



# **Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks**

## **MONTANA WOLF PROGRAM WEEKLY REPORT**

To: Interested Parties

From: MFWP Wolf Program Coordinator, Carolyn Sime

Subject: Wolf Program Activities and Related Information, May 24 - 30, 2008

Contributors to the Montana Wolf Weekly are Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP), Universities, USDA Wildlife Services (WS), the National Park Service (NPS; Glacier NP; Yellowstone National Park will be reported in the Wyoming Wolf Weekly), US Forest Service, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, and the Blackfoot Nation.

Highlighted activities relate to: monitoring, wolf – livestock interactions, outreach and education, research, law enforcement, and other miscellaneous topics of public interest. The Weekly Report will be available on each Monday, covering the previous week. It and other wolf program information (including the 2007 annual report) can be found at: <http://fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/wolf/default.html>.

### **Wolf Monitoring Activities**

In Northwest Montana, Laudon, Boyd and Whitehead wrapped up trapping efforts in Glacier National Park. Next, trapping and scouting efforts will get underway west of Kalispell for the Ashley pack. In addition, they continued ground-based efforts to determine which packs appeared to have denned. So far, Ksanka, Lydia, and Murphy Lake are believed to have denned.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>, wolf monitoring flights were done in southwest Montana (from Big Timber to the Centennial Valley). As a result of the denning season, wolves have localized their activities. This has allowed identification and naming of two new packs, although FWP had been monitoring several radio collared wolves and keeping track of wolf activity in these same areas since winter 2007. They are Jack Creek (Greenhorn Mountains southeast of Ruby River Reservoir) and Horse Creek (west side of the Madison River between Johnny Gulch and the West Fork of the Madison River).

### **Wolf - Livestock Activities**

On the 29<sup>th</sup>, WS confirmed a llama was killed by wolves northwest of Whitefish near the Lazy Creek pack territory. FWP will go visit with the llama owner and a few neighbors and will review options with them and WS.

On the 29<sup>th</sup>, WS confirmed additional sheep losses in the E. Fork Blacktail area south of Dillon. There were 15 confirmed dead bucks and 14 confirmed injured bucks. Two ewes also died, but were considered probable wolf predation. This is the same sheep owner who had 6 sheep confirmed killed on the 9<sup>th</sup> (4 bucks and 2 ewes). Based on monitoring efforts by FWP and WS, the Freezeout pack is thought responsible. WS was authorized and removed 3 adult wolves on private land in very close proximity to the sheep on the 30<sup>th</sup>. None of the wolves were lactating and two adults and a litter were confirmed during an FWP monitoring flight on the 30<sup>th</sup>.

### **Outreach and Education Activities**

Nothing to report.

### **Research Activities**

Nothing to report.

### **Law Enforcement and Related Activities**

On the 27<sup>th</sup>, FWP announced the opening of an investigation into a human-caused wolf death discovered and reported by a private citizen in the Lower Thompson River around Priscilla Peak Trailhead. Those responsible for the shooting could face a substantial fine and/or up to 6 months in jail if convicted. FWP is looking for any information and offering up to a \$1,000 reward for information leading to the apprehension and conviction of the individual(s) responsible for this incident. Callers may contact 1-800-TIP-MONT with information and may remain anonymous.

On the 27<sup>th</sup>, FWP game wardens investigated a report of a self defense shooting north of Olney. A black bear hunter reported that a wolf approached him and got to within 10 feet and his life was threatened. He shot the wolf, then went back to town and reported the incident. The hunter took FWP law enforcement officers back to scene and physical evidence was consistent with what was described. FWP concluded that the shooting was justifiable under state law.

On the 27<sup>th</sup>, agency personnel shot a lone wolf near West Yellowstone. It demonstrated habituated behavior for 2-3 weeks and showed no fear of people in a residential area and a local campground. It was also aggressive towards domestic dogs. The carcass was taken to the Bozeman lab to examine it for evidence of domestic origin and prior captivity (tattoos or other permanent markers).

### **Other**

*Wolf Litigation:* On May 29<sup>th</sup>, Judge Malloy heard oral arguments about Defenders et al.s' request for a preliminary injunction on the federal delisting decision. Their request, if granted, would return wolves back to the Endangered Species Act classifications of endangered in the north half of Montana and experimental in the southern half of Montana. During the hearing, Defenders et al, spoke in support of their request for an injunction. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife

Service, Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho spoke in opposition to the injunction request. Joining the case in support of delisting and against the injunction were Safari Club International / National Rifle Association, Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife, and Stockgrowers et al. (on behalf of Montana and Wyoming Stockgrowers, Friend for the Northern Yellowstone Elk Herd, Montana Shooting Sports Association, and Western Montana Fish and Game Association, Montana Farm Bureau Federation).

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To learn more about Montana's recovered wolf population, the Montana program and to help FWP monitor wolves by reporting wolf sign, visit FWP at: [www.fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/wolf](http://www.fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/wolf).

To request an investigation of injured or dead livestock, call USDA Wildlife Services directly in western Montana / Helena area at 458-0106 or in eastern Montana / Columbus area at: 322-4303. Or call your nearest FWP representative to have your call referred to Wildlife Services.

To anonymously report a dead or injured wolf or suspected illegal activity, call: 1-800-TIP-MONT.