



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

MONTANA WOLF PROGRAM WEEKLY REPORT

To: Interested Parties

From: FWP Wolf Program Coordinator, Carolyn Sime (406-461-0587)

Subject: Wolf Program Activities and Related Information, November 14 - 20, 2009

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 2008 annual report) can be found at: <http://fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/wolf/default.html>.

Wolf Monitoring Activities

On 11/13, Laudon finished up trapping efforts in the N. Fork Flathead River / Glacier National Park area. He captured and collared a male pup of the Dutch pack on 11/9.

During a flight, Laudon found wolf NW389F of the Bearfite pack (north of Libby) in Lodgepole Creek, British Columbia, Canada. The wolf had been missing since 12/5/08.

Hunters, other recreationists, and landowners can help FWP monitor the population by reporting wolf observations, tracks, or sign through the FWP online reporting button [Contact Us - Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks](#), by contacting the closest wolf specialist or FWP office, or mailing a wolf observation card.

Flights: Laudon conducted a signal check flight on 11/16, and a missing frequency flight on 11/20.

Wolf - Livestock Activities

This week in the Martinsdale area, FWP removed fladry from a sheep pasture and replaced it with an electric netted pen.

On 11/16, WS killed two of the adults in the Centennial pack (southwest Montana) -- a black female and one of the collared gray males. The third adult male, which is also collared, was thought to have been killed survived and has moved a few miles away. Ongoing efforts to get the last member of the Centennial pack continue. Removal of this pack was authorized on October 18.

On 11/17, WS confirmed four calves as being killed by wolves and another with injuries that is not expected to live. The incident took place near Wisdom (Big Hole Valley) and was in close proximity to a previous depredation on October 24. There is a current control action for the removal of the

Battlefield pack of which there is believed to be four remaining wolves. A SOS permit has been issued to the producer for four wolves.

On 11/19, WS investigated an injured heifer in the Big Hole area west of Wisdom. The producer observed three wolves attacking it. The producer shot at one of the wolves but believes he missed. Light conditions were poor and the color of the three wolves is uncertain. The heifer is expected to live but will be monitored for the next few days. Pack affiliation is uncertain, but WS has been authorized to remove the remaining members of the Battlefield pack due to other confirmed depredations on private land. FWP and WS will monitor the situation.

Outreach and Education

On 11/5, Laudon gave a talk in Columbia Falls on the history and current status of wolves and wolf management to the Flathead Chapter of the Society of American Foresters on. The talk was also open to the public. There were about 60 in attendance.

Laudon gave an update on the current wolf hunt and fielded all other questions regarding wolves and wolf management to Flathead Wildlife in Kalispell. There were about 50 in attendance.

On 11/20, Sime gave a presentation and participated on a panel on Wolf-Livestock conflict resolution at a conference called Carnivores 2009. About 80 people attended.

Research Activities

Nothing to report at this time.

Law Enforcement and Related Activities

On 11/18, a hunter called the quota hot line to report that he had taken a wolf. When he learned that the season had already closed, he then called FWP law enforcement to turn himself in and was remorseful. He was cited for taking a wolf during a closed season and the case is pending. The carcass was confiscated, and it will be used for outreach and education. During the quota-setting process, FWP had included illegal mortality in the population model based on previous data from radio collared animals through the years. Because illegal mortality was already factored into the model and assumed to still occur, such mortalities are not counted towards the quota during the current year's hunting season. However, they will be reported and factored in as a part of the 2009 wolf population status, which is the basis for future quota levels.

Other Updates

Northern Rockies Delisting Litigation

On 6/2, a coalition of 13 groups challenged the USFWS delisting decision in Federal District Court in Missoula (9th Circuit). On 8/20, a preliminary injunction request was filed, requesting that wolves be placed back on the Endangered Species list while the court decides the main case within the next year – thus preventing a fall hunting season in Montana and Idaho. On 9/8, the injunction request was denied, but the main lawsuit is moving forward. Written briefings by all parties will be completed by late January 2010. A hearing date for oral arguments has not been set, but is expected to be not long after completion of written briefings.

Montana state laws, administrative rules, and the federally-approved management plan remain in effect and wolves are classified and protected under Montana law as a species in need of management. The FWP Commission has the authority to issue rules and regulations regarding the protection and periodic taking of the animal (as through hunting seasons for example). FWP is the lead agency for wolves, assisted by USDA Wildlife Services if wolves are confirmed to have injured or killed livestock.

Montana 2009 Wolf Hunting Season:

During the weekend of November 14/15, progress towards filling the wolf quotas in WMUs 1 and 2 was being routinely tracked. By Sunday evening, 38 wolves had been reported harvested in WMU 1 (quota is 41) and 21 wolves had been reported harvested in WMU 2 (quota is 22). FWP initiated the closure notice process by 9:00pm Sunday 11/15. The wolf hunting seasons in WMUs 1 and 2 officially closed one half hour after sunset on Monday 11/16. A statewide total of 72 wolves had been harvested. Concurrently, FWP stopped selling wolf hunting licenses by 11/17. A total of 15,603 licenses had been sold. Non-residents had purchased 89 out of the total.

FWP's "wolf hunt status" webpage was an important outreach tool regarding the season, status of the quotas, and unit closure information. It was viewed almost 49,000 times between 9/15 and 11/20. Visitors stayed on the page about 2 minutes, significantly longer than most other FWP pages.

The following table summarizes the harvest information through 1:30 am on November 16. Harvest was geographically distributed within each WMU. At a localized scale, more wolves have been harvested where packs have been larger and/or more packs exist.

As of ½ hour after sunset on 11-16	WMU 1 quota: 41 (subquota of 2, N. Fork Flathead)	WMU 2 quota: 22	WMU 3 quota: 12	STATEWIDE quota: 75
Early Backcountry Season (9-15 to 10-24)	3 wolves	CLOSED	9 wolves; permanently closed on October 9	12
General Fall Season (10-25 to 11-16)	35 (2 in the N. Fork subunit)	21	4	60
Total (each WMU closed at ½ hour after sunset on date shown)	38 (CLOSED on 11-16-09)	21 (CLOSED on 11-16-09)	13 (CLOSED on 10-26-09)	72

Montana Livestock Loss Reduction & Mitigation Board:

The Board met on October 23. The agenda and minutes from previous meetings are available at Montana Department of Livestock. The program coordinator can be reached at 444-5609.

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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 at the statewide office: 657-6464. 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.