



## ODFW LIVESTOCK DEPREDATION INVESTIGATION REPORT

Investigation ID: 130727 Umatilla

**Date Investigated:** 7/27/2013 and 7/28/2013

**General Area:** Upper Pine Creek – Private Land

**General situation and animal information:** An 800 lb. yearling cow was found dead in a forested pasture by an attending cattleman at approximately 11:00am on Saturday 7/27/13. The cattleman suspected wolf involvement and ODFW responded the same day. The cattlemen’s assistant reported seeing 5 wolves (1 adult and 4 pups) on the road within 100 yards of the carcass at 5:30 Saturday morning, 7/27/13. He also reported seeing a large male black bear near the same location on Wednesday 7/24/13 at 6:30am.

**Physical evidence of attack by a predator:** The area surrounding the carcass was searched within 200 yards for evidence of a struggle or chase. No evidence was found at the scene to indicate a predator attacked the cow. A large number of bald faced hornets had found the carcass and were active on it, making skinning it impossible. The carcass examination was delayed until the next morning when cool temperatures would subdue the hornets. By 5:15am the next morning the carcass had been further consumed, limiting the value of carcass evidence. The remains were examined including a large 4 foot by 2 foot piece of skin from the left side of the animal with attached legs. No evidence of premortem trauma or bite marks indicating predation was observed. There was no evidence at the scene or on the carcass to suggest a predator killed the cow.

**Evidence that the predator was a wolf:** N/A

**Evidence of wolf presence near the time of the animal(s) death/injury:** The yearling was estimated to have died between 7/21 and 7/23/13. The GPS radio-collar locations of the breeding male of the Umatilla River pack showed that he was in the area of the dead yearling on Tuesday, 7/23/13. However, he did not remain at the location and did not return until Friday night 7/26. On Sunday 7/28, the ODFW investigator heard at least two adults and numerous pups howling approximately 400 yards from the carcass location.

**Recent wolf depredation in the same or nearby area:** Umatilla River pack wolves were confirmed to be responsible for depredating on sheep at one location in two incidents in late May and early June of 2013. The location of these incidents is approximately 1.75 miles from where the carcass was found.

### Cause of death/injury:

Confirmed Wolf

Probable Wolf

Possible/Unknown

Other

**Summary:** The yearling cow appeared by the evidence to have died with little or no struggle. At the time of discovery, after no less than one night of multiple wolves scavenging, the remains of the carcass weighed approximately 300 lbs. and approximately 60% had been consumed. The carcass had lain in three locations (15-25 feet apart) long enough to leave stains from decomposition, and cause vegetation death under the carcass. Only a large black bear would have the strength to move such a heavy carcass. Based on the sign found, it is believed a bear discovered the carcass first and moved it twice. Based on GPS radio-collar data, the wolves scavenged the carcass between Friday night, 7/26 and Sunday 7/28. The lack of a significant amount of carcass to examine made a clear determination of cause of death difficult. That combined with the lack of a struggle scene led to a determination of Possible/Unknown.