

Update on Washington wolves

Latest reports on key wolf activities, conservation efforts, and management actions.

July 25, 2017

Depredations increase for Sherman Pack and Smackout Pack

WDFW officials have confirmed that one or more wolves from the Sherman Pack injured a calf that was discovered July 21 in a grazing allotment in Ferry County.

After an investigation WDFW department officials classified the incident as a confirmed wolf depredation, the third involving the pack since June 12, 2017. (See WDFW wolf updates on June 16 and July 14, 2017.) The depredation occurred on Bureau of Land Management grazing lands, about one mile from the site of the two prior wolf depredations.

The latest incident was reported by the livestock producer after his employees found an injured calf while monitoring livestock. Two department officials examined the injured calf and found lacerations and puncture wounds consistent with wolf bite marks. They found wounds on the upper left shoulder, left armpit area, lower left brisket, left hip, lower and upper left rear leg and around the groin. The calf also suffered a broken right shoulder. The calf was euthanized due to the severity of the injuries. A subsequent necropsy showed massive hemorrhaging of the underlying tissue next to the lacerations and puncture wounds.

WDFW officials also found that GPS data showed that the collared wolf from the Sherman pack was in the area when the incident occurred. Tracks near the scene showed that at least two wolves were present.

The deceased calf was removed from the grazing allotment and taken to the WDFW compost facility.

Based on all available factors, the event was classified as a confirmed wolf depredation by the Sherman Pack.

The livestock producer that owns the cattle grazes them on private and public lands in the area. Calves in the herd were born outside of occupied wolf range and were trucked into the area for the summer grazing season. The producer turned out the cattle onto private land May 24.

The producer uses five WDFW contracted range riders across his grazing areas to discourage conflict with wolves. The range riders started patrolling the area on May 9 – before the cattle were turned out – to check for carnivore activity and to reduce the potential for wolf-livestock conflict. Since then, they have monitored GPS collar data and patrolled the area almost daily, communicating frequently with the producer.

In addition, the producer's family members and ranch employees have increased their presence on the allotment to reduce the potential for wolf-livestock conflict, and the producer has reported changes in cattle behavior and carnivore activity to WDFW.

There are no known wolf dens or rendezvous sites in the area. The range riders, producer, family members and ranch employees will continue to patrol the area and surrounding areas.

Smackout Pack depredations increase to five since September 2016

On July 22, WDFW officials also confirmed that one or more wolves from the Smackout Pack were responsible for injuring a calf in a private, fenced pasture in Stevens County.

During an investigation that day, two WDFW employees classified the incident as a confirmed wolf depredation after they found the calf had sustained severe bite lacerations and bite puncture wounds consistent with wolf bite marks. The wounds were inside the calf's left leg, with hemorrhaging to the underlying tissue. The investigation also found additional bite lacerations and puncture wounds to the inside left rear leg, the lower left hamstring, the lower left front leg and the lower right front leg.

Data from two collared wolves in the Smackout Pack data placed both animals near the livestock when the calf was injured. Based on all available factors, the investigators classified the event as a confirmed wolf depredation by the Smackout Pack.

The incident marks the fifth depredation involving the pack since September 21, 2016. WDFW announced plans to initiate removal of some wolves in the Smackout pack July 20, 2017, after the department confirmed the pack's fourth depredation within that timeframe. (See the WDFW update on July 20, for information on the earlier depredations).

The livestock producer has 30 cow-calf pairs within his 40-acre pasture, which is located near his home, and he checks the cattle daily. Following the incident, a WDFW wildlife conflict specialist worked with the owner to deploy Fox Lights, a type of strobe light designed to haze large predators, as a responsive deterrence measure. The livestock owner will continue to check on the cattle daily.

July 20, 2017

WDFW documents legal caught-in-the-act wolf kill and the fourth depredation by the Smackout wolf pack

In late June, wolves began harassing a livestock producer's cattle in the Smackout pack territory on a regular basis. The rancher's employee documented changes in livestock behavior related to the harassment. The employee began checking on cattle at night. During the night of June 29, the employee hazed wolves near livestock with a spot light. On June 30, the range employee saw two wolves in the act of attacking livestock within the Smackout pack territory. In this incident the employee shot and killed one of the wolves and reported the incident to WDFW. The incident was investigated by WDFW Enforcement and was found to be consistent with state regulations. In areas of Washington where wolves are not listed under the Federal Endangered Species Act, WAC 220-440-080 states the owner of domestic animals (or an immediate family member, agent, or employee) may kill one gray wolf without a permit issued by the Director if the wolf is attacking their domestic animals. The wolf killed was a female, previously captured and collared by Department staff in the Smackout pack territory in 2015. The incident occurred on U.S. Forest Service land.

On July 18, 2017, the Department documented the fourth wolf depredation by the Smackout pack within the last 10 months. WDFW officials confirmed that one or more wolves were responsible for injuring a calf on a U.S. Forest Service grazing allotment in Stevens County. The report was made by the ranch's range rider who found the injured calf while monitoring livestock in the area. The fourth depredation within the last 10 months has prompted WDFW to initiate the provisions of the wolf-livestock interactions protocol (Protocol) developed jointly by WAG and the Department earlier this year.

The four depredations by the Smackout pack include:

- September 21, 2016, a confirmed wolf depredation resulting in a dead calf.

WDFW staff investigating the depredation indicated the injuries to the calf were the result of a signature style wolf attack. The injuries were bite lacerations to both armpit areas, both sides of the groin, the utter, the under belly, both shoulder points, the right Achilles, the left side of the jaw and the head and neck. All bite lacerations showed signs of oxygenation, indicating the calf was alive during the attack. Present at the kill site were wolf tracks and scat. GPS locations from a collared member of the Smackout wolf pack were also present at the scene. During the investigation strong signals from the collared member of the Smackout wolf pack were picked up on a WDFW receiver. There were no signs of any other predators or scavengers (ravens or turkey vultures) discovered near the kill site.

- September 28, 2016, a probable wolf depredation resulting in a dead calf.

WDFW staff investigating the depredation indicated the 800-pound Charolais calf appeared to be deceased for two weeks. Intact skeletal remains were present with a small portion of the hide still attached to the remains. Bite lacerations present on the calf's tail were consistent with a signature-style wolf attack. Bite lacerations discovered on the neck portion of calf's hide were consistent with a signature-style wolf attack. Periodic GPS locations place collared members of the Smackout wolf pack within the USFS Grazing Allotment. Wolf tracks were discovered at the site of the calf remains. Other evidence had been scavenged. The precise location of the attack could not be determined due to the time frame and intermittent weather. The intact skeletal remains had been dragged 50 feet down a slight decline in the terrain from the rumen.

- September 29, 2016, a confirmed wolf depredation resulting in an injured calf.

WDFW staff investigating the depredation indicated the Angus calf had bite lacerations to the right hamstring, upper right rear leg, inside right rear leg, outer right rear leg, point of right shoulder, lower right shoulder, right side of neck, point of left shoulder and lower left rear leg consistent with a signature style wolf attack. Three collared members from the Smackout wolf pack were monitored at the field where the calf was attacked during the early morning hours of 09-29-2016. Just after daylight on 09-29-2016, a minimum of three wolves were heard howling in the same field by a second group of range riders. GPS satellite locations placed the three collared members along the same fence line where the Angus calf was discovered for more than 6 hours.

- July 18, 2017, a confirmed wolf depredation resulting in an injured calf.

WDFW staff investigating the depredation indicated the combination of evidence/information, including recent reports of wolves in the act of attacking calves and VHF signals from a Smackout wolf collar on July 18. An injured calf was found hemorrhaging with bite wounds on the left rear leg and left flank and recent wolf collar location data, along with a legal lethal take of a wolf at the end of June 2017 clearly indicate a wolf depredation on calf #110. Wolf GPS collar data indicated that two Smackout Pack wolves were within one mile of the pasture for the last 60 days on a frequent basis. Both collars (and other non-collared wolves) have been observed in the pasture and in the act of attacking calves at the end of June. The incident occurred in an area of fenced pastures which is part of the U.S. Forest Service grazing allotment.

More information is available in the 2016 calendar year chronology of events document on the Department's website, located [here](#) (link to web page; you may need to refresh your web-browser to download the recent version).

As a result of these events, the criteria in the [protocol](#) for consideration and implementation of lethal removal have been reached for the Smackout pack. WDFW Director Jim Unsworth has

authorized lethal removal of wolves from the pack, consistent with the Department's Wolf Conservation and Management plan and the wolf-livestock interactions protocol.

The purpose of lethal removal is to influence and/or change wolf pack behavior to reduce the potential for recurrent wolf depredations on livestock while continuing to promote wolf recovery. Consistent with the terms of the protocol, the rationale for lethal removal in this case is as follows:

1. **WDFW has documented four wolf depredation events** in the Smackout pack area in the last 10 months. Three of those were confirmed wolf depredations and one was a probable wolf depredation. The probable depredation was a part of a pattern of confirmed wolf depredations in September 2016, and occurred about a week apart and overlap of wolves and livestock in the area of the confirmed wolf depredations, AND
2. **At least two (2) proactive deterrence measures and responsive deterrence measures have been implemented** and failed to meet the goal of influencing/changing pack behavior to reduce the potential for recurrent wolf depredations on livestock. There are several livestock producers within the Smackout pack territory using at least two proactive deterrents, some documented for more than four years. The livestock producer that sustained the July 18, 2017 confirmed wolf depredation is currently using: several range riders (one range rider is primary, but others fill in on an as needed basis), has maintained sanitation by removing or securing livestock carcasses, actively hazed wolves with a firearm and pyrotechnics, kept cattle in a fenced pasture within the allotment due to wolf activity, spotlighting nightly, wolf GPS collar data in the area to monitor activity near cattle, used fladry when needed, a RAG box when needed, and several other deterrents in the past. The range rider started patrolling the area prior to the June 1 turnout in 2017, and communicates frequently with the producer and the local Wildlife Conflict Specialist. Information on denning and wolf activity was also shared with the producer, which the producer has avoided those high use wolf areas. Another producer that was involved in one of the three 2016 depredations within the Smackout territory have been using WDFW contracted range riders, sanitation, and removal of injured cattle from the range, AND
3. **WDFW expects depredations to continue** (e.g., deterrence measures have not changed pack behavior, and overlap between wolves and livestock is expected to continue in near future), AND
4. **The Department has documented the use of appropriate deterrence measures** and notified the public of wolf activities in a timely manner as outlined in the wolf-livestock protocol. We informed the WAG and interested parties by email when the pack was discovered and provided a map of the pack's range. WDFW provided updates on September 23, 28, and 30, 2016 with information on all wolf depredations on livestock in the area, and we described the preventive measures in updates to the chronology of events, AND

5. The lethal removal of wolves is not expected to harm the wolf population's ability to reach recovery objectives statewide or within individual wolf recovery regions.

As mentioned earlier, Director Unsworth has authorized an incremental removal of pack members from the Smackout pack. The last estimate of pack size from the 2016 winter survey was 8 wolves. The pack has since produced an unknown number of pups. The Department expects to begin the effort this week and will likely continue for two-weeks or less depending on the outcome.

The Department will use humane lethal removal methods consistent with state and federal laws. The objective of the methodology is to use the best method available while considering human safety, humaneness to wolves, swift completion of the removal, weather, efficacy, and cost. Likely options include shooting from a helicopter, trapping, and shooting from the ground.

Per the protocol, WDFW's approach is incremental removal, which has periods of active removals or attempts to remove wolves, followed by periods of evaluation to see if the goal of changing pack behavior was met. The first incremental removal will follow the provision of the protocol in section 7.

The Department will keep the public informed about this activity through weekly updates. The Department will provide a final report to the public on any lethal removal action after the operation has concluded.

Monthly Report: Posted July 14, 2017

Confirmed wolf depredation by Sherman wolf pack

WDFW officials have confirmed that one or more wolves were responsible for the death of a calf whose carcass was discovered on July 12 in a grazing allotment of Ferry County. The report was made by a WDFW contract range rider who found a recently deceased calf while monitoring livestock in the area.

The Department officials who conducted the investigation that day indicated that a combination of evidence at the scene (including wolf tracks, scat, possible gray canid hair, and signs of a struggle), injuries on the carcass that occurred while the calf was still alive (hemorrhaging on right rear leg associated with bite wounds on leg and tail, and broken humerus bone), wolf collar location data, and another depredation investigation completed within 200 yards of this carcass on June 13, 2017 clearly indicate a wolf depredation. Wolf GPS collar data also showed that a Sherman Pack wolf was at the scene during the estimated time that the calf was attacked (July 10-12). Based on all available factors, the event was classified as a confirmed wolf depredation by one or more members of the Sherman Pack. The depredation occurred on Bureau of Land Management grazing lands. It is the second confirmed depredation involving the Sherman Pack, the first occurred on June 12, 2017.

The livestock producer grazes both private and public lands in the area. The producer's calves were born outside of occupied wolf range and were trucked into the area for the summer grazing season. The producer turned the cattle out onto private land on May 24.

The producer uses five WDFW contract range riders to increase the level of human presence around the cattle throughout their grazing allotments and other producers in the area. The range riders started patrolling the area on May 9, before the cattle were turned out to check for carnivore activity and to proactively increase regular human presence. They have continued to patrol the area with cattle on a near-daily basis, and communicate frequently with the producer. Any changes in cattle behavior or carnivore activity has been shared with WDFW. The range riders also monitor the activity of GPS collared wolves in the area. There are no known wolf dens or rendezvous sites in the area. The range riders will continue to patrol the area and surrounding areas.

Wolf Pack Updates

Goodman Meadows Pack: WDFW biologists captured an adult male wolf in January, 2017. The wolf was fitted with a radio collar and released on site. Since then, the wolf dispersed to the Bonners Ferry area in Idaho and was legally harvested.

Smackout Pack: WDFW biologists captured an adult female wolf in January, 2017. The wolf was fitted with a radio collar and released on site.

An adult male wolf dispersed from the Smackout pack territory to the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem area in December 2016.

Dirty Shirt Pack: WDFW biologists captured an adult male wolf in January, 2017 and an adult female wolf in February, 2017. Both wolves were fitted with radio collars and released on site. The male wolf dispersed to the Salmo pack territory in April 2017. That animal subsequently was removed in British Columbia to protect Caribou and the female dispersed to an area north of the Smackout pack territory in May 2017.

A mortality of a wolf from the Dirty Shirt pack is currently under investigation.

Carpenter Ridge Pack: WDFW biologists captured an adult male wolf in May, 2017. The wolf was fitted with a radio collar and released on site.

Sherman Pack: WDFW biologists captured an adult female wolf in January, 2017. The wolf was fitted with a radio collar and released on site. This wolf died from a vehicle collision near Sherman Pass in March, 2017.

Strawberry Pack: Colville Confederate Tribal biologists captured an adult male wolf in February, 2017. The wolf was fitted with a radio collar and released on site.

Tucannon pack: WDFW biologists captured a female wolf in July, 2017. The wolf was fitted with a radio collar and released on site.

Loup Loup Pack: WDFW biologists captured an adult female wolf in February, 2017. The wolf was fitted with a radio collar and released on site. The wolf dispersed to the Veron area in British Columbia, Canada in April 2017.

A mortality of a wolf from the Loup Loup pack is currently under investigation.

Teanaway Pack: WDFW biologists captured an adult female wolf in February, 2017. The wolf was fitted with a radio collar and released on site.

Other known wolf activity areas:

In Skagit County, WDFW and USFWS biologists captured an adult male wolf in June, 2017. The wolf was fitted with a radio collar and released on site. It's unknown at this time if the wolf is part of a pack or a solitary animal.

In July, 2017, WDFW received a report of an injured wolf in northern Stevens County. Department staff that responded to the scene and discovered a mortally injured wolf, resulting from a vehicle collision. Department staff humanely euthanized the animal on the scene. The male wolf was previously captured and ear tagged by Department staff in 2014 in the Huckleberry pack territory.

Proactive deterrence measures

Wolf packs in Ferry, Stevens, and Pend Oreille counties

On February 23, 2017, the local Wildlife Conflict Specialist met with Colville National Forest (CNF) staff to discuss areas of recent high wolf use areas and the deployment of proactive deterrence measures. The local Wildlife Conflict Specialist also presented information about wolf numbers, high wolf use areas, the newly released Wolf-Livestock Interaction Protocol, and summer plans for proactive deterrent measures at all three Spring Grazing Meetings for the CNF. Areas of known den sites were also communicated to ranchers that graze livestock in the area.

From January through June of 2017, the local Wildlife Conflict Specialist met a number of times individually and in small groups with local government officials, grazing permit holders on the Colville National Forest, representatives from local area cattle groups, and other local livestock producers to discuss wolf activities, deterrence measures, WDFW contracted range rider programs, and the availability of WDFW Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements for Livestock.

In early June, the local Wildlife Conflict Specialist coordinated with local range riders under contract with WDFW in the Carpenter Ridge, Dirty Shirt, Profanity Peak, Sherman, Smackout, and Wedge wolf pack areas to initiate proactive human presence. WDFW has contracted with four local range riders that deploy a total of eight range riders (one contracted range rider has subcontractors) to cover Ferry, Stevens, and Pend Oreille counties. The Department has re-opened the Request for Proposals to potentially contract with additional range riders on federal grazing allotments.

WDFW staff administered 15 Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements for Livestock through June 2017. with 10 starting July 1, 2017. Deterrent measures being deployed at this time are specific to each producer, the type of livestock, and the location of livestock. Most producers using deterrents are utilizing range riders on large grazing locations on both public and private lands. Other deterrents being used throughout public and private grazing areas include:

- Sanitation.
- Installation of predator-proof fencing around a bone yard.
- Use of the WDFW Compost Facility.
- Contacting WDFW when livestock carcasses are discovered so that they can be removed or protected from wolves.
- removing or treating non-ambulatory (sick or injured) livestock from unsafe pastures in areas where wolves are present (when feasible).
- Using traditional calving or lambing areas that are away from areas occupied by wolves.
- Using protective fencing or fladry around calving or lambing areas when deemed necessary by WDFW when there is known wolf activity in the vicinity of a producer's calving or lambing areas.

- Using lambing sheds during and immediately after lambing.
- Turning-out cattle onto forested/upland grazing allotments when calving is finished.
- Turning-out cattle onto forested/upland grazing pastures or allotments once calves are larger.
- Delaying the turnout of livestock onto forested/upland grazing pastures or allotments until wild ungulates are born.
- Using herders with dogs at night to protect sheep.
- using guarding animals (dogs, llamas, donkeys, etc.) to alert herders and protect livestock.
- Managing or avoiding (when possible) grazing livestock near the core areas (dens, rendezvous sites) of wolf territories to minimize wolf-livestock interactions.
- Using range riders to increase the frequency of human presence to check livestock in areas with wolves or when wolves are in the vicinity of livestock pastures.
- Increasing the frequency of human presence checking livestock in areas with wolves or when wolves are in the vicinity of livestock pastures.
- Installing fox lights temporarily.
- Hazing wolves with non-lethal munitions encountered to frighten them away from livestock,
- Coordinating with WDFW to expand hazing once a depredation event occurs.
- Using predator-resistant or electric fencing as a permanent barrier to keep wolves away.
- Using predator-resistant or electric fencing as a temporary barrier to confine sheep or goats and keep wolves away.
- Using fladry or turbo-fladry around livestock temporarily.

Wolf packs in Asotin, Garfield, Columbia , and Walla Walla counties

Tucannon and Touchet wolf packs:

There are 16 Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements throughout the Blue Mountains and 7 are within these pack territories. All 16 agreements include range riders.

Five producers have grazing allotments in the Umatilla National Forest in Washington. The local Wildlife Conflict Staff contacted producers who may have livestock in areas occupied by wolves starting in June, when the grazing allotments begin. Grazing plans are being developed or modified to require preventative measures for wolf conflict avoidance.

Wolf packs in Okanogan County

Lookout wolf pack:

Conflict Staff met with livestock producers and managers during the spring cooperative resource management (CRM) meeting to discuss wolf activity and proactive deterrence measures. Conflict staff also coordinated with USFS regarding grazing rotations and wolf activity. Outreach efforts will continue as WDFW staff learns more about this pack's activity and status.

The U.S. Forest Service requires sanitation for all producers who graze livestock on the Methow Valley Ranger District. Under the federal guidelines, producers must agree that: "Livestock carcasses found on areas of the allotments where they would attract wolves to a potential conflict situation with other livestock, (such as a salting ground, water source, or holding corral) must be removed, buried or otherwise disposed of such that the carcass will not attract wolves."

WDFW has two contract range riders to cover three wolf packs within Okanogan County; Lookout, Loup Loup, and Beaver Creek packs. Those two range riders spend the majority of their time monitoring livestock in Loup Loup and Beaver Creek pack areas, but are available for the Lookout pack area if needed. The focus of range rider efforts is based on known wolf activity and the number of livestock. Currently there are no Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements with livestock producers in the area.

Loup Loup wolf pack:

Local Wildlife Conflict staff met with livestock producers during the spring CRM meeting to discuss wolf activity and proactive deterrence measures. Individual meetings were also conducted for interested producers who did not have CRM meetings. Outreach efforts will continue as WDFW staff learns more about this pack's activity and status.

A WDFW contracted range rider is assigned to ride the territory and works cooperatively with interested producers to monitor livestock. However, the contracted range rider may monitor livestock in a different wolf pack territory if there is an emerging need. The importance of, and options for, sanitation was discussed with livestock producers and range riders. The contracted range rider and four producers have formal WDFW data sharing agreements. Currently there are no Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements with livestock producers in the area.

The U.S. Forest Service requires sanitation for all producers who graze livestock on the Methow Valley Ranger District. Under Forest Service guidelines, producers agree to sanitation as stated, "Livestock carcasses found on areas of the allotments where they would attract wolves to a potential conflict situation with other livestock, (such as a salting ground, water source, or holding corral) must be removed, buried or otherwise disposed of such that the carcass will not attract wolves."

This pack occasionally uses WDFW lands with grazing leases. Conflict staff coordinates closely with wildlife area managers regarding known wolf activity. WDFW staff met with livestock producers during spring cooperative resource management meetings. Producers have been notified there could be wolf activity on WDFW lands at any time.

Beaver Creek wolf pack:

A WDFW contracted range rider is assigned to ride the estimated Beaver Creek pack territory and works cooperatively with producers to monitor livestock and contacts the local Wildlife Conflict Specialist regularly. The contracted range rider may monitor livestock in a different wolf pack territory if there is an emerging need. The importance of, and options for, sanitation is discussed with livestock producers and range rider.

Wolf packs in Kittitas County

Teanaway pack:

Cattle were turned out in the east Teanaway area in mid-June. Two (1/2 time each) range riders and the local Wildlife Conflict Specialist are monitoring the breeding male and female to find the general location of the den and try to keep cattle from within a half mile of that location until a new rendezvous site is selected. Deer fawning and elk calving is underway based on observations in the pack territory.

Cattle were turned out in late May in the west Teanaway area. This area is the furthest from the suspected/traditional den area and south, closer to Cle Elum. The producer was contacted and practices sanitation and also has a range rider.

Domestic sheep were turned out in late June in the Teanaway pack area. The local Wildlife Conflict Specialist and producer discussed the deployment of the range riders, guard dogs, herder, and the grazing schedule.

Domestic sheep were also turned out in the Naneum area. Although there are is no known wolf pack in the area, the local Wildlife Conflict Specialist and producer discussed deployment of the guard dogs, herder, and the grazing schedule.

Outreach and Information

WDFW wolf presentations and outreach:

1. January 6, 2017 Rearden High School presentation about wolf conflict in Washington.
2. February 18, 2017 Presentation about recreating and living with Large Carnivores in Washington.
3. March 9, 2017 Colville National Forest personnel meeting presentation about 2016 and 2017 wolf conflict items.
4. March 24, 2017 Curlew High School presentation about wolf biology and management in Washington.
5. April 10, 2017 Colville National Forest presentation in Kettle Falls for Forest Service grazing permit holder's on wolf conflict including the 2016 wolf annual report, the Wolf-Livestock Interaction Protocol, 2017 contract range rider offerings, and proactive deterrent measures.

6. April 13, 2017 Colville National Forest presentation in Newport for Forest Service grazing permit holder's on wolf conflict including the 2016 wolf annual report, the Wolf-Livestock Interaction Protocol, 2017 contract range rider offerings, and proactive deterrent measures.
7. April 14, 2017 Colville National Forest presentation in Republic for Forest Service grazing permit holder's on wolf conflict including the 2016 wolf annual report, the Wolf-Livestock Interaction Protocol, 2017 contract range rider offerings, and proactive deterrent measures.
8. On May 4, 2017, presentation to an elementary school in Tacoma Washington on wolf conservation and management.
9. May 6, 2017 Spokane Public Library presentation about wolves Pre K-6th grade.
10. May 10, 2017 Spokane Public Library presentation about wolves Pre K-6th grade.
11. May 11, 2017 Spokane Public Library presentation about wolves Pre K-6th grade.
12. May 12, 2017 Spokane Public Library presentation about wolves Pre K-6th grade.
13. May 17, 2017 Spokane Public Library presentation about wolves Pre K-6th grade.
14. May 18, 2017 Spokane Public Library presentation about wolves Pre K-6th grade.
15. May 19, 2017 Low-Stress Livestock Handling Training presentation about WDFW wolf conflict program offerings.
16. June 6, 2017 Selkirk High School presentation about wolf conflict in Washington.

Weekly staff activity reports

WDFW Wildlife Program weekly activity reports, which include wolf related work activities, can be found at http://wdfw.wa.gov/about/wildlife_weekly/.

June 16, 2017

Wolf captured in Skagit County; confirmed wolf depredation by Sherman Wolf Pack

Wolf captured and collared in Skagit County

On June 8, state and federal wildlife biologists captured an adult male gray wolf in eastern Skagit County. They took genetic samples from the animal and fitted it with a GPS tracking collar before releasing it onsite.

This is the first gray wolf captured and collared in western Washington in modern times.

The animal was captured by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), with support from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), during an investigation of wolf activity in eastern Skagit County. Under federal law, USFWS has primary management responsibility in areas of the state – including western Washington – where wolves are listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act.

On May 17, USFWS received a report from a resident of eastern Skagit County that one or more wolves had preyed on his chickens early that morning. He sent photos of two suspected wolves to a federal wolf biologist, noting that he had heard howling and observed tracks in the area during the winter.

At USFWS's request, WDFW dispatched an area wildlife conflict specialist to investigate the situation later that day. The conflict specialist talked to the landowner, examined the scene of the incident, and concluded it was a probable depredation by one or more wolves.

On May 18, wolf biologists from USFWS and WDFW arrived at the property to deploy traps and trail cameras. While there, they saw what appeared to be a wolf in the distance. Three weeks later, they captured an adult male wolf in a trap.

Samples were taken from the animal and sent to the USFWS Forensic Laboratory in Ashland, Ore. Wildlife managers are monitoring GPS signals from the collared animal to track its movements.

That animal is the strongest indication of wolves moving into the western region since 2015, when a female wolf was found dead – struck by a vehicle – on Interstate 90 near Snoqualmie Pass.

The discovery of wolves west of the Cascade Range is significant for state and federal management of the species. The state's wolf recovery plan establishes a goal of maintaining 15 successful breeding pairs for at least three years before the species can be removed from the state's endangered species list. At least four breeding pairs must be in eastern Washington, four in the Northern Cascades, four in the Southern Cascades and Northwest Coast, and three anywhere in the state.

Last year there were eight breeding pairs in the eastern region and two in the Northern Cascades and none in the Southern Cascades. Additional breeding pairs west of the Cascade Range will help bring the state closer to its recovery goal.

Confirmed wolf depredation by Sherman Wolf Pack

WDFW officials have confirmed that one or more wolves were responsible for the death of a calf whose carcass was discovered on June 12 in a grazing allotment of Ferry County. Investigators also found scattered skeletal remains of a second calf, but they could not determine the cause of its death.

The report was made by a WDFW contract range rider who found a recently deceased calf and partial remains of a second calf while patrolling an area that had a cluster of GPS points from a collared wolf from the Sherman Pack. After finding and reporting the carcass and remains to WDFW, the range rider remained on the scene to prevent scavenging by wildlife.

Shortly after sunrise on Tuesday, June 13, two WDFW officials arrived on the scene. The Department officials who conducted the investigation indicated that the first event was an intact calf carcass with injuries to the groin, inside areas of both the hindquarters and hamstrings. The injuries consisted of bite lacerations and puncture wounds with hemorrhaging associated with those bite wounds. The injuries to calf were consistent with a wolf depredation. The GPS points from the Sherman Pack collared wolf showed that the wolf had been at the location several times between June 3-11. Data from another collared wolf from the Profanity Peak Pack showed the animal was in the area sporadically from June 5-7. Based on all available factors, the event was classified as a confirmed wolf depredation by one or more members of the Sherman Pack. The depredation occurred on BLM grazing lands. It is the first confirmed depredation involving the Sherman Pack.

The second calf's remains were discovered 150 yards downhill from the first calf carcass. Because the scene consisted of only skeletal remains, scattered over a 40-yard area, WDFW classified the event as an Unknown Cause of Death.

The livestock producer grazes both private and public lands in the area. The producer's calves were born outside of occupied wolf range and were trucked into the area for the summer grazing season. The producer turned the cattle out onto private land on May 24.

The producer uses five WDFW contract range riders to increase the level of human presence around the cattle throughout their grazing allotments. The range riders started patrolling the area on May 9, before the cattle were turned out to check for carnivore activity and to proactively increase regular human presence. They have continued to patrol the area with cattle on a near-daily basis, and communicate frequently with the producer. Any changes in cattle behavior or carnivore activity has been shared with WDFW. The range riders also monitor the activity of GPS collared wolves in the area. There are no known wolf dens or rendezvous sites in the area.

Following the depredation investigation, the calf carcass from the confirmed wolf depredation was removed from where high cattle activity is expected. The range riders will continue to patrol the area and surrounding areas.