment period on its proposal to delist the gray wolf in the northern Rocky Mountains. In a notice published in the Federal Register October 28, Fish and Wildlife asked the public to comment and provide any additional information on the February 2007 proposal to delist wolves. Fish and Wildlife is seeking additional information on a variety of topics related to the delisting. More details are available in the Federal Register notice which will be posted along with associated materials at the Fish and Wildlife Service's northern Rocky Mountains wolf website: <http://westerngraywolf.fws.gov>.

The public will have until November 28, 2008, to submit their comments to the Federal Rulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov>, via U.S. mail or by hand delivery to: Public Comments Processing, Attn: RIN 1018-Au53; Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 222; Arlington, VA 22203.

In Idaho, all wolves north of Interstate-90 remain listed as endangered. All wolves in the southern half of Montana, all of Idaho south of Interstate-90, and all of Wyoming are being managed under the 2005 and 2008 Endangered Species Act nonessential experimental population 10j regulations. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game is acting as the designated agent for the USFWS 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 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 State Wolf Conservation and Management Plan and the Wolf Population Management Plan.

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/>

Monitoring

Aerial telemetry flights are ongoing. November and December are the primary months Idaho Fish and Game and the Nez Perce Tribe attempt to count wolf pack members from the air. Snow conditions and time of year when pack members tend to congregate allow us to get pack sizes from the air.

Management

From January 1 – November 3, agencies have documented 131 dead wolves in Idaho. Of those, 82 were depredation control actions by USDA Wildlife Services, nine illegal kills, 13 legal kills, four natural kills, and 23 other or unknown. Wildlife Services also confirmed that wolves: killed 11 cows, 80 calves, 211 sheep and 13 dogs; injured one cow, seven calves, six sheep and seven dogs; probably killed five cows, 21 calves and 57 sheep; injured one cow, three calves and one sheep.

Table 1. Confirmed wolf depredations and wolf mortality in Idaho from 2003 to October 15, 2008.

YEAR	Depredations ¹				Wolf Mortality			
	Cattle	Sheep	Dogs	Total	WS ²	10j ³	Other	Total
2003	7	130	3	140	7	0	8	15
2004	19	176	4	199	17	0	21	39
2005	29	166	12	207	24	3	16	43
2006	41	237	4	282	35	7	19	61
2007	57	211	10	278	43	7	27	77
2008	91	211	13	315	82	13	36	131
Total	243	1130	46	1419	208	30	126	364

¹ Includes depredations resulting in death or injury

² Authorized take by Wildlife Services

³ Authorized take under 10j for protection of stock and dogs

Control

From October 16 – November 3, WS confirmed two wolf depredations on livestock. WS confirmed that wolves killed one calf and one ram, both on private land. In response to those depredations, WS shot and killed two wolves. During the same time in 2007, WS verified two probable wolf depredations.

Non-lethal efforts wrapped up last week with a meeting among cooperators near Ketchum who worked together to reduce livestock/wolf conflicts. Four producers, USFS, USDA Wildlife Services, Idaho Fish and Game, Blaine County Commission, and Defenders of Wildlife experimented with the use of paid non-lethal personnel (funded by Defenders) who used fladry and penning for sheep at night, and attempted to scare wolves away from sheep during the night. Wolves were around the sheep on a regular basis but only one sheep was confirmed killed by wolves all summer. The effort was considered a success by producers and cooperators and may be implemented again in the future should funding and qualified personnel be available.

Research

Nothing new to report.

Information and Education

On October 25 Jim Holyan of the Nez Perce Tribe gave a presentation on wolf biology and ecology to about 25 third-grade students at Barbara Morgan Elementary School in McCall.

On November 1, Steve Nadeau gave a presentation to 15 members of the Idaho Sportsmen's Caucus Advisory Council in Boise and teleconferenced to Idaho Falls and Jerome, where six sportsmen group leaders and two legislators were connected.

A reminder: Wolves are protected under the endangered species act and killing one illegally is a federal offense.

Please help manage wolves by reporting wolf sightings on the Fish and Game observation form found at: http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/apps/wolf_report/.

Delisting: FWS – Northern Rocky Mountain Wolf Status (WY, MT, ID)

The U.S. Federal District Court in Missoula, Montana, issued a preliminary injunction on Friday, July 18, 2008, that immediately reinstated temporary Endangered Species Act protections for gray wolves in the northern Rocky Mountain DPS 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. On September 22, the United States filed its motion to vacate the delisting rule, return the gray wolf to the list of endangered and threatened species, and remand the matter to the Fish and Wildlife Service. On October 14, Judge Molloy filed an order granting the United States' motion to remand the delisting rule back to the Fish and Wildlife Service. He also dismissed the case.