

## **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, August 28 – September 3, 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 2009 annual report) can be found on the FWP website.

### **Wolf Monitoring Activities**

On 8/26, FWP crews caught and radio collared a wolf from the Cache Creek pack west of Missoula.

Flights: Laudon flew in northwest Montana on 6/9, 8/4, and 8/30-31.

### **Wolf - Livestock Activities**

On 8/30, WS confirmed 2 ewe sheep as being killed by what appeared to be a lone wolf on private land south of Livingston the day before. The sheep were in a night pen and the wolf entered the pen through an empty irrigation ditch. WS set traps in the area in an attempt to collar a wolf as this could be new activity but have not seen any sign of the wolf and the ground has been muddy from recent rain. Traps will be run for a few more days. The gap in the fence has been fixed.

On 8/30, WS confirmed that a buck goat had been killed by a wolf or wolves on private land near Canyon Creek. No radio collars were heard in the area, however, this is near the area where previously in June and July WS had confirmed sheep being killed. A newly collared and established pack has been frequenting the area and been involved with previous confirmed depredations and had a lethal removal. On 9/2, WS confirmed that a wolf or wolves killed an adult ewe sheep on private land near where the goat was killed. WS has been authorized to lethally remove three wolves.

On 8/31, WS removed 2 pups from the Horse Creek pack. Also on 8/31, FWP issued a shoot on sight permit to a landowner (has had several losses in the last month) in conjunction with WS lethal control efforts which are ongoing.

On 8/31, WS investigated a report of two calves and one cow being killed by wolves on a Forest Service grazing allotment at the south end of the Big Hole. WS determined that they were not attacked or killed by wolves.

On 8/31, WS confirmed that a calf was injured by a wolf or wolves. The calf's injuries were too severe and the calf had to be euthanized. The Monitor Mountain pack frequents this area regularly and

has recently been seen in cattle and around ranch buildings. WS has been authorized to kill four wolves.

On 8/31, WS investigated a dead calf on private land south of Livingston. It had been dead for a few days. WS found no evidence of predation, tracks, signs of struggle and it was unconfirmed as a wolf loss.

### **Outreach and Education**

See below for an update on Judge Molloy's ruling which reinstated Endangered Species Act Protections for the wolf throughout the northern Rocky Mountains. See <http://fwp.mt.gov/wolf> for the latest information regarding what the ruling means for Montana, what changes and what doesn't. FWP's most recent media releases are also available.

### **Research Activities**

Nothing new to report.

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

Nothing new to report.

### **Other Updates**

#### *Northern Rockies Delisting Litigation in Missoula Federal Court*

On 8/20, FWP announced it would appeal the federal district court ruling that reinstated federal Endangered Species Act protections in the northern Rockies. The requisite documents are being prepared.

Background: On 8/6, federal Endangered Species Act protections were reinstated through a ruling from the federal court. The court ruled that the federal Endangered Species Act does not allow the federal government to subdivide a distinct population segment so that a species is listed in part of it and delisted in the other part. The ruling stated that the wolf must either be listed or delisted as one unit within the Northern Rockies region. Further, given that the current Wyoming wolf management plan and regulatory mechanisms are not approved by the federal government and are considered inadequate, federal protections must be reinstated throughout the region.

Wolves across northern Montana are now legally reclassified as federally endangered. Wolves across southern Montana are reclassified as experimental, non-essential. Different federal regulations apply to each area. See <http://fwp.mt.gov/wolf> for information about the federal regulations and other updates.

Montana has been exploring options with the USFWS regarding ways to change management on the ground to reflect the wolf population's secure, recovered status and the need to manage the population through hunting. Work to develop options in the event of a relisting had already been underway and will continue.

#### *2010 Wolf Hunting Season*

Because the federal court ruling reinstated Endangered Species Act protections for wolves throughout the northern Rockies, the 2010 Montana wolf hunting season is canceled for now. FWP is in the process of exploring ways to secure regulatory authority from the federal government to move forward with a fair chase hunting season.

Montana Livestock Loss Reduction & Mitigation Board:

The Prevention Subcommittee of the Montana Livestock Loss Reduction and Mitigation Board met on June 4 to begin crafting the Prevention side of the Board's Mission and overall program. Work is ongoing with this effort, a Funding Subcommittee, and a Rules Subcommittee.

The Board's website is [www.llrmb.mt.gov](http://www.llrmb.mt.gov). Look under Board and Meetings on the left navigation bar. Agendas and minutes from previous meetings are available at [Montana Department of Livestock](http://Montana Department of Livestock). The next regularly scheduled meeting of the full Board is expected to be October 18, 2010. 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.