

Implementation of the Wolf-Livestock Interaction Protocol

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Umbrella Topic

Appeal granted by Gov. Jay Inslee – directing new rulemaking (January 12, 2024)

Governor's recommendations:

- **Initiate rule-making to codify “Wolf-livestock interaction protocol” or put protocol into policy for consistency, continuity, and confidence for future administrations**
- **Consider new policies or regulations on “caught in the act” circumstances**



Outline

- **Guidance from Wolf Plan**
 - **Protocol development**
 - **Adaptive updates**
- **Direction from appeal**
- **Current Practice of Implementing Protocol**
- **Other Related Regulations**
 - **Identify problem areas not further refined by the WAG**



History of WDFW Protocols

- **2013-2015 Lethal removal protocol – largely developed by WDFW, no stakeholder cohesion, no stakeholder support**
- **Conflict transformation process and capacity building**
- **2016 Lethal removal protocol – WAG cohesion and support process**
- **2017 Wolf-livestock interaction protocol – WAG cohesion and support process**



Guidance from Wolf Plan

Wolf Plan states WDFW will use stakeholder process for more context in implementation of the Plan

- Example, “Lethal removal may be used to stop repeated depredation if it is documented that livestock have clearly been 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.”



Guidance from Wolf Plan	Further guidance from 2017 Wolf-livestock interactions protocol
Stop <u>repeated</u> depredations	There are at least 3 depredation events within a 30-day rolling window of time, or at least 4 depredation events within a 10-month rolling window of time
if it is <u>documented</u> that	Depredations are investigated by trained WDFW staff, who make the final determination (confirmed wolf depredation, probable wolf depredation, confirmed non-wild wolf depredation, unconfirmed depredation, non-depredation, or unconfirmed cause of injury or death).
livestock have clearly been <u>killed</u> by wolves,	At least 1 of the depredation events is a confirmed wolf kill of livestock
<u>Non-lethal methods have been tried but failed</u> to resolve the conflict,	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. Livestock producers are expected to proactively implement at least two (2) deterrence measures with concurrence from the local WDFW Wildlife Conflict Specialist
<u>Depredations are likely to continue</u> , and	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)
Monitor level of control to meet both conservation and management objectives	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

Management decisions also based on...	
Case-specific evaluation based on pack history, and size, pattern of depredations, number of livestock killed, state listed status of wolves, extent of proactive management measures used, and other considerations	Variables include history and pattern of depredations, recovery objectives within region, estimated pack size, number and timing of depredations, classification of depredations, current and previous year circumstances, use of deterrence measures, time of year, and type of livestock

Lethal removal action...	
Will be incremental, with one or two offending animals removed initially. If depredations continue, additional animals may be removed.	Section 7: WDFW's approach is incremental removal, with first attempt to remove 1-2 wolves, followed by an evaluation to see if the goal of changing pack behavior was met.



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- 2017 Wolf-livestock interaction protocol – WAG cohesion and support process
- **2020 Wolf-livestock interaction protocol - added special provisions for range riding from WAG**



History of Petitions/Legal Action Against WDFW Wolf-Livestock Interaction Protocol

1. Petition for rule making (withdrawn)

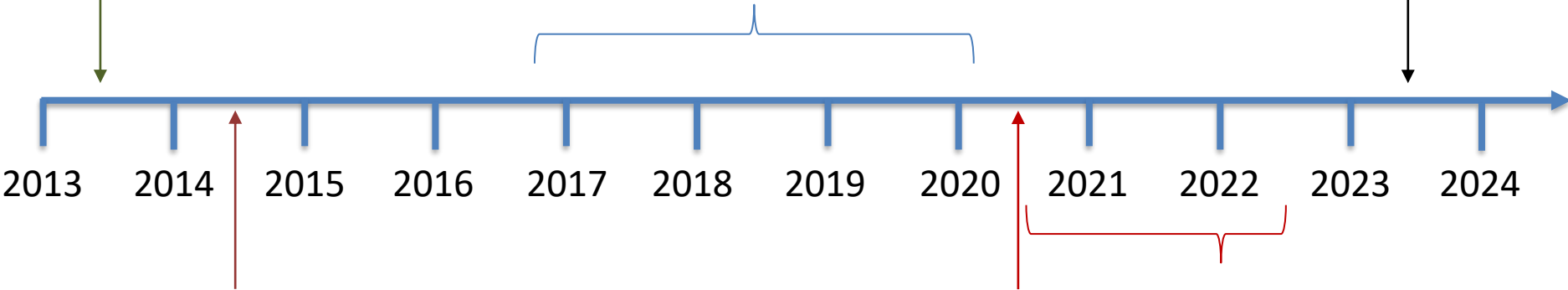
5a. Petition for rule making (denied, appeal approved)

3. Petitioners challenge WDFW's lethal removal actions in several lawsuits

2. Petition for rule making (denied, appeal denied)

4a. Petition for rule making (denied, appeal approved)

4b. Rulemaking process (with Final SEIS & SBEIS)
Rule not adopted

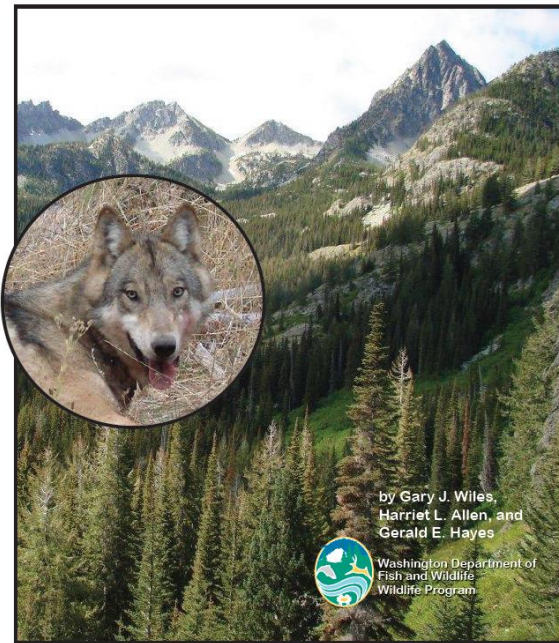


Guidance Documents

Wolf Conservation and Management Plan

STATE OF WASHINGTON

December 2011



[Wolf Conservation and Management Plan \(wa.gov\)](http://www.wa.gov)



Department of Fish and Wildlife

WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wolf-livestock interaction protocol

Revision date June 1, 2017 (sections 3 and 4 amended September 15, 2020)

This protocol was jointly developed by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and its Wolf Advisory Group to guide the Department's efforts to reduce conflicts between wolves and livestock. The Wolf Advisory Group has expressed a strong value to reducing the likelihood of the loss of both wolves and livestock from adverse interactions. The protocol prescribes a variety of proactive measures livestock producers can take to reduce the probability of wolf-livestock conflict and establishes a framework for WDFW's response when conflicts between wolves and livestock do occur.

The protocol draws on a diversity of perspectives expressed by people throughout the state for protecting wildlife populations as a public resource and livestock. These values include achieving a sustained recovered wolf population, supporting rural ways of life, and maintaining livestock production as part of the state's cultural and economic heritage. This protocol also serves to increase the transparency and accountability of the Department's activities and management actions related to wolves.

Section 1. Background and purpose of protocol

Gray wolves are listed as endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 in the western two-thirds of Washington, but are federally delisted in the eastern-third of the state (Fig. 1). Under Washington State rule, gray wolves are endangered statewide. Under the Federal listing statute, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is the lead agency for managing wolves in the western two-thirds of Washington, and WDFW has full management authority for wolves in the eastern third.

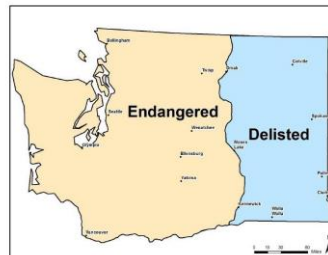


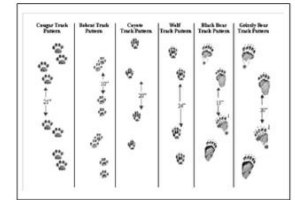
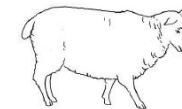
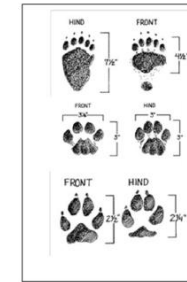
Figure 1. Federal classification of gray wolves in Washington State, 2017.

[20200915_wdfw_wolf_livestock_interaction_protocol.pdf \(wa.gov\)](http://www.wa.gov)



LIVESTOCK INJURY AND MORTALITY INVESTIGATIONS

A REFERENCE GUIDE FOR WDFW FIELD PERSONNEL



Version 03/2014

[wdfw01581.pdf \(wa.gov\)](http://www.wa.gov)

Process for Considering Lethal Removal of Wolves



Wolf-Livestock Interaction Protocol

The goal of the tools and approaches described in this protocol is to influence/change wolf pack behavior to reduce the potential for recurrent wolf depredations on livestock while continuing to promote wolf recovery



Livestock Depredation Investigations

Minimum of two WDFW staff trained in depredation investigations conduct the investigations

“After Action Review (AAR)”

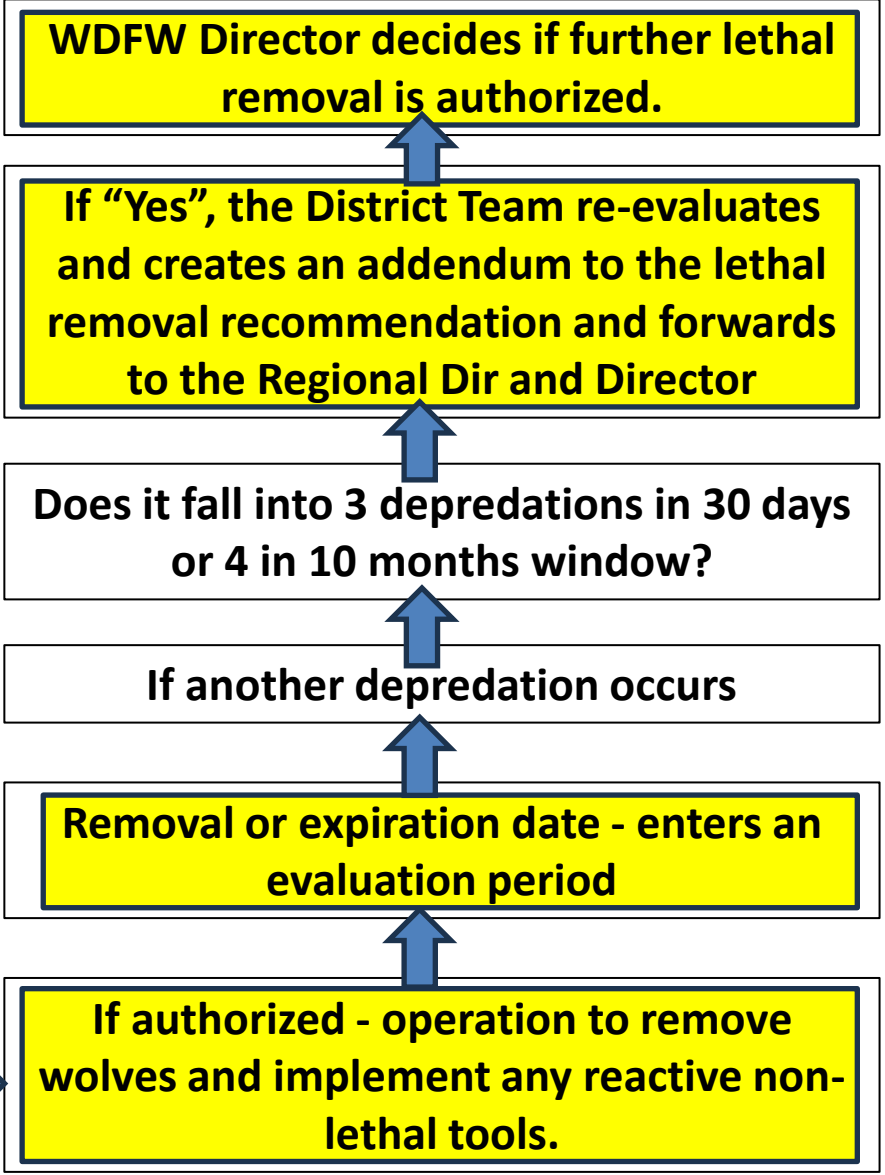
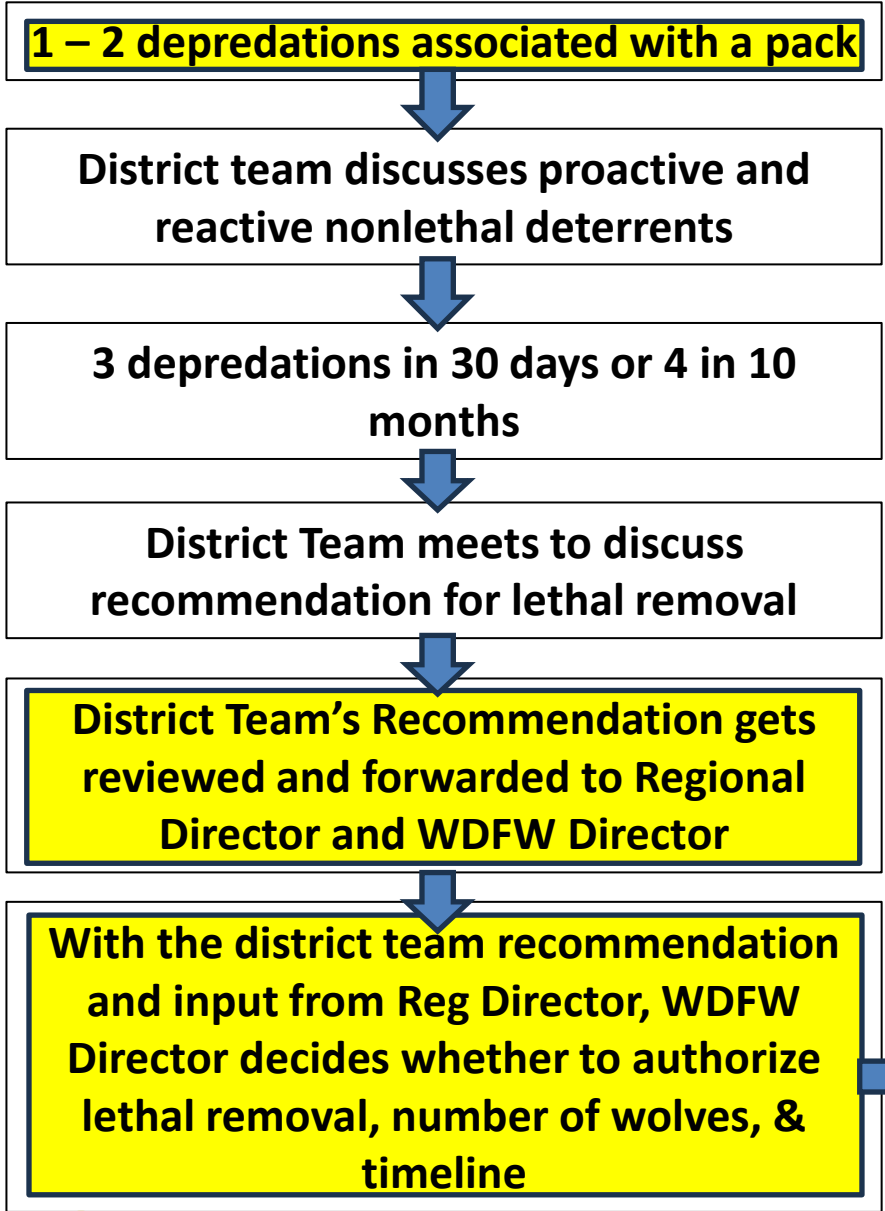
WDFW staff sole responsibility to make the determination of the cause of a livestock mortality/ injury for each depredation incident



Guidance from Wolf-Livestock Protocol for Consideration of Lethal Removal

- Eastern 1/3 only where Federally delisted
- At least 2 nonlethal deterrence measures implemented and failed to meet goal of changing pack behavior.
- At least 3 depredation events within a 30-day window or 4 events within 10-month window.
 - At least one confirmed wolf kill of livestock
 - Only 1 event may be probable
- Depredations are expected to continue
- The lethal removal of wolves is not expected to harm the population's ability to reach recovery objectives





Public outreach/update



Elements in Recommendation to Consider Lethal Removal of Wolves

➤ *Pack Information*

- What pack is involved?
- Number of adults/yearlings/pups
- Time of year (denning vs late summer)
- Location to activity center (den/rendezvous)
- Collared wolves in the pack?
- Overlap by adjacent packs?
- Which wolves may have been involved
- Any recent mortality in the pack?

➤ *Depredation history attributed to the pack*

- Timeline
- Confirmed/Probable (at least 1 must be a confirmed wolf kill, 1 may be a probable)
- Mortality vs Injury



Elements in Recommendation to Consider Lethal Removal of Wolves

➤ *Depredation Area Description*

- Number of Producers affected,
- Types of Proactive nonlethal deterrents
- Types of Responsive deterrents
- Type of livestock (cow/calf pairs, bulls, yearlings, sheep)
- How long will they be overlapping pack (summer allotment vs private pasture)
- Type of pasture
- Narrative for each producer

➤ *Are Depredations Likely to Continue?*

- Responsive deterrents, Cattle moving, Caught in the act, Trapping to collar, etc.



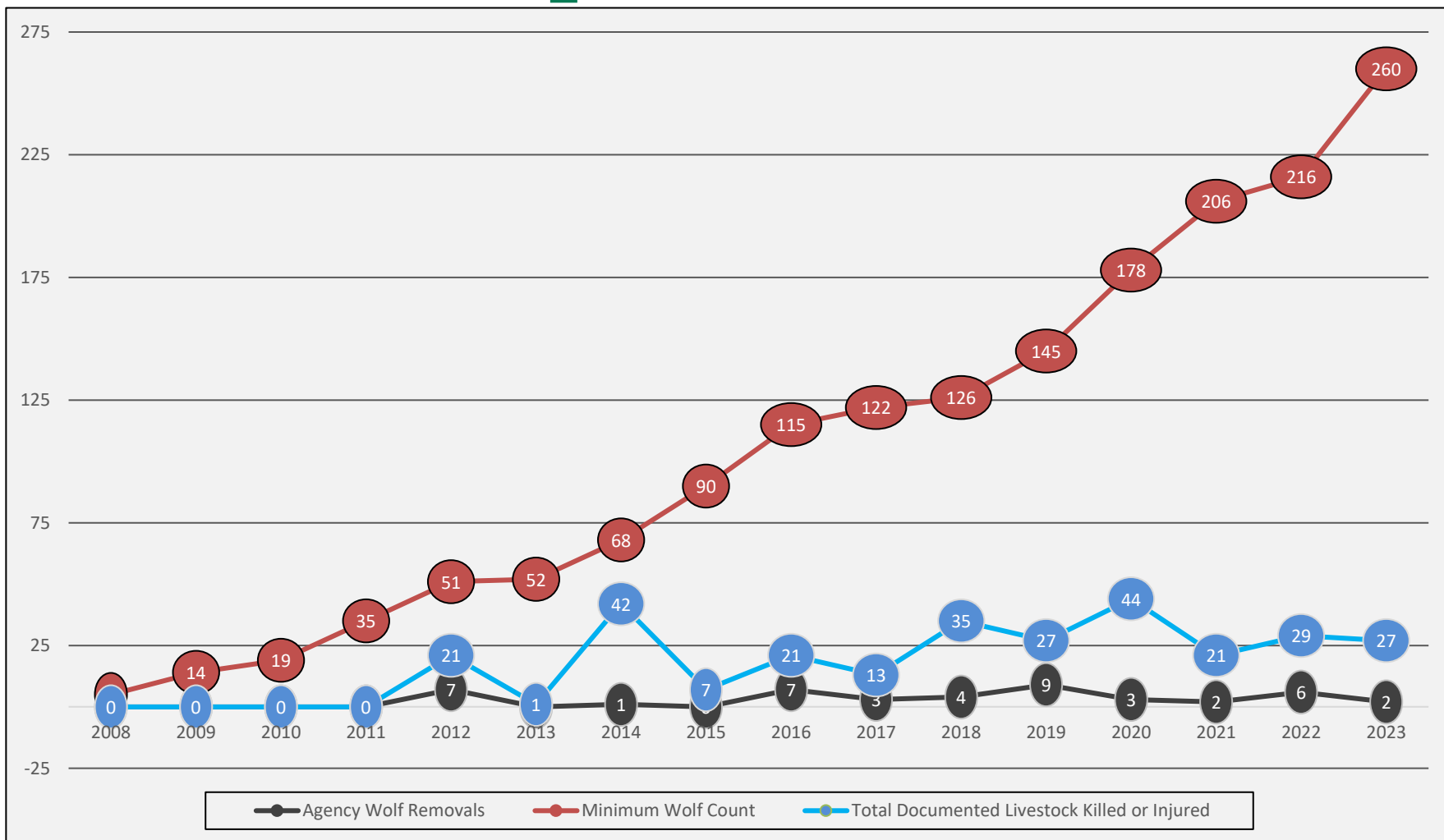
Elements in Recommendation to Consider Lethal Removal of Wolves

- *Would removal of one or more wolves from this pack negatively impact statewide recovery?*
 - Location of the pack,
 - Number of wolves (pups, yearlings, adults) in the pack,
 - Total known mortality for the year

- *Assessment of whether lethal removal is the appropriate management to influence pack behavior*
 - Would it reduce the chances of reoccurring depredations?
 - What other considerations need to be addressed?
 - How would it be conducted, number removed, any specific wolf or wolves to be removed, logistics of the operation



Depredations, Lethal Removal and Wolf Population, 2008 - 2023



Summarizing the Process for Considering Lethal Removal of Wolves



- ***Every depredation incident and associated situation is unique, and the Protocol provides WDFW guidance with enough flexibility to account for that.***
- ***We often hear public frustrations that the process to complete a recommendation takes too long.***
- ***As you heard today, a lot of work goes into developing each recommendation – as they're unique too for different depredation scenarios.***
- ***District Team, Regional Director, and WDFW Director make a concerted effort to move the process along as quickly as possible; Often working outside normal business hours to expedite the process.***



Other Related Rules

WAC 220-440-080: Killing wolves attacking domestic animals – commonly known as “**Caught in the Act**”

(1) An owner of domestic animals, the owner's immediate family member, the agent of an owner, or the owner's documented employee may kill **one** gray wolf (*Canis lupus*) without a permit issued by the director, regardless of its state classification, if the wolf is **attacking** their domestic animals.

A total of 12 incidents were reported to WDFW enforcement from 2013 to 2023 under the caught-in-the-act (CIA) rule - Eight dead wolves were located.



Questions?

