



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, August 22 – August 29, 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 Blackfeet 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

On the 25th, Boyd and Whitehead captured and placed a University of Montana GPS collar on a member of the Lazy Creek pack.

Laudon and Wilson are trapping to radio collar (gps) the Candy Mountain pack. The Candy Mountain pack is uncollared and has left previously known rendezvous sites from this season. Currently they are searching for the pack's current homesite so that trapping can resume.

Flights: Bradley did flights in western Montana on the 8-14 and 8-19. Asher flew southwest Montana (east and west half) on August 28 and 29. Laudon flew in northwest Montana on 8-12 and 8-19.

Wolf - Livestock Activities

On 8/20 an adult cow was killed by wolves in Pleasant Valley. It is not certain which local packs are involved. Traps were set to collar and release. On 8/21 there was a report of an injured calf and 2 adult cows in the same general area. The calf was confirmed wolf damage that same day

and there was not enough evidence to make a determination on the other 2 animals. No wolves were captured and traps have been pulled. We will continue to monitor the area.

On 8/20 a calf was confirmed killed by wolves NE of Plains. It is unclear which pack is involved so the area will be monitored for additional wolf activity.

Control work to remove up to 2 members of the Murphy Lake pack has been temporarily suspended. The affected producer is pulling cattle off of that public grazing allotment.

Traps were pulled south of Dillon in the Blacktail Mountains where sheep were confirmed killed and a wolf had returned back to the band 2 nights later. FWP and WS will monitor the area for renewed wolf activity and may set traps again to collar any wolves in the area. WS is still authorized to kill any wolves caught in the sheep.

On the 29th, WS killed the 5 remaining members of the Willow Creek pack near Hall as requested by FWP. WS had confirmed another dead calf on the 23rd. In response to earlier depredations and continued wolf presence near livestock on private land, FWP had authorized incremental lethal removals, worked with landowners and grazing allotment permittees to reduce the potential for additional losses. FWP also had deployed fladry and hazed the pack away from livestock on several occasions over the past 6 months.

Outreach and Education Activities

Nothing to report.

Research Activities

Nothing to report.

Law Enforcement and Related Activities

Laudon found the collar of a Fishtrap wolf (#266) on mortality mode. The carcass was collected that same day. Wolf 266 was estimated to be ~ 9-11 years old which is old for a wolf. FWP will determine the cause of death.

On 8-22, wolf #505 of the Nyack pack was found dead apparently hit by a train. She was the alpha female of that pack.

Genetic testing results confirmed that the wolf-like animal killed on private land near Brussette (Garfield Co) in 2007 was a wolf-dog hybrid. WS had confirmed 2 sheep deaths and investigated another 10 but the cause of death of those could not be determined. A tissue sample from the animal was tested at UCLA, the same lab which tested a sample from a wolf-like canid in 2006. Montana law requires that any captive, domestic, or hybrid wolf that is more than half wolf to be permanently tattooed and registered with FWP. State law requires that any escape, release, transfer, or other change in disposition be reported to FWP. Anyone with information is urged to call Montana's violation hotline 1-800-TIP-MONT.

Other

Wolf Litigation: On Friday July 18th, the U.S. Federal District Court in Missoula, Montana, issued a preliminary injunction that immediately reinstated temporary Endangered Species Act protections for gray wolves in the Northern Rockies. Wolves across northern Montana return to the “endangered” classification and wolves across southern Montana return to the “experimental” classification – also known in Montana as “split status.”

FWP decisions about wolf-livestock conflicts in the endangered area are guided by the 1999 Interim Control Plan. FWP decisions about wolf-livestock conflicts occurring in the experimental area are guided by the 2005 and 2008 nonessential experimental population 10j regulations. Those regulations also guide what private citizens can do to protect their livestock. See the FWP website for important information and updates:

<http://fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/wolf/default.html>.

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

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

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.

If you have a confirmed or probable livestock loss due to wolves, USDA Wildlife Services will supply you with a copy of the Loss Reimbursement Application form. For more information, see <http://liv.mt.gov/liv/LM/index.asp>. Or, contact the Livestock Loss Reduction and Mitigation Program Coordinator George Edwards at the Montana Department of Livestock at 444-5609.