



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 2 – August 8, 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 5th, Bradley did a monitoring fight in western Montana.

Wolf - Livestock Activities

On the 3rd, a lessee reported seeing a wolf packing off a 50 pound lamb on private land in the Bitterroot Valley near Lolo. The lessee shot at the wolf, but did not injure or kill it. On the 4th, WS confirmed that a wolf had killed the lamb. The sheep are being night penned and 6 guard dogs are present. FWP authorized WS to kill one wolf it returns to the area where the sheep are grazing based on physical evidence at the scene and the report of a lone wolf seen in the immediate area. FWP has not been able to determine whether it is a member of the Welcome Creek pack traveling by itself or a dispersing lone wolf. The sheep will be leaving this area in a few days.

On the 6th, as part of an ongoing control action on the Brooks Creek pack, Wildlife Services killed the collared male when it was found on private and near horses and cattle in the Bitterroot Valley SW of Florence. He was known to be involved in the earlier llama and cattle

depredations. Control is ongoing to remove one more wolf from this pack. Efforts will also be made to collar another wolf in the pack when opportunities arise.

On 8/6/08 MT Wildlife Services confirmed wolves had killed 3 llamas near Niarada. Traps were set and on Friday 8/8/08 CSKT removed a large gray male (NW 360). Control is complete at this time

On the 6th, WS confirmed 9 dead lambs and 1 dead ewe south of Dillon in the Blacktail Mountains on state school trust land. The incident likely happened on the 4th or 5th. Tracks of a single wolf (possibly another) were found. This is not likely to be the Freezeout pack as it is not known to travel that far to the southwest. WS was asked to collar and release a wolf in the area so that we can determine whether there is a new pair / pack in the area. The sheep operation uses night pens, herding dogs, a propane cannon, and a light/siren device. On the 7th when sheep were let out of the night pen, 3 additional injured lambs were found and had to be euthanized. On the night of the 8th, the dogs woke the owner when a wolf came back. The wolf was run off but not before a ewe was injured. WS confirmed it on the 9th and the ewe had to be euthanized. Total confirmed losses are 12 lambs and 2 ewes. Efforts to place a collar are ongoing, but WS has been authorized to kill any wolves caught in the sheep and the owner is aware of the federal regulations that allow hazing, harassing, or killing a wolf caught attacking livestock in the experimental area.

Correction: Previous sheep losses in May / June on private land south of Dillon were due to the Freezeout pack. A total of 4 (not 5 as previously reported) adults were killed between May 29 and July 25, including the collared animal. One to three adults and a litter of pups remain and no further sheep losses have been documented since June 11.

Outreach and Education Activities

Nothing to report.

Research Activities

Nothing to report.

Law Enforcement and Related Activities

Nothing to report.

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>.

On the 5th, FWP recommended and the FWP Commission decided to suspend the proposed quota for a wolf hunting season in 2008 due to the Court-ordered injunction and the ongoing litigation. In addition, the Commission voted to postpone action to finalize the proposed wolf administrative rule (FWP regulations that spell out the manner and types of wolf control methods - lethal and non-lethal - that can be used to address wolf-livestock conflicts) until the September meeting.

=====

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.