

ODFW Wolf Depredation Investigation Summary

Date: 12/14/11

County: Wallowa

General Area: Imnaha River valley (private land)

Situation: On Wednesday 12/14/2011 at 7:40am, ODFW was notified that another adult cow had been found dead in an area close to the previously (12/11) confirmed depredation in the Imnaha River Valley. The cow carcass had been found the previous day and wolves were suspected as having caused the cows' death. ODFW was asked to investigate and arrived at 9:25 am on 12/14/11. Initial indications were that the injuries which ultimately caused the cows' death occurred in an area different from the carcass location – the cow simply died in this spot.

ODFW findings: Confirmed wolf kill

Evidence of wolf presence in the area? The cow was estimated to have died on the night of 12/12. No wolf sign was found at the carcass. However, initial indications were that the cow sustained injuries at another location on the ranch and died where it was ultimately found. GPS radio locations showed that wolf OR4 of the Imnaha pack was in the local ranch area on 12/8, 12/9, 12/11, and 12/12. On 12/11/11 ODFW confirmed a wolf kill of a heifer 1.4 miles southwest of this cows' location (same ranch).

Summary of evidence: No chase or struggle scene was observed at the site of the carcass. There was clear indication that the animal had sustained injuries in another area of the ranch and simply died where ultimately found. The carcass was observed to have multiple bite wound injuries. On the hind end of the animal we observed severe wounds (with associated muscle trauma and subcutaneous hemorrhage) on the left rump, left flank, and underside of left rear leg. We also observed severe damage (with associated muscle trauma and subcutaneous hemorrhage) in front and behind both shoulders. Bites on the hind end of the animal were identified as large carnivore. In addition, the bite/tooth marks, and associated trauma clearly indicate that the bites occurred pre-mortem.

The bite marks on both hind legs and both shoulders are consistent with wolf attack pattern. The location of injuries on the cow, the high number of bites, and the nature of muscle tissue damage (e.g., extensive subcutaneous hemorrhaging associated with the bites) are clear indications of wolf attack. Wolves were known to be in the area. It is possible that this cow was attacked synonymously with the confirmed wolf depredation on 12/11/11, then died and was detected at a later time.