



ODFW LIVESTOCK DEPREDATION INVESTIGATION REPORT

Investigation ID: 150702 Umatilla

Date Investigated: 07/02/2015

General Area: Weston Mountain area – private land

General situation and animal information: On 07/02/2015 a sheep herder found two injured sheep early in the afternoon. Soon after discovery, one died of its injuries (a male lamb) and the other (a ewe) was euthanized as a result of its injuries. Later that same day another male lamb was discovered injured in the same area and is currently being cared for by the livestock owner. The sheep herder reported observing/seeing large canid tracks in the area of the first two carcasses. Wolf depredation was suspected and ODFW investigated the incident early that evening and examined the carcasses the following day on 07/03/2015. Additionally, on 07/03/2015, the carcass of a fourth sheep (a lamb) was discovered 25 yards up the canyon from where the ewe was originally found by the herder. It had been partially consumed similar to the previous two sheep and is assumed to have died as a result of the same incident.

Physical evidence of attack by a predator: The first two carcasses were examined and on each were found areas of severe premortem hemorrhage with multiple associated large carnivore bite marks on the dorsal and ventral side of the necks, shoulders, brisket, and rear legs. These are clear indicators of predator attack.

Evidence that the predator was a wolf: The location of the bite wounds on the dead sheep examined are commonly observed attack points for wolves. Premortem hemorrhage with limited damage to the hide, paired bite marks measuring 1 ¾" apart, and canine puncture holes of 3/16-1/4" in the hide and muscle tissue of these sheep is similar to other wolf depredations in this area.

Evidence of wolf presence near the time of the animal(s) death/injury: No evidence of wolf presence was observed due to the nature of the rocky terrain, grass and shrub cover, and extensive ground disturbance of other sheep in the area. Tracks that were originally reported were not observed. The area is within the Umatilla River pack home range and there are currently no GPS or radio collars on these wolves. The pack, however, has historically frequented this area.

Recent wolf depredation in the same or nearby area: No recent wolf depredation in this specific area. However, wolves of the Umatilla River pack have periodically depredated other sheep in the larger general area in previous years.

Cause of death/injury:

Confirmed Wolf

Probable Wolf

Possible/Unknown

Other

Summary: ODFW examined the sheep carcasses and the location/appearance of the bite wounds are similar to those observed in other confirmed sheep depredations by wolves in this area. Though it is difficult to be certain which specific wolves depredated in this situation, the evidence suggests that the depredation was likely sub-adult wolves of the Umatilla River Pack.