

ODFW Wolf Depredation Investigation Summary

Date: 5/2/12

County: Umatilla

General Area: Weston Mountain area

Situation: A private landowner found four dead sheep (two ewes, two lambs) in a small pen near her house on the morning of May 2, 2012. The property is a forested tract in the Weston Mountain area. Large canid tracks were observed and wolf depredation was suspected. One lamb was also reported to be missing. ODFW examined the sheep the same morning.

ODFW findings: Confirmed wolf

Evidence of wolf presence in the area? A single set of wolf tracks was observed (in snow) travelling to and from the sheep pen area. One wolf track was observed inside the pen.

Summary of evidence: Three of the four dead sheep (two large ewes and one lamb) were necropsied and examined on-site. All three showed numerous large pre-mortem bites with associated internal damage. The lamb showed clear wolf bites over its back, and while they did not break through the hide, they caused massive internal trauma. Both ewes showed a nearly identical attack pattern – numerous pre-mortem bites on the hind end, upper flank, and neck. Few bites penetrated the hide but still caused severe muscle trauma and hemorrhage underneath. The wounds are consistent with wolf bites based on size, spacing, location, and the large number of bites. Wolf depredation was confirmed based on clear physical evidence of wolf attack and evidence of wolf presence inside the pen. Though the fourth animal (lamb) was not necropsied, we confirmed it to be depredated during the same event. The missing lamb is also presumed to be a result of the same depredation event.