



ODFW LIVESTOCK DEPREDATION INVESTIGATION REPORTS

January - April 2020

This document lists livestock depredation investigations completed by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife since January 1, 2020. 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.

April 22, 2020 – Wallowa County A&B (Three Lakes area)

Date Investigated: 4/22/20

Cause of death/injury: Confirmed (2)

General situation and animal information: On the morning of 4/22/20 two live calves were found with injuries in a large rangeland pasture on private property. Both calves were hauled to a local veterinary clinic for treatment, and ODFW was asked to examine the injuries. Calf A had injuries on the right hind leg that were estimated to have occurred earlier that morning. Calf B had injuries on the left front leg that were estimated to be 2 days old. Since these calves were injured on separate days, these are considered separate events.

Physical evidence and summary of findings: Hair on both calves was clipped around the injuries. Calf A had a hole (approx. 3 by 1.5 inches diameter) that ran completely through the upper right hind leg to the groin, with torn and damaged muscle tissue inside. There were also multiple canine tooth scrapes and punctures up to ¼ inch wide on the right hind leg above the hock. Calf B had a hole (approx. 1.5 by 1 inches diameter, 2 inches deep) on the left front leg above the knee, with damaged muscle tissue inside. The number of bites and location, size, and depth of the injuries was similar to other confirmed wolf attack injuries on calves. These depredations are attributed to the Middle Fork Pack.

April 16, 2020 – Union County (Hilgard area)

Date Investigated: 4/16/2020

Cause of death/injury: Confirmed (2)

General situation and animal information: On the afternoon of 4/16/20, one dead and one injured adult llama were found in an approximately 1 acre timbered enclosure at a vacant homestead on private land when the landowner's agent visited to feed the animals. The dead llama was almost entirely intact with some feeding on the hind legs above the hocks and groin. The injured llama was stiff but able to move quickly hindering an examination. The death and injury were both estimated to have occurred less than 12 hours earlier.

Physical evidence and summary of findings: The area where the dead llama was found was searched, but a clear attack scene was not found. Fresh wolf tracks were found less than 10 yards from the carcass. The remains of the dead llama were skinned and portions of the hide on the hind legs was shaved. Several pre-mortem tooth scrapes up to ¼ inch diameter were found on the hide of the hind legs above the hocks. An area of muscle tissue on the right hind leg, approximately 6 inches by 4 inches, exhibited pre-mortem bruising and tissue damage to a depth of at least 2 inches. The injured llama had tooth scrapes several inches long on both hind legs above the hocks and behind the right elbow. The pre-mortem tooth wounds on both animals are clear evidence of attack by a predator, and the size, location, and severity of injuries are similar to other confirmed wolf attacks on livestock. This event is attributed to the Five Points Pack.

April 14, 2020 – Union County (Cricket Flat area)

Date Investigated: 4/14/2020

Cause of death/injury: Other

General situation and animal information: A livestock producer found the remains of a dead, approximately 6-week-old calf at about 7:00am on 4/14/20 in a small private-land calving pasture. The producer removed the carcass from the pasture for ODFW to examine later that day. The carcass was mostly intact except for the majority of the organs and some of the tissues from the nose and belly had been scavenged. It was estimated that the calf died less than 24 hours prior to being found.

Physical evidence and summary of findings: The area where the calf was initially found was searched. No attack scene was found. The majority of the calf carcass was shaved and skinned, then examined. There were no pre-mortem marks or trauma on the hide or in the tissue to indicate predation or how the calf died. The cause of death is unknown but was not wolf related.

April 2, 2020 – Morrow County (Rhea Creek area)

Date Investigated: 4/2/20

Cause of death/injury: Cow – Possible/Unknown,
Calf – Possible/Unknown

General situation and animal information: On the morning of 4/2, a livestock owner's agent found a dead adult cow and the remains of a young calf about 60 yards apart in a draw in a large grassland private-land pasture. The majority of the tissue and organs had been consumed from the cow, except most of the left front leg tissue was intact. The majority of the hide was present with the right abdomen, right leg, and part of the right hind leg missing. Only the bones of two legs were found of the calf. The date of death for both animals was estimated to be around 3/30. The agent reported seeing 2 wolves in the pasture on 3/29. There were GPS collar locations of a Heppner Pack wolf within ¼ mile of the carcass location each night between 3/28 and 4/2.

Physical evidence and summary of findings: The area around the carcasses was searched for signs of a disturbance. No signs of an attack or struggle was present. The remains of the cow carcass was skinned and examined, and the hide was shaved in the areas where wolves attack adult cows. There was no premortem trauma or bites on the carcass, except for one possibly premortem bruise in the tissue on the left front leg at the elbow with corresponding 1/8-inch-wide scrapes 3/8 inch apart on the hide. With no reasonable physical evidence that the death was wolf-related, and due to the missing hide and tissue on the right side the determination is possible/unknown. There was not enough of the calf to investigate to make any determination besides possible/unknown.

April 1, 2020 – Union County (Taylor Creek area)

Date Investigated: 4/1/2020

Cause of death/injury: Possible/Unknown

General situation and animal information: A livestock producer found the remains of a dead, approximately 6-week-old calf at about 6:30am on 3/31/20 in a small private-land calving pasture. The producer removed the carcass from the pasture for ODFW to examine the following day. The carcass had been largely consumed with only portions of the ribcage, left rear leg, and spine remaining. All hide and muscle tissue was missing except on the remaining leg below the hock. It was estimated that the calf died 2-3 days prior to being found.

Physical evidence and summary of findings: The remaining calf carcass was skinned and examined and the area where the calf was initially found was searched. No chase, struggle, or kill scene was found. There were no pre-mortem bite marks on the hide or bite-caused hemorrhage to muscle tissue indicating a predator attack. There was evidence of both coyote and avian scavenger activity on the carcass and in the pasture. Due to the missing muscle tissue and hide, the investigation determination is possible/unknown.

March 21, 2020 – Crook County (South Fork Crooked River area)

Date Investigated: 3/21/2020

Cause of death/injury: Other

General situation and animal information: A ranch hand saw a wolf feeding on a dead 10-day-old calf around 4:30 pm on 3/20/20 in a large, sagebrush, private-land calving pasture. The producer removed the carcass from the pasture for ODFW to examine the following day. The carcass was intact, except for all entrails, some tissue from the right front leg, and a 3 x 2.5 inch area of tissue from the neck was missing.

The hide was largely intact, with one opening at the sternal side of the ribcage and a small opening at the neck. It was estimated that the calf died the night of 3/19 or the morning of 3/20.

Physical evidence and summary of findings: The calf carcass was skinned and examined and the nearby area was searched. About 50 yards from the carcass was a 10-foot area of disturbed ground with wolf and adult cow tracks where the calf had originally died, but there were no pre-mortem bite marks on the hide or bite-caused hemorrhage to muscle tissue indicating the wolf killed the calf. The cause of death is unknown, but was not wolf-related.

March, 9 2020 – Baker County (Immigrant Gulch area)

Date Investigated: 3/9/20

Cause of death/injury: Confirmed

General situation and animal information: On the afternoon of 3/8/20 a livestock producer found an injured 2-day-old calf on a fenced 350-acre private land pasture. The livestock producer scheduled ODFW to examine the live calf the following morning. The calf was able to stand and walked stiffly. The calf was more lethargic than the other calves in the field. The calf was estimated to have been injured approximately 3 days before.

Physical evidence and summary of findings: The calf sustained numerous bite marks to the rear of both hind quarters above the hock, and to the groin that were clear evidence of attack by a predator. The rear legs and groin area were shaved for examination. The left rear leg was hot and swollen with multiple tooth scrapes. Shallow wounds had begun to form scabs and the deeper wounds were still weeping. There were paired canine bite punctures near the pelvis and scrapes on the right rear leg with approximately 1 7/8 inch spacing. Several of the tooth scrapes were >1/8" in diameter. The canine spacing and location of the injuries were similar to other confirmed wolf attack injuries on calves. The location of the attack was within the Cornucopia Pack AKWA.

February 28, 2020 – Union County (High Valley area)

Date Investigated: 2/28/20

Cause of death/injury: Other

General situation and animal information: On the morning of 2/28/20, a livestock producer found a dead approximately 1-day-old, 60 lb. calf in a private-land pasture about 400 yards from the nearest house. Most muscle tissue behind the shoulders, and all entrails had been consumed. The calf was estimated to have died the previous night.

Physical evidence and summary of findings: The carcass was skinned and examined, and the surrounding area searched for an attack scene. A struggle scene approximately 40 yards in length containing significant blood splatter on rocks and vegetation and coyote tracks was found. There were pre-mortem bites with associated tissue hemorrhaging up to ¼" deep on the legs, top of shoulders, head, and face. Paired canine puncture spacing ranged from 1" to 1 ¼". The attack scene, location and depth of hemorrhaging, and the tooth spacing of bite marks are consistent with coyote predation. The death of this calf was not wolf related.

February 16, 2020 – Baker County A, B (Eagle Creek area)

Date Investigated: 2/16/20

Cause of death/injury: Confirmed (1), Probable (1)

General situation and animal information: On the afternoon of 2/12/2020 five cattle (3 bulls, 1 cow, and 1 2019 calf) were found stranded on a private timbered parcel. The livestock producer had been unable to find them when gathering his livestock off his USFS allotment in the fall. A friend returned on 2/15/2020 to trail the cows out and found the dead yearling steer and an injured 2-year-old bull. ODFW was contacted on 2/16/20. Fresh wolf tracks were found at the scene. The steer was largely consumed and only a small piece of the hide, skull and pelvis remained. The bull was euthanized due to its injuries and examined.

Physical evidence and summary of findings: The remains of the steer were examined. It was estimated to have died 3-4 days prior. The steer had been mostly consumed and no muscle tissue remained. Numerous wolf tracks were found by the carcass and the hide that remained had numerous tooth scrapes that measured up to 1/4" in diameter and up to 3 inches long, that appeared to be postmortem. The bull was estimated to have been injured 3-4 days prior. Numerous pre-mortem bite scrapes were found behind both front elbows, the rear and sides of both hind legs from the anus to just above the hock, the groin, and the lower right flank. The bite scrapes measured up to ¼ inch across and up to 5 inches long. The muscle tissue underneath the bites on the rear legs showed areas of associated trauma up to 9 by 6 inches across and 3" in depth. Due to the time since the attack and the recent snowfall no attack scene was found for either animal. The number, location and direction of the bites and the associated depth of injuries on the bull are consistent with other confirmed wolf attack injuries on cows and is a confirmed wolf depredation. The steer died at the same location and time as the injuries to the bull occurred, and is a probable wolf depredation. This event is attributed to the Keating Pack.

January 7, 2020 – Union County (Hilgard area)

Date Investigated: 1/7/20

Cause of death/injury: Possible/Unknown

General situation and animal information: On 1/7/20, the partial remains of an adult llama were found in a small pasture on private land. Portions of the hide from the hind legs and back were present, but the remaining bones and hide were scattered over a large area and had been heavily scavenged by wolves and coyotes with all muscle tissue consumed. The death was estimated to have occurred two to three days earlier.

Physical evidence and summary of findings: The area where the llama remains were found was searched, but no attack scene was located. The remaining hide and bones were examined. There were no pre-mortem injuries found on the carcass remains. Due to the missing muscle tissue and hide, the investigation determination is possible/unknown.