

## **Idaho Wolf Management Progress Report April and May 2009**

**Delisting: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Northern Rocky Mountain Wolf Status (WY, MT, ID):** The rule that removed the gray wolf in the Northern Rocky Mountains from the endangered species list became effective May 4.

The “Final Rule to Establish a Gray Wolf – Northern Rocky Mountain Distinct Population Segment and Remove it from the Federal List of Threatened and Endangered Species” was published in the *Federal Register Vol. 74, No. 62 pages 15123-15188* on April 2. The rule, the literature cited, and questions and answers about the delisting rule are posted on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Web site at <http://westerngraywolf.fws.gov>. The rule delists wolves in Montana, Idaho, eastern third of Washington and Oregon, and a small part of north central Utah. Wolves in Wyoming will remain under the protection of Endangered Species Act. The Fish and Wildlife Service will continue to manage wolves in all of Wyoming under the provisions of the 1994 nonessential experimental population rules. Management under the ESA will continue until Wyoming develops a regulatory framework that the Service determines meets the purposes of the ESA. After that happens Fish and Wildlife may initiate the mandatory federal regulatory process, including public review and comment, to turn management over to Wyoming.

In all of Idaho, gray wolves are being managed as a big game animal. They will be protected by state laws already approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Idaho legislature, and Idaho Fish and Game Commission. The Fish and Game commissioners approved the 2009 wolf hunting season dates at their March meeting, and will consider statewide and wolf zone harvest quotas in August.

Since delisting, Jon Rachael became the new wolf program coordinator, replacing Steve Nadeau. Rachael replaced Brad Compton as the new state wildlife game manager and will oversee the state's big and small game programs.

Information, past wolf updates and publications are available on the Idaho Fish and Game wolf webpage at: <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/wolves/>

### **Monitoring**

The 2008 annual report has been completed and sent to the Fish and Wildlife Service. It is available at: <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/wolves/manage/>. The minimum year-end population estimates for 2008 for Idaho are 846 wolves, in 88 packs, with 39 documented breeding pairs. This is about a 15 percent increase over the 2007 minimum population estimate of 732.

Wolves have denned and produced pups. Several monitoring flights have occurred over the past two months, including looking for lost collars and missing wolves. Many den sites have been located and pup counts have begun. As of the end of May, seven packs had been confirmed to have produced pups across Idaho.

Radio collars have been placed on eight wolves over the past two months by program personnel.

## Management

From April 4 – May 31, agencies documented 18 dead wolves in Idaho. Of those, 10 were depredation control actions by USDA Wildlife Services, two were legal kills, one illegal kill, one natural death, and four other died of unknown causes.

From April 4 through May 3, 10 mortalities were confirmed – four control, three unknown, one illegal, one legal (10j), and one natural. From May 4 – the date of delisting – through May 31, eight mortalities were confirmed – six control, one legal (36-1107), and one other human.

From January 1 – May 29, Wildlife Services (tentatively) confirmed that wolves killed 26 calves, three sheep, three dogs; injured four calves; probable kills of five calves; and probable wolf-caused injuries to two calves.

Table 1. Confirmed wolf depredations and wolf mortality in Idaho from 2003 to May 29, 2009 (tentative).

YEAR	Depredations <sup>1</sup>				Wolf Mortality			
	Cattle	Sheep	Dogs	Total	WS <sup>2</sup>	10j <sup>3</sup>	Other	Total
2003	7	130	3	140	7	0	8	15
2004	19	176	4	199	17	0	21	38
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	104	215	14	333	94	13	44	151
Jan. 1- May 3	16	3	3	22	13	3	11	27
May 4- present	10	0	0	10	6	1	1	8
Total	283	1138	50	1471	239	34	147	420

<sup>1</sup> Includes confirmed depredations resulting in death or injury

<sup>2</sup> Authorized take by Wildlife Services

<sup>3</sup> Authorized take under 10j; or while delisted for protection of stock and dogs under state law.

## Control

Since the last report on April 4, Wildlife Service has confirmed that wolves killed 15 calves, injured two calves, killed two sheep and one dog. Two more calves were killed that were determined to be probable wolf depredations. In response to these, and previous depredations, 11 wolves were killed, and three were radio collared and released.

Since delisting on May 4 through May 28, Wildlife Service has confirmed that wolves killed 10 calves and injured two calves and probably killed another calf. Wildlife Services has taken a total of seven wolves since delisting and radio collared three. During the same period in 2008, Wildlife Services confirmed that wolves killed 15 calves and 30 sheep and, in response to depredations, killed 11 wolves and radio collared two.

## Research

Nothing new to report.

**Information and Education**

Additional information is available at: <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/wolves/>

A reminder: wolves are fully protected under state law. For more detailed information on the laws and policies protecting wolves in Idaho, and what people are allowed to do to protect livestock and pets, please visit the Idaho Fish and Game Web site or call your local Fish and Game office. <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/wolves/>.

Help Fish and Game manage wolves by reporting wolf sightings on the observation form found at: [http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/apps/wolf\\_report/](http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/apps/wolf_report/).