



ODFW LIVESTOCK DEPREDATION INVESTIGATION REPORTS

July - September 2019

This document lists livestock depredation investigations completed by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife since July 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. The investigation determination criteria and previous investigations are listed at 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.

September 3, 2019 – Union County (Ruckel Ridge area)

Date Investigated: 9/3/19

Cause of death/injury: Confirmed

General situation and animal information: During the afternoon of 9/2/2019, a sheep herder found two dead adult sheep on a USFS sheep allotment. During the investigation the next morning, four more adult sheep were found. All sheep were determined to have died during the day on 9/2/2019. Three sheep carcasses had been scavenged, with little muscle tissue remaining on two. The remaining three carcasses were intact with very little scavenging.

Physical evidence and summary of findings: All six sheep were examined, the three intact sheep were skinned fully. Premortem hemorrhage, bite marks and scrapes, indicate all six sheep were attacked by a predator. Paired bite puncture spacing of 1 7/8 - 2 inches and locations of hemorrhage on lower neck, behind elbows, on back and hindquarters are consistent with wolf attacks on sheep. A radio-collared member of the Ruckel Ridge pack was within one mile at noon on 9/2/2019. The depredation of six adult sheep are attributed to the Ruckel Ridge Pack.

August 30, 2019 – Klamath County (Fort Klamath area)

Date Investigated: 8/30/19

Cause of death/injury: Other

General situation and animal information: On the morning of 8/30/19, a ranch hand found a dead 750 lb. steer in a 130 acre, open private-land pasture. The carcass was intact except muscle tissue and hide were missing from portions of the left hind leg and flank, and around the pelvis and anus. All organs other than the heart and lungs had been consumed. The time of death was estimated to be sometime on 8/29/19.

Physical evidence and summary of findings: The hide behind both front elbows, hindquarters, and right flank was shaved. The carcass was also skinned from the front legs rearward to the hindquarters above the hocks, including the tail. No attack scene was found and there were no pre-mortem bite scrapes on the hide or bite-caused hemorrhage or muscle tissue trauma indicating a predator attack. The cause of death is unknown, but no evidence was found to suggest the death was predator or wolf related.

August 26, 2019 – Klamath County (Fort Klamath area)

Date Investigated: 8/26/19

Cause of death/injury: Other

General situation and animal information: On the morning of 8/26/19, a livestock producer found a dead 1200 lb. cow in an open private-land pasture. The carcass was intact except muscle tissue and hide was missing near the udder. Organs were intact and rumen content present within the carcass cavity. The cow was estimated to have died 1-2 days earlier.

Physical evidence and summary of findings: The hide behind both front elbows, the flanks, hindquarters, and withers was skinned. No attack scene was found and there were no pre-mortem bite scrapes on the hide or bite-caused hemorrhage or muscle tissue trauma indicating a predator attack. The cause of death is unknown, but no evidence was found to suggest the death was predator or wolf related.

August 19, 2019 – Baker County (Pine Valley area)

Date Investigated: 8/19/19

Cause of death/injury: Other

General situation and animal information: On the morning of 8/19/19, a livestock owner found one dead lamb in a 40 acre, private-land pasture across the road from the house. The carcass was mostly consumed. The time of death was estimated to be the preceding night.

Physical evidence and summary of findings: The remaining carcass was skinned and examined. There were pre-mortem bite marks and hemorrhage on the lamb carcass indicating that it had been attacked by a predator. Paired canine bite punctures had approximately 1 1/4 inch spacing for upper canines and 13/16 inch spacing for lower canines. These bites are consistent with coyote bite spacing. The location of hemorrhage on the throat just behind the lower jaw, and the back of the hindquarter, are consistent with coyote attack locations on sheep. This lamb mortality was not wolf related.

August 16, 2019 – Wallowa County (Swamp Creek area)

Date Investigated: 8/16/19

Cause of death/injury: Confirmed

General situation and animal information: Midday on 8/16/19, an injured, approximately four-month-old, 300 lb. calf was found on a forested USFS cattle allotment. The calf was taken to a veterinarian for evaluation, and was subsequently euthanized. The hindquarters had noticeable open wounds. The condition of the flesh around the wounds suggested the injuries were sustained about 5-8 days earlier.

Physical evidence and summary of findings: The calf was partially shaved and skinned, then examined. There were more than 40 canine tooth scrapes (1/8 – 1/4 inch width) in the hide on the upper portions of the hind legs. An open wound of torn hide and damaged muscle tissue was found near the anus on the hind legs. The damage extended at least 2 inches into the muscle tissue. The location of the bites, their length, width and direction, and the size and depth of the injuries are similar to other confirmed wolf attack injuries on calves. This depredation occurred outside the estimated Chesnimnus Pack AKWA. It is unknown at this time if the Chesnimnus Pack or other wolves were involved.

August 12, 2019 – Baker County A, B, C (First Creek area)

Date Investigated: 8/12/19

Cause of death/injury: Possible/Unknown (3)

General situation and animal information: On the afternoon of 8/12/19, a ranch hand found three dead adult cows in a large private-land pasture. The carcass of cow A had been almost completely consumed and the bones scattered. Cow A was estimated to have died several weeks earlier. The carcass of cow B was mostly intact with some hide and muscle tissue consumed from the hindquarters and abdomen. The carcass of cow C had been heavily scavenged with most organs consumed as well as much of the hide and tissue from both of the rear legs, abdomen, and front left leg. Cows B and C were estimated to have died on approximately 8/10/19 and 8/8/19, respectively.

Physical evidence and summary of findings: No chase or kill scene was found for any of the cows. The remains of cow A were examined. Due to the lack of muscle tissue and hide remaining on the carcass the determination is possible/unknown. The carcasses of cows B and C were partially shaved and skinned, then examined. There were no pre-mortem bite scrapes on the remaining hide or bite-caused hemorrhage to muscle tissue indicating a predator attack on either cow. However, due to the missing hide and muscle tissue on the hindquarters, the determination for both cow B and C is possible/unknown.

August 9, 2019 – Union County (Five Points Creek area)

Date Investigated: 8/9/19

Cause of death/injury: Confirmed

General situation and animal information: Midday on 8/9/19, an injured, approximately 400 lb. calf was found in a large forested pasture on private property while gathering cattle. The hindquarters

had noticeable open wounds. The condition of the flesh around the wounds suggested the injuries were sustained at least one week earlier.

Physical evidence and summary of findings: The hindquarters of the calf were partially shaved and examined. There were more than 50 canine tooth scrapes (1/8 – 1/4 inch width) in the hide on the upper portions of the hind legs. An open wound approximately 12 inches by 6 inches of torn hide and damaged muscle tissue was found on the groin and inside of both hind legs. The damage extended more than 2 inches into the muscle tissue. The location of the bites, their length, width and direction, and the size and depth of the injuries are similar to other confirmed wolf attack injuries on calves. This depredation is attributed to wolves of the Five Points Pack.

August 8, 2019 – Klamath County (Fort Klamath area)

Date Investigated: 8/8/19

Cause of death/injury: Other

General situation and animal information: On the morning of 8/8/19, a ranch hand found a dead 350 lb. calf in a private-land grass pasture. The internal organs, left eye and a small portion of hide/tissue from the left shoulder and abdomen were missing, but the carcass was otherwise intact. The calf was estimated to have died on 8/6/19.

Physical evidence and summary of findings: The area where the calf was found was searched for signs of a predator attack, none were found. The carcass was skinned from the front of the shoulders back to the hocks and examined. There were no bite wounds or other pre-mortem injuries found on the carcass. With no evidence of predator attack, the investigation determination is other.

August 2, 2019 – Wallowa County (Grouse Creek area)

Date Investigated: 8/2/19

Cause of death/injury: Other

General situation and animal information: On the morning of 8/2/19, a live calf, believed to be injured, was found unable to stand. The 4-month-old, 300 lb. calf was in a forested public-land allotment pasture. The calf was euthanized by the owner prior to ODFW's arrival.

Physical evidence and summary of findings: The area where the calf was found was searched for signs of a predator attack, none were found. Both hind legs and left side of the calf carcass were skinned and examined. There were no bite wounds or other pre-mortem injuries found on the carcass. With no evidence of predator attack, the investigation determination is other.

July 30, 2019 – Wallowa County (Zumwalt Prairie area)

Date Investigated: 7/30/19

Cause of death/injury: Possible/Unknown

General situation and animal information: On 7/29/19, two carcasses of five-month-old, 400 lbs. calves were found in a large, private, grassland pasture. The carcasses had been heavily scavenged and only the mostly intact skeletons remained. The calves are estimated to have died at least five days prior.

Physical evidence and summary of findings: No premortem evidence was found on either carcass nor was an attack scene observed. Due to the lack of hide or tissue to examine on the carcasses the determination is possible/unknown.

July 23, 2019 – Klamath County (Fort Klamath area)

Date Investigated: 7/23/19

Cause of death/injury: Other

General situation and animal information: On the morning of 7/23/19 a landowner found a dead 750 lb. yearling steer in an open private-land pasture. The carcass was intact except muscle tissue and hide was missing from the anus, pelvis and rear ribcage. Some organs were also consumed. The steer was estimated to have died the previous night.

Physical evidence and summary of findings: The remaining hide behind both front elbows, the flanks and hindquarters was shaved. The carcass was skinned from the shoulders to the hindquarters above the hocks. There were no pre-mortem bite scrapes on the remaining hide or bite-caused hemorrhage or muscle tissue trauma indicating a predator attack, and no attack scene was found. The cause of death is unknown, but no evidence was found to suggest the death was predator or wolf related.

July 20, 2019 – Umatilla County (Government Mountain area)

Date Investigated: 7/20/19

Cause of death/injury: Possible/Unknown

General situation and animal information: On the morning of 7/20/19 a range rider found a dead 300 lb. calf in a large, open private-land pasture. The carcass had been extensively scavenged and scattered with all organs consumed. Only some muscle tissue on the shoulders, and the majority of the skeleton and portions of the hide remained. The calf was estimated to have died two days prior to the investigation on 7/18/19.

Physical evidence and summary of findings: The remaining carcass was skinned and examined. There were no pre-mortem bite scrapes on the remaining hide or bite-caused hemorrhage or tissue trauma to indicating a predator attack, and no attack scene was found. However, due to the missing hide and muscle tissue on both hindquarters as well as the decomposition of the remaining carcass, the determination is possible/unknown.

July 20, 2019 – Baker County (North Powder area)

Date Investigated: 7/20/19

Cause of death/injury: Possible/Unknown

General situation and animal information: A livestock producer found the remains of a dead calf, approximate weight of 500 lbs., the morning of 7/19/19 in an open private-land pasture about 500 yards from a residence. ODFW was notified and asked to investigate on 7/20/19. The carcass had been extensively scavenged and only some bone fragments from the head, spine, ribs, and legs were present. The calf was estimated to have died approximately a week prior.

Physical evidence and summary of findings: No sign of a struggle, chase or attack scene was present. The site showed heavy use by coyote scavengers. Due to the lack of hide and muscle tissue, the determination is possible/unknown.

July 5, 2019 – Wallowa County (Griffith Creek area)

Date Investigated: 7/5/19

Cause of death/injury: Possible/Unknown

General situation and animal information: A range rider found a 4-month-old, ~200 lb., dead calf on the evening of 7/4/19 while checking cattle in a large, private, open-land pasture. The carcass was covered and ODFW was asked to investigate on 7/5/19. At the investigation, the producer reported seeing a wolf attacking an adult cow in the same location the previous week. The carcass had been scavenged with only muscle and hide forward of the front shoulders, some hide on the rear legs and the skeleton remaining. The calf was estimated to have died between 7/1/19 and 7/3/19.

Physical evidence and summary of findings: The remaining carcass and hide were skinned and examined. No premortem bite marks or trauma were found on the muscle tissue or hide and no attack scene was located. No evidence was found to suggest the death was wolf-related. However, due to the lack of hide and muscle tissue on the hindquarters, the determination is possible/unknown.