

ODFW Wolf Depredation Investigation Summary

Date: 5/12/12

County: Umatilla

General Area: Weston Mountain area

Situation: A private landowner in the Weston Mountain area found a dead adult ram sheep in a small pen near their house on the morning of May 12, 2012. Three other rams in the pen showed signs of attack and severe injury. One of the injured sheep was euthanized as a result of its injuries. Due to previous wolf depredation of sheep in the area wolves were suspected and ODFW examined the sheep the same day.

ODFW findings: Confirmed wolf

Evidence of wolf presence in the area? On May 2, a wolf depredation occurred approximately 6 miles away. In addition, ODFW has been tracking a single wolf in the general area only a few miles of this incident. On the morning of the investigation a set of wolf tracks was observed approx. 120 meters from the sheep pen. This combination of information is evidence that at least one wolf was in the area at the time of this event.

Summary of evidence: Two sheep were necropsied and found to have significant premortem injuries associated with bite marks. The large number of bites made measurement of individual bites difficult, but were clearly large carnivore bites. Bites were found on the necropsied sheep in the following areas; hind end, flanks, over the back, sternum, and neck. All bites caused massive subdermal hemorrhage and trauma to the underlying muscle tissues. The extent of bite damage, and the size and location of bites on the sheep was nearly identical to the May 2, 2012 depredation event in the area. Wolf depredation was confirmed based on clear physical evidence of wolf attack. The two remaining injured sheep were examined externally and were confirmed to have been attacked during the same depredation event.

Note: On May 16, one of the two remaining injured sheep died as a result of injuries sustained on the May 12 depredation event. The loss total is now three, with one injured sheep.