

ODFW Wolf Depredation Investigation Summary

Date: 9/22/11

County: Wallowa

General Area: Griffith Creek (private land)

Situation: On 9/22/11 a dead calf was found on private land east of Joseph, OR. Wolves were suspected and ODFW examined the calf the same day. The carcass was mostly consumed and was examined for evidence of wolf attack.

ODFW findings: Confirmed wolf kill

Evidence of wolf presence in the area? The calf was estimated to have died during the night of 9/20-21/2011. Multiple wolf tracks were present in the round corral near the carcass, just outside the corral, in the spring 20 yards downhill and on the cow trail 85 yards to the southwest. In addition, GPS radio collar data places OR4, the Imnaha pack alpha male, at the site the same night as the calf's death. This clearly indicates wolves were present at or near the time of death of the calf. OR2 (alpha female) was also determined to be in the general area (non-GPS radio locations). After the examination, ODFW investigators drove to the breaks of nearby Griffith Creek canyon and radio signals from OR4 and OR2 (alpha female) were heard towards the bottom of the canyon on 9/22. At that time a visual observation was made of OR2, but no others were seen due to heavy vegetative cover.

Summary of evidence: We observed a clear struggle/kill scene as evidenced by a disturbance area with multiple areas of blood, tissues, and hair. Blood from the calf was scattered over a large area both inside and outside an old broken-down corral. Within the corral were multiple areas of blood, hair tufts, and sign that the calf had gone down (and then back up) at least once before its death. There was a trail of blood that started 30 feet west of the corral, crossed over the corral logs into the corral, to an area near the carcass that had larger blood spots. The overall scene associated with this dead calf, and the agitated behavior of remaining cattle in this immediate area, is consistent with a predation event.

The calf had been largely consumed within a 36 hour period and little carcass remained. The remains were scattered over a large area. Though there was limited evidence remaining on the carcass itself, there was clear evidence (struggle/kill scene) that the calf was killed by predation and that wolves were present at or near the time the calf was killed. No other large carnivore sign was found and the carcass was largely consumed (and scattered) in a very short time period.