

ODFW Wolf Depredation Investigation Summary

Date: 4/22/2013

County: Wallowa

General Area: Three Lakes Country -- Private Land

Situation: A livestock producer found the partially eaten carcass of a 1 ½ month old calf in a grassland pasture on the morning of 4/22/2013. Wolf depredation was suspected as the area is a frequently used by the Imnaha Pack and has experienced wolf depredation in the past. ODFW was asked to investigate the remains for signs of wolf predation and an investigation was initiated the same morning.

ODFW finding: Confirmed wolf

Evidence of wolf presence in the area: The area had received approximately an inch of snow through the night, but had melted off before the landowner arrived on the scene. A possible wolf track was found in mud near the carcass, but this was unconfirmed. GPS collar data showed that the two wolves with collars were not at the scene but were approximately 4.5 miles away on the night of the 21st. It is important to note, however, that one wolf (OR17) did travel to the area of the dead calf on the night of the 22nd indicating knowledge of the dead calf or was travelling with another pack member with knowledge of the calf.

Summary of evidence: The cattle (including this calf) had been moved into an adjacent pasture on the previous day (4/21). There was little evidence observed of a struggle or kill scene, though snow the previous night would have likely obscured much of this. Several old dry "cow pies" near the carcass were freshly turned over – likely the result of the mother cow defending the calf's carcass. The mother cow was very agitated and was aggressive during the investigation – a commonly observed behavior following any type of predation. The partially eaten carcass showed significant hemorrhage on its back just forward of the hips indicating pre-mortem injury. This is not a typical area of wolf attack, but the muscle tissue under the hide showed shredding along the right side of the vertebrae with associated hemorrhage. This "shredding" of muscle tissue is similar to what has been observed on other wolf depredations in this area. The hide near rear flank of right side shows hemorrhaging in subcutaneous tissue and two holes (1/4 and 1/2 inches in diameter) appears to be the result of canine teeth, pre-mortem. Torn muscle tissue (3 inches diameter) above the hock of right rear leg appears to be the result of post-mortem canine bite. Large area of hemorrhage (4 inches in length) in muscle tissue along left side of vertebrae below ribs appears to be the result of canine bite pre-mortem. Subcutaneous hemorrhage under the hide covering the right elbow appeared to be the result of a canine bite. Feeding on the carcass was relatively light, with a portion of the viscera removed and muscle tissue on the right hind leg mostly consumed. The light nature of feeding on the carcass suggests a single or few wolves.