

## Idaho Wolf Management Progress Report February 1 – February 28, 2009

### Monitoring

Aerial telemetry flights and end-of-year counts are completed, and the annual report is being wrapped up. The minimum population estimates for 2008 are 846 wolves for Idaho, in 88 packs, 39 breeding pairs. This is about a 15 percent increase over the 2007 minimum population estimate of 732.

February was the peak for wolf dispersal during the breeding season. Often these wolves may be close to development and may cause some conflicts if not just increased sightings. As an example, a GPS collared wolf from Paradise Valley north of Yellowstone that was part of the Mill Creek pack moved to the Wyoming, Utah, Idaho border area in September and in January moved to southeast Idaho, then through Utah and recently was located near Vail, Colorado.

On February 27, two U.S. Department of Agriculture, Wildlife Services employees darted and collared a wolf near Kilgore, Idaho.

### Management

From January 1 – February 28, agencies have documented five dead wolves in Idaho. Of those, four were depredation control actions by Wildlife Services, and one was an illegal kill.

From January 1 – February 28, Wildlife Services (tentatively) confirmed that wolves killed 2 calves, 1 sheep and 1 dog; and probably injured 2 calves.

A pack of nine wolves attacked a pet dog at a residence near Ashton. The owner of the dog somehow was able to jump into the fight and retrieve his dog. A reminder that under the 10(j) rule amended in 2008, a person is allowed to kill a wolf attacking a dog, livestock, or stock on public or private land.

Table 1. Confirmed wolf depredations and wolf mortality in Idaho from 2003 to Feb 28, 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
2009	2	1	1	4	4		1	5
Total	259	1136	48	1443	224	30	136	390

<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

## **Control**

In summary, from February 1 – 28, Wildlife Services conducted five wolf depredation investigations, confirmed two and determined two were probable. Wildlife Services confirmed that wolves killed one pregnant ewe and one calf and determined that wolves probably killed two more calves. In response to these and previous depredations, Wildlife Services shot and killed four wolves.

By comparison in February 2008, Wildlife Services conducted five wolf depredation investigations and confirmed that wolves killed four calves and a pet dog and determined that wolves probably killed another calf. Wildlife Services shot and killed five wolves in response to depredations in February 2008.

## **Research**

Nothing new to report.

## **Information and Education**

Idaho Fish and Game director's office has been giving several wolf updates to the state Legislature, to the Fish and Game Commission, and on television.

Researcher Craig White gave two presentations to the Legislature on ungulate-wolf research being conducted in Idaho.

Michael Lucid gave a presentation on wintering wildlife, wolf biology, predation, and management to 10 students and several teachers and chaperones of the Timberline High school science class on February 27 and 28 near Lowman.

The annual report on wolf activity in Idaho is being completed and will be out on the Web site in the next week or so.

Further information and updates, including the directives provided by the commission can be viewed at: <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/wolves/>

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

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/](http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/apps/wolf_report/)

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

For the time being, all wolves to the north of Interstate 90 in Idaho remain listed as endangered. All wolves in the southern half of Montana, all portions of Idaho south of Interstate 90, and all of Wyoming are being managed under the 2005 and 2008 Endangered Species Act nonessential experimental population 10(j) regulations. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game is acting as the designated agent for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in implementing day-to-day management of wolves under a 2006 MOU between the Department of Interior and Idaho.

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 State Wolf Conservation and Management Plan and the Wolf Population Management Plan.

The Fish and Wildlife Service rewrote the delisting rule based on comments and new administrative record and data, and submitted a final delisting rule in January 2009 but did not post it in the Federal Register. The incoming Obama administration placed a hold on all pending rules and regulations to have time to review them. We have not yet heard results of the review. Fish and Wildlife is still filling vacant positions in decision levels. They indicated to Idaho Fish and Game that the review of the rule is ongoing and moving forward.

The state of Idaho's comments to the Fish and Wildlife Service on the delisting rule are available at: <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/wolves/>

Past wolf update publications and links along with pertinent and updated wolf information and publications are available on the Fish and Game wolf webpage at: <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/wolves/>