

ODFW Wolf Depredation Investigation Summary

Date: 12/11/11

County: Wallowa

General Area: Imnaha River valley (private land)

Situation: On Sunday 12/11/2011 at 5:30 am, ODFW notified the livestock producer that at 5:00 am OR4, the alpha male of the Imnaha pack, was in the immediate area of his cows. By 5:45 am, the producer discovered that his yearling heifers had run through two fences and were out of the pasture near the main barn. The heifers were agitated and scattered up a nearby drainage as far as $\frac{3}{4}$ miles from the pasture they had been in the night before. The heifers were rounded up and counted to see if all had been found. A search was begun when they discovered that one was still missing. The carcass was found about 8:30 am, one half mile up from the pasture.

ODFW findings: Confirmed wolf kill

Evidence of wolf presence in the area? The carcass was still warm during the examination and had died the morning of 12/11/11. At 5:45 am that morning the livestock producer heard two wolves howling and heard OR4's radio-collar signal on the telemetry receiver checked out to him by ODFW in the area near the carcass. Also that morning the alpha male's (OR4) GPS radio-collar recorded a location at 2 am 330 yards from a main ranch house and at 5 am, 115 yards from the carcass. On Monday 12/12/11, OR4 returned to the area early in the morning. At 4 am the producer reported hearing OR4's signal near the main ranch barns, at 2 am and 5 am his GPS collar recorded locations within 750 yards of the heifer pasture. No signal from OR2's collar was heard either day.

Summary of evidence: The length of the chase (minimum 1/2 mile) and the evidence at the struggle/kill scene is indicative of wolf predation. The evidence included blood and rumen smears on the ground, blood stains on the vegetation, hair tufts, muscle fibers, and vegetation and soil disturbances. There were pre-mortem bite marks and pre-mortem injuries on the carcass indicating a predator attack. The locations, size and quantity of the bite marks, and the depth and damage inflicted by the bites is characteristic of damage caused by wolves. The presence of wolves and the evidence on the scene and the carcass show that the cow died from an attack by wolves of the Imnaha pack.