

MONTANA WOLF PROGRAM - WEEKLY REPORT

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Ken McDonald, Wildlife Bureau Chief
SUBJECT: Wolf Program Activities and Related Information
WEEK OF: April 2-8, 2011

Contributors to the Montana Wolf Weekly are Montana Fish, Wildlife & 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 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:

We're glad to be welcoming back Ty Smucker who will be working as a seasonal technician again for the wolf program out of Region 2. Ty started on April 7th.

WOLF-LIVESTOCK ACTIVITIES:

4/4: FWP and Wildlife Conservation Society installed electrified fladry in the Big Hole to protect calving grounds on a ranch that historically has had chronic depredations.

4/5: WS investigated a report of a missing newborn calf near Avon. A neighbor had seen a single gray wolf in the area several days before so wolf predation was suspected. Tracking conditions were poor and none of the calf could be found. No final determination could be made.

4/6: An adult female wolf from the Lake Como pack in the Bitterroot Valley was trapped and killed. This control action is now finished. Three wolves total were removed from the pack after they killed a yearling steer on private property in early March northwest of Darby.

4/7: A missing calf was reported and bone fragments were found on private land south of Boulder. Wolves have been sighted in this area before. WS determined the calf to be a probable wolf kill but no management action was authorized.

4/8: WS confirmed a newborn calf as being killed by wolves in the Blacktail south of Dillon. This is in close proximity to the other recent depredations and we are assuming it is the same wolves. There is an ongoing control action for 2 wolves and the producer has been issued a SOS permit in response to the last depredation.

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION:

4/7: Laudon presented wolf survey techniques to both wildlife classes at Flathead High School.

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES:

LAW ENFORCEMENT AND RELATED ACTIVITIES:

OTHER UPDATES:

4/7: Idaho senators declared the gray wolf's presence in the state a disaster emergency, following their peers in the House. A bill passed with a 27-8 vote seeks to assert Idaho's right to oversee its wildlife in what's become a longstanding dispute over wolf management involving the federal government, neighboring states and lawsuits.

The legislation is fairly open-ended: Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter would have the power to, among other things, direct his Office of Species Conservation to initiate "emergency proceedings." Otter could issue executive orders in response to threats to people, livestock, wildlife or businesses, noting the actions planned to resolve an issue such as contracting with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services.

4/9: U.S. District Court Judge Donald Molloy in Missoula rejected a proposed settlement that could have resolved the long-standing fight over wolf management in Montana and Idaho. Molloy didn't have jurisdiction to rule on the settlement, since the actual ruling it was attempting to settle, namely putting wolves back on the Endangered Species List, is on appeal. But he could give what is known as an "indicative ruling", showing what his position would be on the settlement.

Attorneys for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the states, and 10-different conservation groups had hammered out the plan after months of negotiations in March. At the end of the month, the parties asked Molloy to indicate whether he would be open to approving the settlement, which would have turned wolf management over to the states with federal oversight.

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 or 1-800-847-6668.

To request an investigation of injured or dead livestock, call USDA Wildlife Services directly in western Montana / Helena area at 406-458-0106 or in eastern Montana at the statewide office at 406-657-6464. 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 406-444-5609.