

Idaho Wolf Management Update September - October, 2010

Wolves Relisted

On August 5, U.S. District Judge Donald Molloy returned wolves in Montana and Idaho to federal protection under the Endangered Species Act, effectively restricting state management and ending plans for state-regulated fall wolf hunts in Idaho and Montana.

Wolves north of Interstate 90 are once again fully protected as endangered. Though people may still harass or kill wolves posing a direct, immediate threat to human safety, private individuals may not shoot endangered wolves to protect their stock on public or private land. Wolves south of I-90 are returned to their prior classification as a nonessential, experimental population. South of I-90, livestock and pet owners/operators may kill wolves in the act of attacking their animals and can be provided shoot-on-sight permits following confirmed losses. Additional information is available on our website: <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/wolves/>

On September 30, Idaho filed a notice of appeal with the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, seeking to overturn Molloy's decision to relist wolves. Montana and the U.S. Department of Interior filed similar notices on October 1. Legislation has also been introduced in Congress with the intent of delisting wolves in Idaho and Montana.

Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter and Interior Secretary Ken Salazar attempted to negotiate a renewal of a Memorandum of Agreement for Idaho to continue to act as the lead wolf management authority in Idaho. However, these efforts were not successful. On October 18, Otter terminated Idaho's status as a designated agent of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Regardless of designated agent status, federal rules allow states with wolf management plans approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to submit proposals for control actions where wolves are having an unacceptable impact on ungulates, such as elk, deer and moose. Idaho will continue to seek approval of its pending proposal for wolf control in the Lolo Zone, and will consider submitting other such proposals as appropriate.

As of October 18, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has resumed the lead role for other wolf management activities in Idaho. The USDA APHIS Wildlife Services division will continue to respond to suspected depredations on livestock or pets. Calls about depredations should be directed to Wildlife Services at 866-487-3297 or 208-378-5077.

Monitoring

Our 2009 annual report on Wolf Conservation and Management in Idaho is available on our website at: <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/wolves/manage/>. The year-end minimum population estimate for 2009 was 835 wolves in 94 packs with 49 breeding pairs confirmed (breeding pair is defined as an adult male and female with at least two pups that survived to December 31). The 2009 year-end minimum estimate of 835 wolves compares to the 2008 year-end minimum population estimate of 856 wolves in 88 packs, with 39 documented breeding pairs.

At the end of September, there were 97 known packs in Idaho, including four packs newly documented this year. Nez Perce Tribe and Idaho Fish and Game wolf crews confirmed breeding pair status (more than two pups still alive) in 38 packs and presence of at least one pup was confirmed in 47 packs. A minimum of 166 pups had been confirmed by observation by September 30. Nez Perce Tribe, Fish and Game, The University of Montana, and Idaho USDA Wildlife Services trappers caught and radio-collared six wolves during September.

Management and Control Actions

In response to the court ruling to relist wolves, Idaho Fish and Game completed a proposal to reduce wolf numbers in the Lolo elk management zone in north-central Idaho under provisions Section 10(j) of the Endangered Species Act to address unacceptable impacts of wolf predation to the elk population. About 2,000 comments were received on the proposal. A final proposal was submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on September 24. The proposal is available at:

<http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/wolves/manage/reduceProposal.cfm>.

Defenders of Wildlife ended their program to compensate ranchers for livestock losses confirmed to have been caused by wolves in December. The Idaho Governor's Office of Species Conservation manages the state wolf compensation program.

Idaho USDA Wildlife Services reported their personnel confirmed that wolves killed nine calves and seven sheep and injured a guard dog in September. Probable wolf depredations included two calves killed, two calves injured and one sheep injured. In response to these and previous depredations, Wildlife Services killed six wolves and radio-collared and released one wolf. Confirmed year-to-date depredations through September 30 were 49 percent lower in 2010 than during the same period in 2009. The reduction in depredation activity is likely the result of wolves removed during the 2009-2010 hunting season combined with increased efforts to remove wolves in packs with a chronic history of depredations.

In early October, results came back on the suspected wolf-dog hybrid reported killed on July 6 for depredation on domestic sheep in Franklin Basin (see July wolf management update). DNA analysis confirmed that one parent of that animal was a purebred German shepherd dog.

Confirmed wolf depredations and mortalities from 2003–2010 are reported in Table 2.

Research

Idaho Fish and Game research biologists continue to monitor wolves, elk, and moose in the North Fork Clearwater study area and wolves and elk in the Lowman study area. Fish and Game research efforts have documented that wolf predation is the leading cause of mortality of cow and calf elk in some elk management zones. As a result, not enough calves survive to offset adult cow mortality, causing these elk populations to continue to decline.

University of Montana researchers wrapped up field work on "biofences" in three wolf pack territories in Idaho this summer. Preliminary results have shown wolves investigating the scent-marks along the biofence and sign surveys have found little wolf use of areas where the biofence is attempting to exclude wolves. Sign survey data and satellite data from collared wolves in these packs will be analyzed in the fall to determine whether the biofence was effective. If proven effective, biofencing may be an additional tool to mitigate wolf/livestock conflict.

University of Montana crews continued their work on their wolf population monitoring techniques project. More information on the University of Montana's research project can be found at:

<http://www.umt.edu/mcwru/personnel/ausband/default.aspx>.

Information and Education

Additional information and updates can be viewed at:

<http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/wolves/>.

Table 1. Total known wolf mortality by cause, Jan. 1, 2010 – Sep. 30, 2010.

Wolf Mgt Zone	WS Control	IDFG Control	Harvest	Illegal	Legal (protection of livestock or pets)	Other	Unk	Total
Dworshak-Elk City	7				3		2	12
Lolo		2	6					8
McCall-Weiser	21				3		2	26
Middle Fork			2					2
Palouse-Hells Canyon	4				1			5
Panhandle			11	2 ¹	1	4		18
Salmon	4		6					10
Sawtooth	14		15		2		1	32
Selway			5	1				6
Southern Idaho			1					1
Southern Mountains	14						1	15
Island Park	1				1			2
Total	65	2	46	3	11	4	6	137

¹ One wolf was a non-target capture (accidentally captured and killed) in a snare legally set for a coyote. WS = Wildlife Services

Table 2. Confirmed wolf depredations and mortalities in Idaho, 2003 to Sep. 30, 2010.

YEAR	Depredations ¹				Wolf Mortality				
	Cattle	Sheep	Dogs	Total	WS ²	10j / 36-1107 ³	Other ⁴	Hunter Harvest	Total
2003	7	130	3	140	7	0	8		15
2004	19	176	4	199	17	0	21		38
2005	29	166	12	207	24	3	16		43
2006	41	237	4	282	35	7	19		61
2007	57	211	10	278	43	7	27		77
2008	104	215	14	333	94	14	45		153
2009	76	295	14	385	87	6	45	135	273
2010 (1/1 – 9/30)	65	121	1	187	65	13	13	46	137

¹ Includes only confirmed wolf depredations of cattle, sheep, and dogs that resulted in death or injury.

² Wolves taken by USDA Wildlife Services in response to depredation on livestock.

³ Authorized take under 10j, or legal take after delisting under state law for protection of stock and dogs (Idaho Code 36-1107).

⁴ Other includes of mortalities of unknown cause, documented natural mortality, collisions with automobiles, and illegal take.

Idaho Wolf Management Update August, 2010

Wolves Relisted

On August 5, U.S. District Judge Donald Molloy vacated the rule that delisted wolves in Montana and Idaho and returned them to protections of the Endangered Species Act, effectively restricting state management and eliminated the possibility of a state regulated fall wolf hunt in Idaho and Montana.

In June 2009, 13 special interest groups filed a legal challenge to the wolf delisting in U.S. District Court in Missoula, Montana. The Greater Yellowstone Coalition brought a separate lawsuit, and the cases were consolidated. Their complaints alleged the Northern Rocky Mountain wolf population is not recovered and that the delisting violates the Endangered Species Act for several reasons, including challenges to Montana and Idaho's regulatory frameworks and the assertion that it is not legal to delist only a portion of this distinct population. Molloy had denied the plaintiffs' motion for a preliminary injunction to stop wolf hunts in Idaho and Montana in 2009 on grounds that the plaintiffs failed to show a likelihood of irreparable harm to the wolf population but ruled in their favor almost a year later.

Wolves north of Interstate 90 are once again fully protected as endangered. Private individuals may not shoot wolves to protect their stock on public or private land. Wolves south of I-90 are returned to their prior classification as a nonessential, experimental population. Livestock and pet owners/operators may kill wolves in the act of attacking their animals and may be provided shoot-on-sight permits following confirmed losses. Additional information is available on our website:

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On August 16, the Idaho Fish and Game Commission adopted a resolution to maintain Idaho Fish and Game's role as lead wolf manager with conditions including restricting use of state license funds for enforcement and other purposes, to support an appeal of the legal ruling, and to seek federal legislation to return full management authority to the state. The full resolution is available on our website at:

<http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/wolves/manage/resolution.pdf>.

Monitoring

Our 2009 annual report on Wolf Conservation and Management in Idaho is available on our website at: <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/wolves/manage/>. The year-end minimum population estimate for 2009 was 835 wolves in 94 packs with 49 breeding pairs confirmed (a breeding pair is defined as an adult male and female with at least two pups that survived to December 31). The 2009 year-end minimum estimate of 835 wolves compares to the 2008 year-end minimum population estimate of 856 wolves in 88 packs, with 39 documented breeding pairs.

At the end of August, there were 97 known packs in Idaho, including four packs newly documented this year. Nez Perce Tribe and Idaho Fish and Game wolf crews confirmed breeding pair status (more than two pups observed) in 38 packs and production of at least one pup was confirmed in 47 packs. A minimum of 166 pups had been observed by August 31. Nez Perce Tribe, Idaho Fish and Game and The University of Montana capture crews trapped and radio-collared six wolves during August.

Management and Control Actions

In response to the court ruling to relist wolves, Idaho Fish and Game updated and completed a draft proposal to reduce wolf numbers in the Lolo elk management zone in north-central Idaho under provisions Section 10(j) of the Endangered Species Act to address unacceptable impacts of wolf predation to the elk population. The proposal was released to the public for comment in mid-August and about 2,000 comments were submitted. A final proposal will be submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife

Service in September. The proposal is available at:

<http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/wolves/manage/reduceProposal.cfm>

Idaho USDA Wildlife Services personnel confirmed 29 livestock depredations by wolves during August. Wildlife Services confirmed wolves killed 12 calves, two cows, one bull and 77 sheep, and injured four calves. Wildlife Services also documented two cows, one calf and one sheep as probable wolf kills. In response to these and previous depredations, Wildlife Services killed 13 wolves under authorization of Idaho Fish and Game. August has historically been the month with the highest number of wolf depredations, and August 2010 will most likely be the month with the most this year, but confirmed wolf depredations in August were 15 to 20 percent lower than August 2008 and 2009, and Wildlife Service killed 35 to 48 percent fewer wolves in August 2010 compared to the two previous Augusts. Confirmed year-to-date depredations through August 31 were 46 percent lower in 2010 than during the same period in 2009. The reduction in depredation activity is likely the result of wolves removed during the 2009-2010 hunting season combined with increased efforts to remove wolves in packs with a chronic history of depredations.

Confirmed wolf depredations and mortalities from 2003–2010 are reported in Table 2.

Research

Idaho Fish and Game research biologists continue to monitor radio-collared wolves, elk and moose in the North Fork Clearwater study area and wolves and elk in the Lowman study area. Survival among six-month old elk calves has been higher this year, but the leading cause of mortality within this age class continues to be wolves. Fish and Game research efforts have documented that wolf predation is the leading cause of mortality of cow and calf elk in some elk management zones. As a result, not enough calves survive to offset adult cow mortality, causing these elk populations to continue to decline.

Researchers at The University of Montana wrapped up field work on their construction of “biofences” in three wolf pack territories in Idaho this summer. A biofence exploits wolves' innate territorial behavior by using human-deployed scats and urine (scent-marks) to manipulate wolf pack movements. Preliminary results have shown wolves investigating the scent-marks along the biofence and sign surveys have found little wolf use of areas where the biofence is attempting to exclude wolves. Sign survey data and satellite data from collared wolves in these packs will be analyzed in the fall to determine whether the biofence was effective. If proven effective, biofencing may be an additional tool to mitigate wolf/livestock conflict.

University of Montana crews continued their work on their wolf population monitoring techniques project. More information on the University of Montana’s research project can be found at:

<http://www.umt.edu/mcwru/personnel/ausband/default.aspx>.

Information and Education

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Table 1. Total known wolf mortality by cause, Jan. 1, 2010 – Aug. 31, 2010.

Wolf Mgt Zone	WS Control	IDFG Control	Harvest	Illegal	Legal (protection of livestock or pets)	Other	Unk	Total
Dworshak-Elk City	7				3		2	12
Lolo		2	6					8
McCall-Weiser	21				3	0	2	26
Middle Fork			2					2
Palouse-Hells Canyon	4				1			5
Panhandle			11	2 ¹	1	4		18
Salmon	3		6					9
Sawtooth	10		15		2		1	28
Selway			5	1				6
Southern Idaho			1					1
Southern Mountains	13						1	14
Island Park	1				1			2
Total	59	2	46	3	11	4	6	131

¹ One wolf was a non-target capture (accidentally captured and killed) in a snare legally set for a coyote. WS = Wildlife Services

Table 2. Confirmed wolf depredations and mortalities in Idaho, 2003 to Aug. 31, 2010.

YEAR	Depredations ¹				Wolf Mortality				
	Cattle	Sheep	Dogs	Total	WS ²	10j / 36-1107 ³	Other ⁴	Hunter Harvest	Total
2003	7	130	3	140	7	0	8		15
2004	19	176	4	199	17	0	21		38
2005	29	166	12	207	24	3	16		43
2006	41	237	4	282	35	7	19		61
2007	57	211	10	278	43	7	27		77
2008	104	215	14	333	94	14	45		153
2009	76	295	14	385	87	6	45	135	273
2010 (1/1 – 8/31)	56	114	0	170	59	13	13	46	131

¹ Includes only confirmed wolf depredations of cattle, sheep, and dogs that resulted in death or injury.

² Wolves taken by USDA Wildlife Services in response to depredation on livestock.

³ Authorized take under 10j, or legal take after delisting under state law for protection of stock and dogs (Idaho Code 36-1107).

⁴ Other includes of mortalities of unknown cause, documented natural mortality, collisions with automobiles, and illegal take.

Idaho Wolf Management Update July, 2010

Wolves are being managed as a big game animal in Idaho. They are protected by state laws approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Idaho legislature, and the Idaho Fish and Game Commission.

Monitoring

Our 2009 annual report on Wolf Conservation and Management in Idaho is available on our website at: <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/wolves/manage/>. The year-end minimum population estimate for 2009 was 835 wolves in 94 packs with 49 breeding pairs confirmed (breeding pair is defined as an adult male and female with at least two pups that survived to December 31.). The 2009 year-end minimum estimate of 835 wolves compares to the 2008 year-end minimum population estimate of 856 wolves in 88 packs, with 39 documented breeding pairs.

At the end of July, there were 94 known packs in Idaho, including two packs newly documented this year. Nez Perce Tribe and Idaho Fish and Game wolf crews confirmed breeding pair status (more than two pups observed) in 27 packs and production of at least one pup was confirmed in 32 packs. A minimum of 124 pups had been observed by July 31. Nez Perce Tribe, Idaho Fish and Game and The University of Montana capture crews trapped and radio-collared nine wolves during July, including seven new captures. Radio collars were replaced on two wolves that had been captured previously.

Management and Control Actions

The Idaho Fish and Game Commission discussed wolf harvest regulations and methods of take at their meeting on July 8. Seasons and harvest limits for the proposed 2010 – 2011 hunting season will be set August 16.

USDA Wildlife Services confirmed 11 wolf depredations on livestock during July. Wildlife Services confirmed that wolves killed 11 sheep, one bull, and one calf and injured another calf. In response to these and previous depredations, Wildlife Services killed four wolves. In comparison, in July 2009, Wildlife Services confirmed 34 wolf depredations, in which 70 sheep, 10 calves and three dogs were killed. Confirmed year-to-date depredations through July 31 were 64 percent lower in 2010 than during the same period in 2009. The reduction in depredation activity is likely the result of wolves removed during the 2009-2010 hunting season combined with increased efforts to remove wolves in packs with a chronic history of depredations.

On July 6, a shepherd shot and killed what was believed to be a gray wolf that had killed a lamb in the Franklin Basin east of Preston. Physical characteristics observed during subsequent necropsy, examination of photographs taken before and after death, and behavior described by observers strongly suggest this animal was likely a wolf-dog hybrid that was raised by people rather than a wolf of wild origin. DNA samples were collected for further evaluation.

Confirmed wolf depredations and mortalities from 2003–2010 are reported in Table 2.

Research

Idaho Fish and Game research biologists continue to monitor radio-collared wolves, elk and moose in the North Fork Clearwater study area and wolves and elk in the Lowman study area. Survival among six-month old elk calves has been higher this year, but the leading cause of mortality within this age class continues to be wolves.

Idaho Fish and Game research efforts have documented that wolf predation is the leading cause of mortality of cow and calf elk in some elk management zones. As a result, calf recruitment is insufficient to offset adult cow mortality, causing these elk populations to continue to decline. Idaho Fish and Game and the Nez Perce Tribe wolf program continue to collaborate with The University of Montana to develop new wolf population monitoring techniques.

Researchers at The University of Montana have constructed “biofences” in three wolf pack territories in Idaho this summer. A biofence exploits wolves' innate territorial behavior by using human-deployed scat and urine (scent-marks) to manipulate wolf pack movements. Preliminary results have shown wolves investigating the scent-marks along the biofence, and sign surveys have found little wolf use of areas where the biofence is attempting to exclude wolves. Sign survey data and satellite data from collared wolves in these packs will be analyzed in the fall to determine whether the biofence was effective. If proven effective, biofencing may be an additional tool to mitigate wolf/livestock conflict.

University of Montana crews are continuing their work on their wolf population monitoring techniques project. One crew has collected hair samples from wolves using rub stations in the Panhandle, eastern Idaho, central Idaho and the Salmon regions. This is the first year they sampled with rub stations across a broad geographic area. In addition to rub stations, crews continue to survey and collect scats and hairs at predicted rendezvous sites in the Selkirks, St. Joe and Sawtooth areas. Further testing and refinement of the howl box is under way in the Panhandle and hunters were surveyed statewide once again about their observations during the big game hunting season. Survey forms were mailed to hunters during May. More information on the University of Montana’s research project can be found at: <http://www.umt.edu/mcwru/personnel/ausband/default.aspx>.

Information and Education

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Litigation Status

In June 2009, 13 special interest groups filed a legal challenge to the wolf delisting in U.S. District Court in Missoula, Montana. The Greater Yellowstone Coalition brought a separate lawsuit, and the cases were consolidated. Their complaints allege the Northern Rocky Mountain wolf population is not recovered and that the delisting violates the Endangered Species Act for several reasons, including challenges to Montana and Idaho’s regulatory frameworks and the assertion that it is not legal to delist only a portion of this distinct population. District Judge Donald Molloy denied the plaintiffs’ motion for a preliminary injunction to stop wolf hunts in Idaho and Montana on grounds that the plaintiffs failed to show a likelihood of irreparable harm to the wolf population. The final legal briefs were filed by January 28, and a hearing for oral arguments was held June 15. Molloy indicated he would issue a ruling “as soon as possible” but it is unknown how long that will be. The state of Wyoming and other parties filed another lawsuit in U.S. District Court in Cheyenne, Wyoming, challenging the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s rejection of Wyoming’s regulatory framework and wolf management plan.

Table 1. Total known wolf mortality by cause, Jan. 1, 2010 – July 31, 2010.

Wolf Mgt Zone	WS Control	IDFG Control	Harvest	Illegal	Legal (protection of livestock or pets)	Other	Unk	Total
Dworshak-Elk City	7				3		2	12
Lolo		2	6					8
McCall-Weiser	18				3		2	23
Middle Fork			2					2
Palouse-Hells Canyon					1			1
Panhandle			11	2 ¹	1	3	1	18
Salmon	2		6					8
Sawtooth	6		15		1			22
Selway			5	1			1	7
Southern Idaho			1					1
Southern Mountains	13							13
Island Park					1			1
Total	46	2	46	3	10	3	6	116

¹ One wolf was a non-target capture (accidentally captured and killed) in a snare legally set for a coyote.

Table 2. Confirmed wolf depredations and mortalities in Idaho, 2003 to July 31, 2010.

YEAR	Depredations ¹				Wolf Mortality				
	Cattle	Sheep	Dogs	Total	WS ²	10j / 36-1107 ³	Other ⁴	Hunter Harvest	Total
2003	7	130	3	140	7	0	8		15
2004	19	176	4	199	17	0	21		38
2005	29	166	12	207	24	3	16		43
2006	41	237	4	282	35	7	19		61
2007	57	211	10	278	43	7	27		77
2008	104	215	14	333	94	14	45		153
2009	76	295	14	385	87	6	45	135	273
2010 (1/1 – 7/31)	37	37	0	74	46	10	14	46	116

¹ Includes only confirmed wolf depredations of cattle, sheep, and dogs that resulted in death or injury.

² Wolves taken by USDA Wildlife Services in response to depredation on livestock.

³ Authorized take under 10j, or legal take after delisting under state law for protection of stock and dogs (Idaho Code 36-1107).

⁴ Other includes of mortalities of unknown cause, documented natural mortality, collisions with automobiles, and illegal take.

Idaho Wolf Management Update

June, 2010

Wolves are being managed as a big game animal in Idaho. They are protected by state laws approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Idaho legislature, and the Idaho Fish and Game Commission.

Monitoring

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Nez Perce Tribe and Idaho Fish and Game wolf crews focused on confirming reproduction and began trapping efforts on priority packs in May and June. By the end of June, there were 96 known packs in Idaho, including two newly documented packs. Breeding pair status (more than two pups observed) had been confirmed in 22 packs and production of at least one pup was confirmed in 24 packs. A minimum of 100 pups had been observed by June 30. Nez Perce Tribe, Idaho Fish and Game and The University of Montana capture crews trapped and radio-collared seven wolves during June.

Management and Control Actions

The Idaho Fish and Game Commission discussed wolf harvest regulations and methods of take at their meeting on July 8. Seasons and harvest limits will be set August 16.

Pursuant to the Predator Management Plan for the Lolo and Selway elk management zones and the 2008-2012 Idaho Wolf Population Management Plan, Fish and Game has determined that agency removal of wolves is needed to address imbalances between predator populations and the elk population in Game Management Units 10 and 12. In May, Fish and Game authorized four outfitters and their licensed guides, as agents of Fish and Game, to kill up to five wolves each within their permitted outfitting areas in Units 10 and 12 (total of 20 wolves maximum) between May 15 and June 30. Two wolves were killed during this action.

USDA Wildlife Services confirmed wolves were responsible for killing three cows, one steer, eight calves, four ewes, one lamb, and one buffalo calf during June. Wildlife Services agents killed two wolves in response to those depredations. A bear killed one pig and a cougar killed five lambs and probably another twenty that could not be confirmed.

Confirmed wolf depredations and mortalities from 2003–2010 are reported in Table 2.

Research

Idaho Fish and Game research biologists continue to monitor radio-collared wolves, elk and moose. Survival among six-month old elk calves has been higher this year, but the leading cause of mortality within this age class continues to be wolves.

Fish and Game research efforts have documented that wolf predation is the leading cause of mortality of cow and calf elk in some elk management zones. As a result, calf recruitment is insufficient to offset adult cow mortality, causing these elk populations to continue to decline. Fish and Game and the Nez Perce Tribe wolf program continue to collaborate with The University of Montana to develop new wolf population monitoring techniques.

Researchers at The University of Montana are constructing “biofences” in four wolf pack territories in Idaho this summer. A biofence exploits wolves' innate territorial behavior by using human-deployed scats and urine (scent-marks) to manipulate wolf pack movements. If proven effective, biofencing may be an additional tool to mitigate wolf-livestock conflict. UofM crews are continuing their work on their wolf population monitoring techniques project. The crew is collecting hair samples from wolves using rub stations throughout Idaho. This is the first year they will sample with rub stations across a broad geographic area. In addition to rub stations, they will continue to survey and collect scats and hairs at predicted rendezvous sites, further test and refine the howl box, and survey hunters statewide once again about their observations during the big game hunting season. Survey forms were mailed to hunters during May. More information on the University of Montana's research project can be found at: <http://www.umt.edu/mcwru/personnel/ausband/default.aspx>

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Table 1. Total known wolf mortality by cause, Jan. 1, 2010 – June 30, 2010.

Wolf Mgt Zone	WS Control	IDFG Control	Harvest	Illegal	Legal (protection of livestock or pets)	Other	Unk	Total
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Middle Fork			2					2
Palouse-Hells Canyon					1			1
Panhandle			11	2 ¹	1	3	1	18
Salmon	2		6					8
Sawtooth	4		15					19
Selway			5				1	6
Southern Idaho			1					1
Southern Mountains	12							12
Island Park								0
Total	42	2	46	2	8	3	6	109

¹ One wolf was a non-target capture (accidentally captured and killed) in a snare legally set for a coyote.

Table 2. Confirmed wolf depredations and mortalities in Idaho, 2003 to June 30, 2010.

Year	Depredations ¹				Wolf Mortality				
	Cattle	Sheep	Dogs	Total	WS ²	10j / 36-1107 ³	Other ⁴	Hunter Harvest	Total
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2007	57	211	10	278	43	7	27		77
2008	104	215	14	333	94	14	45		153
2009	76	295	14	385	87	6	45	135	273
2010 (1/1 – 6/30)	34	26	0	60	42	8	13	46	109

¹ Includes only confirmed wolf depredations of cattle, sheep, and dogs that resulted in death or injury.

² Wolves taken by USDA Wildlife Services in response to depredation on livestock.

³ Authorized take under 10j, or legal take after delisting under state law for protection of stock and dogs (Idaho Code 36-1107).

⁴ Other includes of mortalities of unknown cause, documented natural mortality, collisions with automobiles, and illegal take.

Idaho Wolf Management Progress Report May, 2010

Wolves are being managed as a big game animal in Idaho. They are protected by state laws approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Idaho legislature, and the Idaho Fish and Game Commission.

Monitoring

Our 2009 annual report on Wolf Conservation and Management in Idaho is available on our website at: <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/wolves/manage/>. The year-end minimum population estimate for 2009 was 835 wolves in 94 packs with 49 breeding pairs confirmed (breeding pair is defined as an adult male and female with at least 2 pups that survived to December 31). The 2009 year-end minimum estimate of 835 wolves compares to the 2008 year-end minimum population estimate of 856 wolves in 88 packs, with 39 documented breeding pairs.

Nez Perce Tribe and Idaho Fish and Game wolf crews prioritized spring and summer field efforts and increased frequency of telemetry flights to help identify denning areas in April. Crews focused on confirming reproduction and began trapping efforts on priority packs in May and June. By the end of May, breeding pair status (more than two pups observed) had been confirmed in 10 packs and production of at least one pup was confirmed in 12 packs. One new pack was verified upon confirmation of reproduction. A minimum of 50 pups had been observed by May 31. Wet spring weather hampered trapping efforts in May; two wolves were captured and radio-collared.

Management and Control Actions

The Idaho Fish and Game Commission will consider changes to wolf harvest regulations at their meeting on July 8. Seasons and harvest limits will be set August 16.

Pursuant to the Predator Management Plan for the Lolo and Selway elk management zones and the 2008-2012 Idaho Wolf Population Management Plan, Fish and Game has determined that agency removal of wolves is needed to address imbalances between predator populations and the elk population in Game Management Units 10 and 12. In May, Fish and Game authorized four outfitters and their licensed guides, as agents of Fish and Game, to kill up to five wolves within their permitted outfitting areas in Units 10 and 12 (total of 20 wolves maximum) between May 15 and June 30. Fish and Game will evaluate the effectiveness of this agency control action as part of its ongoing Lolo Elk study.

USDA Wildlife Services confirmed wolves killed five calves, five ewes, eight lambs, and two buck sheep during May. Wildlife Services also determined wolves probably killed another two calves, one ewe and two lambs. In response to these depredations, Wildlife Services removed four wolves and radio-collared and released one on site. Wildlife Services also confirmed that black bears killed two lambs, two buck sheep, and probably killed another buck.

Confirmed wolf depredations and mortalities from 2003–2010 are reported in Table 2.

Research

Idaho Fish and Game research biologists continue to monitor radio-collared wolves, elk and moose. Survival among six-month-old elk calves has been higher this year, but the leading cause of mortality within this age class continues to be wolves.

Fish and Game research efforts have documented that wolf predation is the leading cause of mortality of cow and calf elk in some elk management zones. As a result, calf recruitment is

insufficient to offset adult cow mortality, causing these elk populations to continue to decline. Fish and Game and the Nez Perce Tribe wolf program continue to collaborate with The University of Montana to develop new wolf population monitoring techniques.

Researchers at The University of Montana are constructing "biofences" in four wolf pack territories in Idaho this summer. A biofence exploits wolves' innate territorial behavior by using human-deployed scats and urine (scent-marks) to manipulate wolf pack movements. If proven effective, biofencing may be an additional tool to mitigate wolf/livestock conflict. U of M crews are continuing their work on their wolf population monitoring techniques project. The crew is collecting hair samples from wolves using rub stations throughout Idaho. This is the first year they will sample with rub stations across a broad geographic area. In addition to rub stations, they will continue to survey and collect scats and hairs at predicted rendezvous sites, further test and refine the howl box, and survey hunters statewide once again about their observations during the big game hunting season. Survey forms were mailed to hunters during May. More information on the University of Montana's research project can be found at: <http://www.umt.edu/mcwru/PERSONNELPROFILES08/PPDaveAusband2008.htm>

Information and Education

In addition to programs previously reported for April, Idaho Fish and Game wildlife officials presented a program on wolf biology and management to 30 retired members of the Atomic Energy Commission Sportsman Club in Idaho Falls. In May, Fish and Game wolf program employees participated in the 2010 Wild Idaho! conference and led two morning wolf search field trips and a two-hour wolf ecology session in the field for about 20 of the 100 conference participants. Fish and Game Communications bureau employees gave a program on safety considerations for hunters using bird dogs in wolf country for 20-25 members of the Idaho Brittany Spaniel Club and German Shorthair Club in early May. The program also included some basic wolf biology and natural history.

Additional information and updates can be viewed at:
<http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/wolves/>

Please help us manage wolves by reporting wolf sightings on our Fish and Game online wolf observation form: http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/apps/wolf_report/

Litigation Status

In June 2009, 13 conservation and animal rights groups filed a legal challenge to the wolf delisting in U.S. District Court in Missoula, Montana. The Greater Yellowstone Coalition brought a separate lawsuit, and the cases were consolidated. Their complaints allege the Northern Rocky Mountain wolf population is not recovered and that the delisting violates the Endangered Species Act for several reasons, including challenges to Montana and Idaho's regulatory frameworks and the assertion that it is not legal to delist only a portion of this distinct population. District Judge Donald Molloy denied the plaintiffs' motion for a preliminary injunction to stop wolf hunts in Idaho and Montana on grounds that the plaintiffs failed to show a likelihood of irreparable harm to the wolf population. The final legal briefs were filed by January 28 and a hearing for oral arguments was held June 15. Molloy indicated he would issue a ruling "as soon as possible" but it is unknown how long that will be. The state of Wyoming and other parties filed another lawsuit in U.S. District Court in Cheyenne, Wyoming, challenging the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's rejection of Wyoming's regulatory framework and wolf management plan.

Table 1. Total known wolf mortality by cause, January 1, 2010 – May 31, 2010.

Wolf Mgt Zone	WS Control	IDFG Control	Harvest	Illegal	Legal (protection of livestock or pets)	Other	Unk	Total
Dworshak-Elk City	7				3		2	12
Lolo		1	6					7
McCall-Weiser	17				2		1	20
Middle Fork			2					2
Palouse-Hells Canyon					1			1
Panhandle			11	2 ¹	1	1 ²	1	16
Salmon	2		6					8
Sawtooth	4		15					19
Selway			5					5
Southern Idaho			1					1
Southern Mountains	10							10
Upper Snake								0
Total	40	1	46	2	7	1	4	101

1 –One wolf was a non-target capture (accidentally captured and killed) in a snare legally set for a coyote, another wolf mortality is under investigation.

2 – Vehicle collision.

Table 2. Confirmed wolf depredations and mortalities in Idaho, 2003 to May 31, 2010.

YEAR	Depredations ¹				WS ²	Wolf Mortality			
	Cattle	Sheep	Dogs	Total		10j / 36-1107 ³	Other ⁴	Hunter Harvest	Total
2003	7	130	3	140	7	0	8		15
2004	19	176	4	199	17	0	21		38
2005	29	166	12	207	24	3	16		43
2006	41	237	4	282	35	7	19		61
2007	57	211	10	278	43	7	27		77
2008	104	215	14	333	94	14	45		153
2009	76	295	14	385	87	6	45	135	273
2010 (1/1 – 5/31)	22	21	0	43	40	7	8	46	101

¹ Includes only confirmed wolf depredations of cattle, sheep, and dogs that resulted in death or injury.

² Wolves taken by USDA Wildlife Services in response to depredation on livestock.

³ Authorized take under 10j, or legal take after delisting under state law for protection of stock and dogs (Idaho Code 36-1107).

⁴ Other includes of mortalities of unknown cause, documented natural mortality, collisions with automobiles, and illegal take.

Idaho Wolf Management Progress Report April 2010

Wolves are being managed as a big game animal in Idaho. They are protected by state laws approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Idaho Legislature, and the Idaho Fish and Game Commission.

Monitoring

Our 2009 annual report on Wolf Conservation and Management in Idaho is available on our website at: <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/wolves/manage/>. The year-end minimum population estimate for 2009 was 835 wolves in 94 packs with 49 breeding pairs confirmed (breeding pair is defined as an adult male and female with at least two pups that survived to December 31). The 2009 year-end minimum estimate compares to the 2008 year-end minimum population estimate of 856 wolves in 88 packs, with 39 documented breeding pairs.

Nez Perce Tribe and Idaho Fish and Game wolf crews prioritized spring and summer field efforts and increased frequency of telemetry flights to help begin identifying denning areas in April. Crews will focus on confirming reproduction and begin trapping efforts on priority packs in May.

2009 – 2010 Wolf Hunting Season

Wolf harvest seasons closed in seven wolf management zones when harvest limits were met: Upper Snake zone on November 2, McCall-Weiser zone on November 9, Dworshak-Elk City zone on November 17, Palouse-Hells Canyon zone on December 18, the Southern Mountains zone on December 31, the Middle Fork Zone on January 31, and the Salmon Zone on March 15. The five remaining zones closed March 31, 2010.

Idaho Fish and Game sold 26,428 tags (25,744 resident, 684 nonresident) for 2009, and 4,972 tags (4,875 resident, 97 nonresident) for 2010, for a total of 31,400 wolf tags for the September 1, 2009, through March 31, 2010, hunting season. Unused tags for 2010 remain valid through a fall season through the end of the year, unless blocked by pending legal action.

Hunters were required to call and report within 24 hours of killing a wolf. Successful hunters were required to have the skull and pelt checked in by Idaho Fish and Game within five days of kill.

Harvest — From September 1 through December 31, 2009, 135 wolves were harvested legally. Hunters took 46 wolves between January 1 and March 31, 2010 (Table 1). At the close of the hunting season on March 13, 188 wolves had been counted against the statewide harvest limit of 220 wolves; 181 were harvested legally and an additional seven were either killed illegally during the season, were wounded but not recovered, or were accidentally killed as nontarget captures in snares legally set for bobcats or coyotes.

The Idaho Fish and Game Commission will discuss methods of take, bag limits, and other regulations at their July meeting. The commission is scheduled to set seasons and harvest limits for the 2010-2011 hunting season in August.

Management and Control Actions

USDA Wildlife Services responded to 10 depredation complaints which consisted of one ewe, nine lambs, one mule and seven calves. These investigations had a total of 18 animals killed and about 100 lambs missing. Out of the 10 complaints, eight were confirmed wolf predation (total of seven cattle and two sheep confirmed killed by wolves), one confirmed mountain lion predation, and one confirmed black bear predation. In response to these and previous depredations, Wildlife Services killed 11 wolves from eight different wolf packs and captured, radio-collared, and released one wolf in a newly documented pack.

Confirmed wolf depredations and mortalities from 2003–2010 are reported in Table 2.

Idaho Fish and Game employees participated in a meeting of the Big Wood River nonlethal project with representatives from the U.S. Forest Service, Defenders of Wildlife, volunteers, and several sheep producers on April 27.

Research

Idaho Fish and Game research biologists captured and radio-marking elk, moose, and wolves in January through March as part of Fish and Game's on-going elk/wolf interaction study in the North Fork Clearwater and Lowman study areas. Fish and Game researchers captured and placed GPS/ARGOS-collars on several wolves from packs in the two study areas during April. They also identified a den site.

Fish and Game research and wolf program staff members will continue to monitor radio-collared wolves during the summer and use GPS/ARGOS locations to pinpoint activity and focus on trapping more members of these packs. Survival among six-month-old elk calves has been higher this year, but the leading cause of mortality within this age class continues to be wolves. During the 2009-2010 wolf harvest season, 17 percent of the radio-collared research project wolves in the Sawtooth Wolf Management Zone were harvested.

Fish and Game research efforts have resulted in documentation that wolf predation is the leading cause of mortality of female and calf elk in some elk management zones. As a result, calf survival is insufficient to offset adult female mortality, causing these elk populations to continue to decline. In addition, the intensive radio-collaring of elk and wolves with GPS collars, and in some cases GPS/ARGOS collars, is providing Fish and Game with important survival and movement data. Fish and Game and the Nez Perce Tribe wolf program continue to collaborate with the University of Montana to develop wolf population monitoring techniques.

Researchers at the University of Montana will construct "biofences" in four wolf pack territories in Idaho this summer. A biofence exploits wolves' innate territorial behavior by using human-deployed scats and urine (scent-marks) to manipulate wolf-pack movements. If proven effective, biofencing may be an additional tool to mitigate wolf/livestock conflict. The University of Montana crew will also continue work on its wolf population monitoring techniques project. The crew plans to collect hair samples from wolves using rub stations throughout Idaho this coming summer. This is the first year the crew will sample with rub stations across a broad geographic area. In addition to rub stations, the crew will continue to survey and collect scats and hairs at predicted rendezvous sites, further test and refine the howl box, and survey hunters statewide once again about their observations during the big game hunting season. Survey forms will be mailed to hunters during April. More information on the University of Montana's research project can be found at:

<http://www.umt.edu/mcwru/PERSONNELPROFILES08/PPDaveAusband2008.htm>

Information and Education

Idaho Fish and Game wolf program staff members gave a three-hour presentation on wolf natural history, population recovery, and current management issues to 19 students in the Idaho Master Naturalists Program. Fish and Game employees also participated in day-long wolf viewing tours conducted by the Sun Valley Trekking Company in the Ketchum – Galena Summit area on April 3 and 10.

Additional information and updates can be viewed at: <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/wolves/>

Please help us manage wolves by reporting wolf sightings on our Fish and Game online wolf observation form: http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/apps/wolf_report/

Litigation Status

In June 2009, a coalition of 13 interest groups filed a legal challenge to the wolf delisting in U.S. District Court in Missoula, Montana. The Greater Yellowstone Coalition brought a separate lawsuit, and the cases were consolidated. Their complaints claim the Northern Rocky Mountain wolf population is not recovered and that the delisting violates the Endangered Species Act for several reasons, including challenges to Montana and Idaho's regulatory frameworks and the assertion that it is not legal to delist only a portion of this distinct population. District Judge Donald Molloy denied a plaintiffs' motion for a preliminary injunction to stop wolf hunts in Idaho and Montana on grounds that the plaintiffs failed to show a likelihood of irreparable harm to the

wolf population. The final legal briefs were filed by January 28, 2010. A hearing date for oral arguments has been set for June 15. The state of Wyoming and other parties filed another lawsuit in U.S. District Court in Cheyenne, Wyoming challenging the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's rejection of Wyoming's regulatory framework and wolf management plan.

Table 1. Total known wolf mortality by cause, Jan. 1, 2010 – Apr. 30, 2010.

Wolf Mgt Zone	Control	Harvest	Illegal	Legal (protection of livestock or pets)	Other	Unk	Total
Dworshak-Elk City	7			2			9
Lolo		6					6
McCall-Weiser	17			2		1	20
Middle Fork		2					2
Palouse-Hells Canyon				1			1
Panhandle		11	2 ¹	1	1 ²	1	16
Salmon	2	6					8
Sawtooth	4	15					19
Selway		5					5
Southern Idaho		1					1
Southern Mountains	6						6
Upper Snake							0
Total	36	46	2	6	1	2	93

1 –One wolf was a nontarget capture (accidentally captured and killed) in a snare legally set for a coyote, another wolf mortality is under investigation.

2 – Vehicle collision.

Table 2. Confirmed wolf depredations and mortalities in Idaho, 2003 to April 30, 2010.

YEAR	Depredations ¹				Wolf Mortality				
	Cattle	Sheep	Dogs	Total	WS ²	10j / 36-1107 ³	Other ⁴	Hunter Harvest	Total
2003	7	130	3	140	7	0	8		15
2004	19	176	4	199	17	0	21		38
2005	29	166	12	207	24	3	16		43
2006	41	237	4	282	35	7	19		61
2007	57	211	10	278	43	7	27		77
2008	104	215	14	333	94	14	45		153
2009	76	295	14	385	87	6	45	135	273
2010 (1/1 – 4/30)	17	6	0	23	36	6	5	46	93

¹ Includes only confirmed wolf depredations of cattle, sheep, and dogs that resulted in death or injury.

² Wolves taken by USDA Wildlife Services in response to depredation on livestock.

³ Authorized take under 10j, or legal take after delisting under state law for protection of stock and dogs (Idaho Code 36-1107).

⁴ Other includes of mortalities of unknown cause, documented natural mortality, collisions with automobiles, and illegal take.

Idaho Wolf Management Progress Report March, 2010

Wolves are being managed as a big game animal in Idaho. They are protected by state laws approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Idaho legislature, and the Idaho Fish and Game Commission. The Fish and Game Commission set a statewide harvest limit of 220 wolves for the 2009-2010 hunting season which ended March 31, 2010 with 188 wolves taken.

Wolf Hunting Seasons

Wolf harvest seasons closed in seven wolf management zones when harvest limits were met: Upper Snake zone on November 2, McCall-Weiser zone November 9, Dworshak-Elk City zone November 17, Palouse-Hells Canyon zone December 18, the Southern Mountains zone December 31, the Middle Fork Zone January 31, and the Salmon Zone March 15. The five remaining zones closed March 31.

Idaho Department of Fish and Game sold 26,428 wolf tags (25,744 resident, 684 nonresident) for the 2009 hunting season and, as of March 31, had sold 4,972 tags (4,875 resident, 97 nonresident) for the 2010 season.

Hunters were required to call and report within 24 hours of killing a wolf. Successful hunters were required to have the skull and pelt checked in by Idaho Fish and Game within five days of kill. Idaho wolf hunting seasons and rules for the recently closed 2009-2010 season are available on our website:

<http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/hunt/wolf/wolfrules.pdf>.

Harvest — From September 1 through December 31, 2009, 135 wolves were harvested legally. Hunters took 46 wolves between January 1 and March 31, 2010 (Table 1). At the close of the hunting season on March 13, 188 wolves had been counted against the statewide harvest limit of 220 wolves; 181 were harvested legally, and an additional seven were either killed illegally during the season, were wounded but not recovered, or were accidentally killed as nontarget captures in snares legally set for bobcats or coyotes.

A detailed summary of the 2009-2010 wolf hunting season is being prepared and will be circulated and posted to the website along with the April monthly wolf update.

Monitoring

Our 2009 annual report on Wolf Conservation and Management in Idaho is available on our website at: <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/wolves/manage/>. The corrected year-end minimum population estimate for 2009 was 835 wolves in 94 packs with 49 breeding pairs confirmed – a breeding pair is defined as an adult male and female with at least two pups that survived to December 31. The previously reported year-end figure was incorrect. The annual report has been corrected and reposted on the Web site. The 2009 year-end estimate of 835 wolves compares to the 2008 year-end minimum population estimate of 856 wolves in 88 packs, with 39 documented breeding pairs.

Nez Perce Tribe and Idaho Fish and Game wolf crews will be gearing up in April to prioritize spring and summer field work and will increase frequency of telemetry flights to help begin identifying denning areas.

Management and Control Actions

USDA Wildlife Services confirmed wolves killed eight calves, injured one calf and probably killed another calf during March. In response to these and previous depredations, Wildlife Services killed 10 wolves. No depredations from black bears or mountain lions were reported to Wildlife Services during March. Confirmed wolf depredations and mortalities from 2003–2010 are reported in Table 2.

Research

Idaho Fish and Game research biologists captured and radio-marking elk, moose, and wolves in January through March as part of Fish and Game's on-going elk-wolf interaction study in the North Fork Clearwater and Lowman study areas. Additional capture efforts are planned through April.

Fish and Game research has documented that wolf predation is the leading cause of mortality of female and calf elk in some elk management zones. As a result, calf recruitment is insufficient to offset adult cow mortality, causing these elk populations to continue to decline. In addition, the intensive radio-collaring of elk and wolves with GPS collars, and in some cases GPS/ARGOS collars, is providing Fish and Game with important survival and movement data. Fish and Game continues to collaborate with the University of Montana to develop wolf population monitoring techniques, and wolves collared by Fish and Game are playing an important role in university's efforts to test "bio-fences."

Researchers at the University of Montana have been collecting wolf scats for use this summer when they will construct "bio-fences" in four wolf pack territories in Idaho. A bio-fence exploits wolves' innate territorial behavior by using human-deployed scats and urine (scent-marks) to manipulate wolf pack movements. If proven effective, bio-fencing may be an additional tool to mitigate wolf/livestock conflict. The University of Montana crew will also continue work on their wolf population monitoring techniques project. The crew plans to collect hair samples from wolves using rub stations throughout Idaho this coming summer. This is the first year they will sample with rub stations across a broad geographic area. In addition to rub stations, they will continue to survey and collect scats and hairs at predicted rendezvous sites, further test and refine the howl box, and survey hunters statewide once again about their observations during the big game hunting season. Survey forms will be mailed to hunters during April. More information on the University of Montana's research project can be found at:

<http://www.umt.edu/mcwru/PERSONNELPROFILES08/PPDaveAusband2008.htm>

Information and Education

Idaho Fish and Game wolf program staff members gave a presentation on wolf management to about 200 wildlife professionals at the annual meeting of the Idaho Chapter of The Wildlife Society in Boise on March 10.

Fish and Game wolf program staff members also gave a presentation and answered questions to a group of 22 students at the Treasure Valley Community College in Ontario, Oregon. Students were enthusiastic and some expressed strong opinions about wolves. Questions covered a broad range of topics, including brucellosis, game farms, bighorn sheep, big-game feeding stations, biological and social carrying capacity, compensation for livestock losses, hybrids, DNA, wolf hunting, and wolf control action for depredations.

At a Fish and Game news conference on the close of the wolf season on March 31, participants included newspaper reporters from throughout the state and Pacific Northwest, National Public Radio, several local TV stations as well as the National Rifle Association and interested members of the public. A video news summary is available through our wolf site and on YouTube:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9v6Nn5K65Ek&feature=player_embedded

Additional information and updates can be viewed at: <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/wolves/>

Please help us manage wolves by reporting wolf sightings on our Fish and Game online wolf observation form: http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/apps/wolf_report/

Litigation Status

In June 2009 a coalition of 13 special interest groups filed a legal challenge to the wolf delisting in U.S. District Court in Missoula, Montana. The Greater Yellowstone Coalition brought a separate lawsuit, and the cases were consolidated. Their complaints allege the Northern Rocky Mountain wolf population is not recovered and

that the delisting violates the Endangered Species Act for several reasons, including challenges to Montana and Idaho’s regulatory frameworks and the assertion that it is not legal to delist only a portion of this distinct population. Judge Donald Molloy denied the plaintiffs’ motion for a preliminary injunction to stop wolf hunts in Idaho and Montana on grounds that the plaintiffs failed to show a likelihood of irreparable harm to the wolf population. The final legal briefs were filed by January 28. A hearing date for oral arguments has not been set, but is expected within a few months. The state of Wyoming and other parties filed another lawsuit in U.S. District Court in Cheyenne, Wyoming challenging the US Fish & Wildlife Service’s rejection of Wyoming’s regulatory framework and wolf management plan. The District Court in Montana is in the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals and the Court in Wyoming is in the 10th Circuit, so there could be conflicting rulings at both the district and appellate levels.

Table 1. Total known wolf mortality by cause, January 1, 2010 – March 31, 2010.

Wolf Mgt Zone	Control	Harvest	Illegal	Legal (protection of livestock or pets)	Other	Unk	Total
Dworshak-Elk City	7			2			9
Lolo		6					6
McCall-Weiser	13					1	14
Middle Fork		2					2
Palouse-Hells Canyon				1			1
Panhandle		11	2¹	1	1²	1	16
Salmon		6					6
Sawtooth	2	15					17
Selway		5					5
Southern Idaho		1					1
Southern Mountains	2						2
Upper Snake							0
Total	24	46	2	4	1	2	79

¹ One wolf was a nontarget capture (accidentally captured and killed) in a snare legally set for a coyote, another wolf mortality is under investigation.

² Vehicle collision.

Table 2. Confirmed wolf depredations and mortalities in Idaho, 2003 to March 31, 2010.

Year	Depredations ¹				Wolf Mortality				
	Cattle	Sheep	Dogs	Total	WS ²	10j / 36-1107 ³	Other ⁴	Hunter Harvest	Total
2003	7	130	3	140	7	0	8		15
2004	19	176	4	199	17	0	21		38
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2006	41	237	4	282	35	7	19		61
2007	57	211	10	278	43	7	27		77
2008	104	215	14	333	94	14	45		153
2009	76	295	14	385	87	6	45	135	273
2010 (1/1 – 3/31)	10	4	0	14	24	4	5	46	79

¹ Includes only confirmed wolf depredations of cattle, sheep, and dogs that resulted in death or injury.

² Wolves taken by USDA Wildlife Services in response to depredation on livestock.

³ Authorized take under 10j, or legal take after delisting under state law for protection of stock and dogs (Idaho Code 36-1107).

⁴ Other includes of mortalities of unknown cause, documented natural mortality, collisions with automobiles, and illegal take.

Idaho Wolf Management Progress Report February 2010

Wolves are being managed as a big game animal in Idaho. They are protected under state laws approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Idaho Legislature, and the Idaho Fish and Game Commission. The Fish and Game Commission set a statewide harvest limit of 220 wolves for the 2009-2010 hunting season. Nez Perce Tribe members may take up to 35 additional wolves within the Nez Perce Tribal Treaty Area.

Wolf Hunting Seasons

Wolf harvest seasons closed in seven wolf management zones when harvest limits were met: Upper Snake zone on November 2, McCall-Weiser zone on November 9, Dworshak-Elk City zone on November 17, Palouse-Hells Canyon zone on December 18, the Southern Mountains zone on December 31, the Middle Fork zone on January 31, and the Salmon zone on March 15. The five remaining zones are open until March 31 or until harvest limits for individual zones are met, whichever comes first.

Idaho Department of Fish and Game sold 26,428 wolf tags – 25,744 resident, 684 nonresident – in 2009. Hunters must purchase a 2010 hunting license and new 2010 wolf tag to hunt wolves during the remaining open seasons.

Hunters are required to call 877-872-3190 within 24 hours of killing a wolf. Successful hunters must have the skull and pelt checked in by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game within five days of kill.

Idaho wolf hunting seasons and rules are available at <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/hunt/wolf/wolfrules.pdf>.

Hunters are required to confirm the season remains open in the zone they are hunting by calling 877-872-3190 or by checking status on-line: <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/hunt/wolf/quota.cfm>.

Harvest – From September 1 through December 31, 2009, 135 wolves were harvested legally. Forty-one percent of the wolves taken between September 1 and February 28 were killed in October when most of the state's deer and elk hunters were in the field than during any other month. Hunters took 21 wolves between January 1 and February 28 (Table 1). At the end of February, 164 wolves had been counted against the statewide harvest limit of 220 wolves for the 2009–2010 hunting season.

Monitoring

The 2009 annual report on Wolf Conservation and Management in Idaho is available at: <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/wolves/manage/>. The year-end minimum population estimate for 2009 was 843 wolves in 94 packs with 49 breeding pairs confirmed. A breeding pair is defined as an adult male and female with at least two pups that survived to December 31. This compares to the 2008 year-end minimum population estimate of 846 wolves in 88 packs, with 39 documented breeding pairs.

Idaho Fish and Game and Nez Perce Tribe biologists documented 15 new packs during 2009. Three Idaho packs were eliminated by control actions in response to livestock depredations, and five previously documented packs were dropped from the count because of a lack of confirmed activity during the year.

In December, Idaho Fish and Game received authorization from the U.S. Forest Service to land a helicopter in the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness as an aid to capture and radio-collar wolves that may be encountered incidental to routine elk surveys scheduled for February and March. The Wolf Recovery Foundation, Western Watersheds Project and six other groups filed a motion in U.S. District Court on February 3 requesting a temporary restraining order and/or preliminary injunction to block the project. District Judge Lynn Winmill denied the motion on February 19. Fish and Game biologists conducted the elk survey in game management units 26 and 27 in early March and captured and radio-collared four wolves in conjunction with that effort.

Management and Control Actions

USDA Wildlife Services confirmed that wolves killed five calves during February. Wildlife Services radio-collared and released one wolf and killed seven wolves in response to livestock depredations during these and other ongoing control actions. There were no reports of black bear or mountain lion depredations during February.

Confirmed wolf depredations and mortalities from 2003–2010 are reported in Table 2.

Research

Idaho Fish and Game research biologists began capturing and radio-marking elk, moose, and wolves in January as part of Fish and Game's on-going elk-wolf interaction study in the North Fork Clearwater and Lowman study areas. Progress has been delayed by a helicopter accident that occurred on January 8. The research team and regional wildlife and enforcement staff focused efforts on capturing elk from the ground in the Lowman study area during February. Alternative plans are being considered to capture additional elk, wolves, and moose.

Researchers at the University of Montana have been collecting wolf scats for use this summer when they will construct "biofences" in four wolf pack territories in Idaho. A biofence exploits wolves' innate territorial behavior by using human-deployed scats and urine (scent-marks) to manipulate wolf pack movements. If proven effective, biofencing may be an additional tool to mitigate wolf-livestock conflict.

Information and Education

Idaho Fish and Game wolf program staff members participated in a field trip to the Lowman area with Timberline High School students and teachers from Boise. Carter Niemeyer spoke on all aspects of wolf biology, management and politics, followed by a presentation on traps, drugs, and assorted capture tools, including helicopter darting and net guns. The demonstration was followed by some howling instruction and a hike to look for wolf sign.

Fish and Game and Nez Perce Tribe wolf program staff members completed the 2009 annual report. The report is available on our website:

<http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/wolves/manage/>

Additional information and updates can be viewed at:

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Please help us manage wolves by reporting wolf sightings on our Fish and Game online wolf observation form: http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/apps/wolf_report/

Litigation Status

In June 2009 a coalition of 13 special interest groups filed a legal challenge to the wolf delisting in U.S. District Court in Missoula, Montana. The Greater Yellowstone Coalition brought a separate lawsuit, and the cases were consolidated. Their complaints allege the Northern Rocky Mountain wolf population is not recovered and that the delisting violates the Endangered Species Act for several reasons, including challenges to Montana and Idaho's regulatory frameworks and the assertion that it is not legal to delist only a portion of this distinct population. District Judge Donald Molloy denied the plaintiffs' motion for a preliminary injunction to stop wolf hunts in Idaho and Montana on grounds that the plaintiffs failed to show a likelihood of irreparable harm to the wolf population. The final legal briefs were filed by January 28. A hearing date for oral arguments has not been set, but is expected within a few months. The state of Wyoming and other parties filed another lawsuit in U.S. District Court in Cheyenne, Wyoming challenging the US Fish & Wildlife Service's rejection of Wyoming's regulatory framework and wolf management plan. The federal District Court for Montana is in the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals and the District Court for Wyoming is in the 10th Circuit, so there could be conflicting rulings at both the district and appellate levels.

Table 1. Total known wolf mortality by cause, January 1, 2010 – February 28, 2010.

Wolf Mgt Zone	Control	Harvest	Illegal	Legal (protection of livestock or pets)	Other	Unk	Total
Dworshak-Elk City	4						4
Lolo		4					4
McCall-Weiser	9						9
Middle Fork		2					2
Palouse-Hells Canyon							
Panhandle		2	2 ¹	1		1	6
Salmon		5					5
Sawtooth		4					4
Selway		4					4
South Idaho							
Southern Mountains							
Upper Snake							
Total	13	21	2	1		1	38

1 – Non-target capture. One wolf was accidentally captured and killed in a snare legally set for a coyote, another wolf mortality is under investigation.

Table 2. Confirmed wolf depredations and mortalities in Idaho, 2003 to February 28, 2010.

YEAR	Depredations ¹				WS ²	Wolf Mortality			
	Cattle	Sheep	Dogs	Total		10j / 36-1107 ³	Other ⁴	Hunter Harvest	Total
2003	7	130	3	140	7	0	8		15
2004	19	176	4	199	17	0	21		38
2005	29	166	12	207	24	3	16		43
2006	41	237	4	282	35	7	19		61
2007	57	211	10	278	43	7	27		77
2008	104	215	14	333	94	14	45		153
2009	76	295	14	385	87	6	45	135	273
2010 (1/1 – 2/28)	10	4	0	14	13	1	3	21	38

¹ Includes only confirmed wolf depredations of cattle, sheep and dogs that resulted in death or injury.

² Wolves taken by USDA Wildlife Services in response to depredation on livestock.

³ Authorized take under 10j, or legal take after delisting under state law for protection of stock and dogs (Idaho Code 36-1107).

⁴ Other includes of mortalities of unknown cause, documented natural mortality, collisions with automobiles, and illegal take.

Idaho Wolf Management Progress Report January 2010

Wolves are being managed as a big game animal in Idaho. They are protected by state laws approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Idaho Legislature, and the Idaho Fish and Game Commission. The commission set a statewide harvest limit of 220 wolves for the 2009-2010 hunting season. Nez Perce Tribe members may take up to 35 additional wolves within the Nez Perce Tribal Treaty Area.

Wolf Hunting Seasons

Wolf seasons have closed in six wolf management zones when harvest limits were met: Upper Snake zone on November 2, McCall-Weiser zone on November 9, Dworshak-Elk City zone on November 17, Palouse-Hells Canyon zone on December 18, the Southern Mountains zone on December 31 and the Middle Fork Zone on January 31. The six remaining zones are open until March 31, or until harvest limits for individual zones are met, whichever comes first.

Idaho Department of Fish and Game sold 26,428 wolf tags – 25,744 resident, 684 nonresident – in 2009. Hunters must purchase a 2010 hunting license and new 2010 wolf tag to hunt wolves during the remaining open seasons.

Hunters are required to call 877-872-3190 within 24 hours of killing a wolf. They must have the skull and hide checked in by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game within five days of kill.

Idaho wolf hunting seasons and rules are available on our website:

<http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/hunt/wolf/wolfrules.pdf>

Hunters are required to confirm the season remains open in the zone they are hunting by calling 877-872-3190 or by checking status on-line:

<http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/hunt/wolf/quota.cfm>

Harvest – From September 1 through December 31, 135 wolves were legally harvested. During this period three additional wolves were documented to have been either shot illegally or wounded and not retrieved. Another wolf was killed in a closed area, and one wolf was accidentally killed in a snare legally set by a trapper. These wolves were all counted against the harvest limit for the zone in which they were killed. The heaviest harvest occurred October 10-12 when 16 wolves were taken by hunters over the three-day weekend when deer season opened in most of the state. Hunters harvested 21 wolves in December 2009 and six during January (Table 1.). At the end of January, 147 wolves had been counted against the statewide harvest limit of 220 wolves.

Monitoring

Fish and Game's 2008 annual report on Wolf Conservation and Management in Idaho is available on our website at: <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/wolves/manage/>. The year-end population estimate for 2008 was a minimum of 846 wolves, 88 packs, with 39 documented breeding pairs. The 2009 annual report is being prepared and will be available in March. Preliminary year-end minimum estimates for 2009 are very close to year-end figures for 2008.

The following year-end numbers for 2009 are still considered preliminary. Idaho Fish and Game and Nez Perce Tribe biologists documented 94 packs present in Idaho at the end of December 2009.

Reproduction was confirmed in 65 packs, and 49 packs met breeding-pair criteria of at least two 2 pups produced and survived through December 31, 2009. Biologists documented 15 new packs during 2009. Three Idaho packs were eliminated by control actions in response to livestock depredations, and five previously documented packs were dropped from the count due to lack of confirmed activity during the year.

In December, Fish and Game received authorization from the U.S. Forest Service to land a helicopter in the Frank Church River-of-No-Return Wilderness as an aid to capture and radio-collar wolves that may be encountered incidental to routine elk surveys scheduled for February - March. The Wolf Recovery Foundation, Western Watersheds Project, and six other groups filed a motion in federal district court on February 3, requesting a temporary restraining order and/or preliminary injunction to prevent the project. A hearing on the motion has been set for Thursday, February 18 in Boise.

Management and Control Actions

During January, U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services confirmed that wolves killed five calves, three sheep, one mare and one foal, injured one sheep, and probably killed a stock dog. In response to these and previous depredations, Wildlife Services killed six wolves.

Confirmed wolf depredations from 2003–2010 are reported in Table 2.

Research

Idaho Fish and Game research biologists began capturing and radio-collaring elk, moose and wolves in January as part of its on-going elk/wolf interaction study in the North Fork Clearwater and Lowman study areas. Progress has been delayed by a helicopter accident on January 8. Alternative capture plans are being implemented. The research team and regional wildlife and enforcement staff plans to radio-collar 20 six-month old elk calves and enough bulls and cows to maintain 20 bulls and 20 cows in each of the two study areas. Four or more wolves will be radio-collared in two to four packs in each study area. Moose will also be radio-collared in the North Fork study area.

Nez Perce Tribe wolf project personnel and Idaho Fish and Game wolf project and wildlife research personnel met with the University of Montana Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit staff on January 22 to discuss progress on their research and plans for the coming year. Biologists from the Montana Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit at The University of Montana are conducting research to develop wolf population monitoring techniques. Analyses of DNA from wolf scats and hairs collected at rendezvous sites in three Idaho study areas are underway in Dr. Lisette Waits' lab at The University of Idaho. In addition, DNA analyses of hair samples obtained at rub stations deployed last summer were recently completed. Full results and a summary report describing this technique are forthcoming. A 2009 research progress report and information is available at:

<http://www.umt.edu/mcwru/PERSONNELPROFILES08/PPDaveAusband2008.htm>

The University of Montana is hiring 14 technicians for wolf research in Idaho this coming summer. Position descriptions can be viewed at: <http://www.umt.edu/mcwru/jobopenings.htm>

Information and Education

Idaho Fish and Game and Nez Perce Tribe wolf staff members are completing the 2009 annual report. Final data tabulation, map preparation, and report writing and editing is nearing completion. The report will be available in March.

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Table 1. Total known wolf mortality by cause, January 1 – 31, 2010.

Wolf Mgt Zone	Control	Harvest	Illegal	Legal (protection of livestock or pets)	Other	Unk	Total
Dworshak-Elk City	2						2
Lolo		1					1
McCall-Weiser	4						4
Middle Fork		2					2
Palouse-Hells Canyon							
Panhandle			1 ¹	1	1		3
Salmon		1					1
Sawtooth		1					1
Selway		1					1
South Idaho							
Southern Mountains							
Upper Snake							
Total	6	6	1	1	1		15

1 – Non-target capture. Wolf accidentally captured and killed in a snare legally set for a coyote.

Table 2. Confirmed wolf depredations and mortalities in Idaho, 2003 to January 31, 2010.

YEAR	Depredations ¹				WS ²	Wolf Mortality			
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2008	104	215	14	333	94	14	45		153
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2010	5	4	0	9	6	1	2	6	15

¹ Includes only confirmed wolf depredations of cattle, sheep, and dogs that resulted in death or injury.

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