

Wolf-livestock conflict in Dirty Shirt pack, 2015

July 16, 2015



Background

The Dirty Shirt pack is located in northeastern Washington, just north of Chewelah. The size of the pack is at least six members. It's unknown if the pack denned or produced pups in 2015. The pack had no known history of confirmed wolf depredations on livestock until July 9, 2015. For more details on the Dirty Shirt pack, see the [2015 Wolf Conflict-Deterrence Updates](#).

The livestock producer who experienced wolf depredations in early July 2015 grazes 166 cattle (83 cow-calf pairs) on the North Fork Chewelah Creek and South Fork Chewelah Creek US Forest Service grazing allotments. The terrain is rugged, with steep canyons, partially forested areas, and brushy draws. The cow-calf pairs tend to graze in small groups across the allotment, and are rotated through various pastures throughout the grazing season. WDFW staff communicated with the producer over the past two years, and the producer was aware that the grazing allotment overlapped with the Dirty Shirt pack's territory.

Addressing wolf-livestock conflict

WDFW's [Wolf Conservation and Management Plan](#) describes the strategies and management actions for minimizing wolf depredations on livestock. The Department emphasizes the use of non-lethal, preventive measures as the first line of defense for minimizing conflict. Lethal removal of wolves may be used to stop repeated depredation if it is documented that livestock have been clearly killed by wolves, non-lethal methods have been tried but failed to resolve the conflict, depredations are likely to continue, and there is no evidence of intentional feeding or unnatural attraction of wolves by the livestock owner. The Department, with review by a citizen-stakeholder Wolf Advisory Group, has further defined the conditions for the use of lethal action through the development of a checklist that identifies the non-lethal methods required and a [Protocol for Lethal Control](#) (and [flow-chart](#)) describing the process for considering such an action. A chronology of events and responses by WDFW are shown below.

Chronology

Date	Preventive Measures	Depredation Event and Observations	Management action	Comments
June 1, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calving took place at producer's home outside of the Dirty Shirt pack territory. • Producer turned out 83 cow/calf pairs onto summer Forest Service allotment (North Fork of Chewelah Creek) on June 1, 2015. • Calf weights at the time of turn-out were approximately 200-250lbs. Calves born late and under 200lbs are not turned out. • The producer had one hired hand to assist in managing the cattle. • The producer and/or hired hand checked on the cattle two to three times a week. • No cattle were observed sick or injured. • The producer had no bone piles in the area of the wolf pack. • The area has relatively high level of human presence by recreationists and Air Force survival training participants. 	None	None	WDFW Conflict Staff communicated with all the producers in the Dirty Shirt pack area during US Forest Service allotment permittee meetings.
July 10-12, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDFW verbally shared daily wolf locations • WDFW staff and range rider conducted evening/morning patrols: hazed one wolf with spotlight during evening of July 10 • Producer moved cattle to lower elevations away from wolf activity • Producer, hired hand, and family members looked for stray cattle • Cow carcasses secured with fladry until carcasses can be removed. 	<p>Confirmed depredation #1: one dead adult cow (suspected date of depredation July 5, 2015)</p> <p>Confirmed depredation #2: one dead adult cow (suspected date of depredation July 6, 2015)</p>	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notified by Air Force staff of one dead cow July 9, 2015, eight miles up North Fork Chewelah Creek. During investigation, a second dead adult cow was discovered and investigated, and determined to be a separate event. • WDFW staff discussed possible non-lethal preventive measures available (7/10/2015): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fladry cannot be used due to open range 2. RAG box not effective as cattle continue to move around on open range 3. Fox lights not used also due the movements of cattle 4. Guard/herding dogs not effective for cattle in rugged, forested terrain

				<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Continue to haze wolves if seen near cattle 6. Continue to utilize department staff to increase human presence 7. Share wolf location data with producer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update emailed to WAG/Interested parties and northeastern Washington County Commissioners and Legislators. • Other Forest Service allotment permittees notified about depredation events by Dirty Shirt pack members.
July 13, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDFW verbally shared daily wolf locations • Producer, hired hand, and family members looked for stray cattle • Two range riders worked area on horseback • Haze wolves if seen near cattle 	None	None	Update sent to WAG and interested parties
July 14, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDFW verbally shared daily wolf locations • Producer, hired hand, and family members looking for stray cattle • Two range riders worked area on horseback • Cow carcass secured with fladry until carcass can be removed. 	Confirmed depredation #3: one dead adult cow (suspected date of depredation approximately July 9-10, 2015)	None	
July 15, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDFW verbally shared daily wolf locations • Producer, hired hand, and family members looked for stray cattle • Two range riders worked area on horseback 	Confirmed depredation #4: one dead calf (suspected date of depredation approximately July 9-10, 2015)	None	Removed the calf carcass from the field.
July 16, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDFW verbally shared daily wolf locations • Producer, hired hand, and family members looked for stray cattle • Two range riders worked area on horseback 	None	None	Update emailed to WAG and interested parties and northeast Washington legislators and county commissioners