



## ODFW LIVESTOCK DEPREDATION INVESTIGATION REPORTS

January - March 2019

This document lists livestock depredation investigations completed by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife since January 1, 2019. Investigations are done at the request of the owner of injured or dead livestock when they suspect wolf depredation. The goal of these investigations is to determine if the livestock was attacked by a predator and if that predator was a wolf. The goal is not necessarily to determine the cause of death, as in some cases that would require a veterinary pathologist (e.g. illness, injury, age, poisonous plants). In some areas of Oregon, USDA Wildlife Services assists ODFW when wolves are suspected and is the lead agency to investigate when other predators such as coyotes, bear, or cougar are suspected. In areas where wolves are federally protected, the USFWS may choose to assist at investigations. In some counties, the local Sheriff's office deputies also attend investigations. ODFW needs to make the determination for lethal removal of chronically depredating wolves to be considered or if the livestock producer wants financial compensation from the Oregon Department of Agriculture.

There is information about methods to minimize conflict at [https://www.dfw.state.or.us/Wolves/non-lethal\\_methods.asp](https://www.dfw.state.or.us/Wolves/non-lethal_methods.asp). The investigation determination criteria and previous investigations are listed at [https://www.dfw.state.or.us/Wolves/depredation\\_investigations.asp](https://www.dfw.state.or.us/Wolves/depredation_investigations.asp). Additional information about Oregon wolves and answers to frequently asked questions are provided at [www.odfw.com/wolves](http://www.odfw.com/wolves).

### March 4, 2019 – Curry County (White Mountain area)

**Date Investigated:** 3/4/19

**Cause of death/injury:** Probable

**General situation and animal information:** Between 2/23/19 – 3/4/19, a producer and a USDA Wildlife Services specialist discovered 23 dead sheep in a partially fenced pasture on private property. After the discovery of four dead lambs on 3/4/19, ODFW was notified of the situation by USDA Wildlife Services and investigated the same day. The three carcasses available for examination were intact, however the organs and most of the muscle tissue from the flanks on one sheep had been consumed. Two additional carcasses from previous incidents were examined on 3/5 that had wounds similar to the most recently killed animals.

**Physical evidence and summary of findings:** No chase, struggle, or kill scene was found. The majority of each carcass was skinned and examined. On the first carcass, premortem tooth punctures, hemorrhaging, and tissue trauma were observed along the upper ribcage, on the sides of the rear legs, and on the flanks. On the second carcass, premortem tooth punctures, hemorrhaging, and tissue trauma were observed behind the left front leg and along the upper ribcage. On the partially consumed carcass, probable hemorrhaging was observed on the hide near an apparent break in the spine. The premortem trauma and attack locations on all three carcasses are consistent with a wolf attack, but lack diagnostic evidence to clearly differentiate between wolf and domestic dog. The cause of death/injury was categorized as "Probable". This determination may be changed if additional evidence is collected during ongoing monitoring.

## **February 21, 2019 – Crook County (Crooked River Valley area)**

**Date Investigated:** 2/21/19

**Cause of death/injury:** Other

**General situation and animal information:** On the morning of 2/21/19, a livestock producer found the remains of two approx. 100 lb. calves in a 40-acre private-land pasture. The producer removed both calves after discovery. Both carcasses were intact with muscle tissue consumed from the upper hindquarters and neck. The internal organs of one calf were consumed as well. The calves were estimated to have died between the morning of 2/20/19 and the morning of 2/21/19.

**Physical evidence and summary of findings:** Both carcasses were skinned and examined. There were no premortem bite scrapes on the hide or bite-caused hemorrhage or muscle tissue trauma indicating a predator attack. The carcasses had been scavenged by coyotes and birds. Snow conditions allowed for determination of animals present since time of death and no wolf sign was observed. The deaths were categorized as “Other”.

## **February 17, 2019 – Baker County (Officer Butte area)**

**Date Investigated:** 2/17/19

**Cause of death/injury:** Other

**General situation and animal information:** On the morning of 2/17/19, a livestock producer found the remains of a 1-day-old, 30 lb. calf in a fenced 100-acre private-land pasture. The carcass was almost completely consumed. The calf was estimated to have died the evening of 2/16/19.

**Physical evidence and summary of findings:** No hide or muscle tissue remained to assess presence of premortem bite scrapes or bite-caused hemorrhage or muscle tissue trauma indicating a predator attack. However, snow conditions allowed for determination of animals present since time of death and no wolf sign was found. Although the calf’s death was not wolf related, it is unknown if the calf died from a coyote attack or other causes.

## **February 12, 2019 – Baker County (Bearwallow Gulch area)**

**Date Investigated:** 2/12-13/19

**Cause of death/injury:** Other

**General situation and animal information:** On the afternoon of 2/12/19, a livestock owner found a dead, two-day-old, 60 lb. calf in an 80-acre private-land pasture. The owner removed the calf and plowed the pasture shortly after discovery. ODFW investigated the same day, and completed the investigation on 2/13 after thawing the carcass. The carcass was intact with all muscle tissue on the hindquarters above the hocks consumed as well as all the abdominal organs. The hide was intact other than portions of the abdomen and inside of the hind legs. The date of death was estimated to be between the afternoon of 2/10/19 and the evening of 2/11/19.

**Physical evidence and summary of findings:** The calf carcass was shaved, skinned and examined. There were no premortem bite scrapes on the hide or bite-caused hemorrhage or muscle tissue trauma indicating a predator attack. The carcass had been scavenged by both wolves and birds, however no evidence was found to suggest the death was wolf related. The death was categorized as “Other”.

## **January 18, 2019 – Union County (Catherine Creek area)**

**Date Investigated:** 1/18/19

**Cause of death/injury:** Confirmed

**General situation and animal information:** The carcass of an 11-month-old, 500 lb. steer was discovered by the owner's brother at daybreak on 1/18/19 in a private-land pasture. He reported hearing four wolves howling at 3:00 am. Later that day, district ODFW staff contacted the owner about a wolf GPS radio-collar location in his pasture at 5 am on 1/18, which generated the request for an investigation. Most of the internal organs and abdomen were consumed, but the remainder of the carcass and hide were largely intact. The death of the calf was estimated to have occurred less than 24 hours prior.

**Physical evidence and summary of findings:** The entire carcass was skinned. Multiple tooth scrapes were found on the hide of the neck, left front quarter, and hindquarters. Associated premortem hemorrhage and tissue trauma extending at least 2” in depth was found on the posterior portion of the hind legs and the left front leg behind the elbow. The premortem muscle tissue trauma is a clear sign of predator attack and the size, number, severity, and location of the bite injuries are similar to injuries observed on other calves attacked by wolves. The depredation was attributed to one or more wolves from the Catherine Pack.

## **January 18, 2019 – Jackson County (Boundary Butte area)**

**Date Investigated:** 1/18/19

**Cause of death/injury:** Confirmed

**General situation and animal information:** Just after midnight on 1/18/19, a livestock owner, while responding to wolves howling and his dogs barking, found an injured, 4-month-old, 180 lb. calf in his private-land pasture. The owner euthanized the animal at that time. There were extensive tooth scrapes and puncture wounds on the rear half of the animal and intestine protruding from the anus. ODFW was notified and examined the carcass later that morning.

**Physical evidence and summary of findings:** The entire carcass was shaved and skinned. Multiple tooth scrapes up to 1/2” width and 4” length were found on the hide of the neck, front quarters, abdomen, and hindquarters. Associated tissue trauma extending up to 3” in depth was found on the inside of the hind legs from the groin to the tail. The premortem muscle tissue trauma is a clear sign of predator attack and the size, number, and location of the bite injuries are similar to injuries observed on other calves attacked by wolves. The Rogue Pack has previously depredated on this property.

## January 1, 2019 – Jackson County (Boundary Butte area)

**Date Investigated:** 1/1-2/19

**Cause of death/injury:** Confirmed

**General situation and animal information:** On the morning of 1/1/19, a livestock owner found an injured, 5-month-old, 235 lb. calf in a private-land pasture. An approximately 2-foot length of intestine was protruding from the anus with tissue trauma evident on the hindquarters and abdomen. The injuries were estimated to have occurred less than 12 hours earlier. The animal was euthanized on site, the carcass was brought to an ODFW office, and the examination was completed the morning of 1/2/19.

**Physical evidence and summary of findings:** The entire carcass was shaved and skinned. More than 100 tooth scrapes from 1/16 to 1/4 inch width were found on the hide of the neck, abdomen, flanks, and hindquarters. Associated trauma extending up to 1 1/2 inches into muscle tissue was found on the inside of the hind legs from the abdomen back to the tail and down the legs to within 3 inches of the hocks. The premortem muscle tissue trauma is a clear sign of predator attack and the size, number, and location of the bite injuries are similar to injuries observed on other calves attacked by wolves. The Rogue Pack has previously depredated on this property.