



ODFW LIVESTOCK DEPREDACTION INVESTIGATION REPORT

Investigation ID: 140530 Wallowa

Date Investigated: 5/30/2014

General Area: Western portion of Zumwalt Prairie - private land

General situation and animal information: At 11:30pm on 5/29/14 a shepherd heard wolves howling near his trailer and the bedded flock of domestic sheep. He went outside and reported seeing 3 tan colored wolves in the light from his flashlight. The herder fired several shots in the air from a .22 magnum gun and they moved away. For the next 20 minutes he could hear the sheep being chased in the dark. In the morning he found 3 dead lambs (1 mostly consumed), and 20 sheep that had bite injuries on them. There were about 425 ewes in the flock with 2 lambs each and also about 30 cow/calf pairs in a large grassland pasture. There were 1 adult and 2 half-grown Pyrenees livestock protection dogs with the flock. ODFW was called on 5/30/14 and examined the sheep that day.

Physical evidence of attack by a predator: Two dead lambs and 5 injured lambs were examined. One of the dead lambs was intact. There were premortem canine puncture holes in the hide. When skinned, severe hemorrhaging and muscle tissue damage was found on the neck (6"x8"), right side (6"x15"), brisket (6"x8"), and lower hind quarters on both sides (4"x8" left, 2"x3" right). A second dead lamb was mostly consumed, only the head, hide, and major leg bones with part of the pelvis remained. Five injured lambs were examined; each had fresh premortem puncture wounds to the neck, throat, or hindquarters.

Evidence that the predator was a wolf: The location of the bite wounds on the dead lamb are commonly observed attack points for wolves. Severely damaged muscle tissue beneath several of the bite wounds showed evidence of 'shredding' – something commonly observed with sheep depredation by wolves. The shredding of tissue was observed in areas where the hide over the wound was relatively intact. This, combined with deep hemorrhage into the muscle tissues, is clear indicators of very powerful bites with relatively blunt teeth. There were also canine puncture holes in the hide found on the dead lamb that measured 1 5/8" to 2" apart and 1/4" in diameter.

Evidence of wolf presence near the time of the animal(s) death/injury: Large canid tracks were present at the 2 carcass sites, though it is possible that they were from the adult livestock protection dog.

Recent wolf depredation in the same or nearby area: None

Cause of death/injury:

Confirmed Wolf

Probable Wolf

Possible/Unknown

Other

Summary: ODFW found that these lambs were depredated by wolves. The location and appearance of the bite wounds noted above are similar to those observed on other confirmed sheep depredations. There were additional sheep that were not available for examination that are included in this incident. A total of three lambs were killed and 20 sheep were injured (all lambs except one ewe). The current dispositions of the injured sheep are unknown, it is possible that some will succumb to their injuries.