

Dealing with Wolves in Oregon

October 6, 2011

With the dispersal of wolves from Northeastern Oregon to several new places throughout the eastern half of the state, citizens need to know what is legal, whom to contact and what procedures you may need to follow if you encounter a wolf. An additional concern is that the wolves in Oregon can be found in close proximity to homes, calving operations, barns and other places where people work, live and play,

The wolf is currently listed as Endangered under the Oregon ESA. It has been delisted by the Federal Government in the portion of Oregon that lies east of Hwy 395 from the Washington line to Burns, then south along Hwy 78 to Burns Junction, and south along Hwy 95 to the Nevada border. West of that line wolves are listed as threatened under the federal ESA, however, management of the wolves is very similar and contacts below would be the same.

Actions that can be currently taken in Oregon (Phase I of the Oregon Wolf Plan)

Phase I rules apply until four breeding pair of wolves produce pups that survive until Jan 1, for a minimum of three years. At that time wolves may be delisted in Oregon and a new set of rules will apply during Phase II.

No permit required

- If a livestock producer sees a wolf testing or chasing livestock or in close proximity, they may scare a wolf off by firing shots in the air, making loud noises or otherwise confronting the wolf provided no bodily harm is done to the wolf. Such incidents must be reported to ODFW within 48 hours and the rancher cannot be intentionally looking for a wolf.

ODFW permit required

Before a permit is issued, ODFW will consider the location of den sites and any attractants that may be luring wolves to the area.

If persistent wolf activity around livestock occurs, producers may engage in additional harassment by permit

- Harassment of wolves in ways that may cause bodily harm but not death (e.g., rubber bullets or bean bag projectiles)
- Intentional pursuit of problem wolves would be allowed under this permit to keep wolves away from livestock
- If a wolf is captured, ODFW may relocate it to the nearest wilderness area.
- Wolf harassment under the permit must be reported to ODFW within 48 hours.

Permits for lethal control

- Permits for lethal control will be issued if non-lethal methods are deemed ineffective and livestock depredation has occurred. This permit allows a livestock producer to kill a wolf “caught in the act” of attacking (but not testing or scavenging) livestock.

Lethal control for chronic damage situations

- ODFW and authorized agents may also conduct lethal removal of wolves after chronic depredations and ineffective non-lethal efforts have been tried.
- Livestock producers can work with their local wildlife biologist on these issues or they may want to work with Russ Morgan, ODFW wolf coordinator.

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Protocol when suspected wolf depredations are found:

Contact local County Sheriff

- ☐ Sheriff will contact local Wildlife Services Agent
 - If Sheriff cannot be found contact local Wildlife Services Agent
 - Wildlife Services Agent will contact Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
- ☐ For incidents west of Hwy 395 where wolves are still federally listed under ESA contact John Stephenson US Fish & Wildlife Service in addition to the County Sheriff.
- ☐ Make sure that you or your representative is present. Stay involved in the investigation and follow-up.

Not all producers will encounter the presence of wolves immediately. To prepare for the presence of wolves in your area there are several management recommendations that we believe will better prepare you for with wolves.

- Bury or remove dead animals immediately to keep from attracting wolves to your operation
- Clean-up old bone piles
- Begin conducting Body Condition Scores on your cattle when coming off range in the fall
- Tag your calves with individual tag numbers so that accurate tallies of stock can be conducted at turn out in the spring and at fall gathering
- Weigh as many of your calves as possible to establish current production
- Keep accurate records of cattle movements and tallies

For more information contact:

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Prepared by: John Williams, OSU Extension Service, Wallowa County in cooperation with Oregon Cattlemen's Association wolf task force. Significant information was taken from *the Federal/State Coordination Strategy for Implementation of Oregon's Wolf Plan, April 2007* and ODFW's document titled: *How to Respond to Wolf Depredation under the State's Management Plan.*

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