

ODFW Wolf Depredation Investigation Summary

Date: 5/27/12

County: Umatilla

General Area: Bear Creek area, South of Pilot Rock, OR

Situation: On May 27, 2012 the remains of a calf were found in a pasture on Bear Creek in South Umatilla County. Coyotes were observed at the site of the carcass and ODFW was asked to evaluate the carcass for possible wolf depredation. The scene was initially investigated by Wildlife Services personnel and though no sign of wolves was observed, the carcass remains were brought to Pendleton ODFW and placed in a cooler for later inspection.

ODFW findings: Other

Evidence of wolf presence in the area? No wolf sign was found at or near the carcass. Within the past two years wolf tracks have been noted in an area approximately 4 miles from this site. However, no resident wolf activity in this area is known at this time.

Summary of evidence: The lack of significant decomposition indicated that the calf had died a day or less prior. Feeding on the carcass by coyotes and scavenging birds was observed and was also evident on the carcass remains. No sign of predation was noted at the initial scene of the carcass and only coyote tracks were observed as reported by Wildlife Services personnel. The calf was estimated to have weighed approximately 175 lbs when alive. However, the remaining carcass was only about 50 lbs when examined. Overall the carcass showed signs of heavy feeding. The carcass was found laying on its right side and nearly the entire left (up) side soft tissue of the animal was missing except for the head, neck, left front fore leg, and some loose skin. All viscera and internal organs were completely gone. ODFW skinned the remaining portions of the calf and examined the underlying tissues for bite marks and any pre-mortem wounds. All skinned areas had undamaged muscle tissue with normal tissue color and no pre-mortem wounds were observed. Paired tooth marks were observed on the thin bone of the upper left scapula but were clearly post-mortem and were approximately 1 inch apart. Except for some limited portions of floating rib bone ends, very little bone consumption had occurred even though scavenging had been extensive. ODFW found no evidence of predation of any kind on this calf.