

## **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, April 24 – April 30, 2010

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 2008 annual report) can be found on the FWP website.

NOTE: FWP has recently redesigned and reorganized its Website. The Wolf Program Home Page can be found at <http://fwp.mt.gov/wolf>. If you get an error page, go to the FWP Home page and look for Montana Wolves under Fish & Wildlife.

### **Wolf Monitoring Activities**

The Montana Wolf Program 2009 Annual Report, FWP Quick Facts about the report, and a media release are available at: <http://fwp.mt.gov/wolf>. The full report can be found by scrolling down the Wolf Program Home page to Reports // look for 2009 Annual Report or click on the photo link for 2009 Annual Report.

On 4/25, Smucker, Bradley, and volunteer Seth Thompson trapped and collared 2 yearling male wolves in the Ovando Mtn pack in the Blackfoot Valley. Bradley and Thompson have been scouting for other packs in the Blackfoot this week, mainly in the Arrastra Creek and Blackfoot-Clearwater game range areas.

Thanks to volunteer Seth Thompson who's been helping with scouting and trapping in the Blackfoot. Seth is starting a bear job in the Greater Yellowstone on May 10th.

Flights: Bradley flew the Bitterroot and Philipsburg areas on the 27th.

### **Wolf - Livestock Activities**

On 4/25, WS investigated a report of a calf being killed by wolves on private land near Boulder. WS determined that it was unconfirmed and not killed by wolves or any other predator. Tracks of coyotes were seen near the carcass and feeding by coyotes did occur.

On 4/27, WS confirmed a calf as being killed on private land by wolves southwest of Red Lodge in the territory of the Rosebud pack. Two other calves have been found dead on the same ranch within the past couple of weeks but were not confirmed as wolf kills. WS called on the carcass and no wolves responded or were killed. WS will be working on putting a collar in this pack which formed in 2005 and has consisted of 2-3 wolves ever since. It has not previously ever been collared.

**Outreach and Education**

Bradley taught a wolf course as part of hunter education the nights of 4/27 and 4/28. About 80 students attended across both nights.

**Research Activities**

Nothing to report.

**Law Enforcement and Related Activities**

On 4/27, a ranch manager shot and killed a lone wolf that was chasing cattle south of Butte on private land. A FWP warden investigated and determined that it was a legal take of a wolf under the state defense of property statute. The wolf was wearing a radio collar and FWP is still determining its origin.

On 4/27, a yearling male wolf from the Trapper Peak pack collared by FWP last October near Darby was found on mortality during a monitoring flight. FWP warden Royce and Bradley found the collar in the East Fork Bitterroot River on 4/28. The collar could not be retrieved due to high water but based on the location (out of this wolf's normal territory and under a bridge) the wolf was likely illegally killed.

On 4/29, a 2 year old gray male wolf was shot by a landowner north of Missoula The wolf was seen trying to attack a dog on private land. The landowner saw 2 wolves approach the dog and shot one of them. FWP Warden Berg and Sergeant Curtin investigated and confirmed it was a legal take under state defense of property statute. It's unknown whether these wolves were a new establishing pair, dispersers, or part of a larger pack.

**Other Updates**

Northern Rockies Delisting Litigation in Missoula Federal Court

On 4/23, Judge Molloy announced a hearing date for oral arguments in the legal challenge of the USFWS decision to delist the wolf throughout the northern Rockies DPS except Wyoming. The hearing will be June 15 at 9:00am in the Russell Smith Courthouse in Missoula.

Background: Montana's interests in support of delisting have been represented and brought forward through efforts by FWP in consultation with the Montana Attorney General's Office. FWP filed its last written brief on 1/28. FWP argued that: 1. for a variety of reasons, it is lawful for USFWS to establish different levels of protection for a species, subspecies or Distinct Population Segment under the Endangered Species Act; 2. the facts show that Montana's existing regulatory mechanisms will keep wolf populations well above the federal recovery criteria and encourage connectivity; 3. sufficient genetic exchange has taken place and will continue; and 4. Montana's hunting season is not a basis for relisting the gray wolf.

Montana Livestock Loss Reduction & Mitigation Board:

The Livestock Loss Reduction & Mitigation Board met on April 9<sup>th</sup>. The meeting was also broadcast on local access TV and streamed over the Internet.

The full agenda for this meeting is available at the Board's website [www.llrmb.mt.gov](http://www.llrmb.mt.gov). Look under Board and Meetings on the left navigation bar. The agenda and minutes from previous meetings are available at [Montana Department of Livestock](http://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 online. Use the following shortcut link and be sure to update your bookmarks: <http://fwp.mt.gov/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 death 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.

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