



ODFW LIVESTOCK DEPREDATION INVESTIGATION REPORTS

January – April 2021

This document lists livestock depredation investigations completed by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife since January 1, 2021. 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 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 8, 2021 – Wallowa County (Prairie Creek area)

Date Investigated: 4/8/21

Cause of death/injury: Possible/Unknown

General situation and animal information: On the morning of 4/8/21, a ranch hand found the remains of a 5-day-old calf in a privately owned feedlot and pasture. Over 75% of the carcass was consumed. The only remaining parts were the left front leg, both hind legs, and rib bone fragments scattered over a half mile from the feedlot. It was estimated the calf died less than 12 hours prior to the investigation.

Physical evidence and summary of findings: The surrounding area was searched and the carcass remains were shaved, skinned, and examined. A struggle scene approximately 20 yards in length containing spots of dripping blood was found. There were small areas of 1/16 to 1/2 inch deep pre-mortem hemorrhaging behind the left elbow, left stifle, and on the back of the right leg above the hock. The struggle scene and pre-mortem hemorrhaging are signs of predator attack. The location and severity of injuries are consistent with coyote attacks on calves, but since most of the evidence was gone, wolf depredation cannot be ruled out.

April 6, 2021 – Wallowa County (Prairie Creek area)

Date Investigated: 4/6/21

Cause of death/injury: Other

General situation and animal information: On the morning of 4/6/21, a producer found the remains of a 1 or 2-day-old calf in his privately owned calving pasture. Some organs and portions of the abdominal cavity had been consumed, but the carcass was otherwise intact. It was estimated the calf died less than 16 hours prior to the investigation.

Physical evidence and summary of findings: The calf carcass was shaved, skinned, and examined. There were multiple pre-mortem tooth scrapes on both thighs and on the throat measuring up to 1/8 inch wide and 1.5 inches long. Associated hemorrhaging extended up to 1 inch into underlying muscle tissues. The pre-mortem bite marks are a clear sign of predator attack and the size, locations, and severity of injuries are consistent with coyote attacks on calves.

March 31, 2021 – Baker County (Keating Valley area)

Date Investigated: 3/31/21

Cause of death/injury: Other

General situation and animal information: On the morning of 3/31/21, a producer found a dead 7-week-old calf in a private-land pasture approximately 300 yards from a residence. Most of the muscle tissue had been scavenged, but 80% of the hide remained including the majority of the head, back, front legs, rear legs and tail. It was estimated the calf died the night prior to the investigation.

Physical evidence and summary of findings: There was no chase or struggle scene found in the pasture. The carcass was skinned and the hide shaved. There were no pre-mortem bite marks or hemorrhage in the remaining hide and muscle tissue. Due to the absence of any pre-mortem wounds on the remaining hide, which included the areas typically attacked by wolves, the determination is other.

March 22, 2021 – Lake County (Lower Silver Creek area)

Date Investigated: 3/22/21

Cause of death/injury: Possible/Unknown

General situation and animal information: On the morning of 3/22/21, a producer found a dead approximately 10-day-old calf in a 95-acre open country private-land calving pasture. The producer reported that his cows were agitated on the morning of 3/22 standing near the gate, and that he had subsequently found wolf tracks in the pasture near the calf carcass. The majority of the skeleton and substantial portions of the hide were present, though very little tissue remained. It was estimated the calf died approximately 2 days prior to the investigation.

Physical evidence and summary of findings: The head and lower legs were skinned and parts of the hide shaved. Significant trauma was noted on the throat with deep tissue hemorrhaging. There were several marks and scrapes on the hide along the back with associated shallow bruising, that were inconsistent with wolf bites. GPS locations from a radio-collared wolf around the calf's time of death were 4.3 to 6.5 miles away. One GPS collar location was within 300m of the scene at 3/22 at 6am. Wounds on the throat of the calf are consistent with a predator attack. Wolves do not usually bite only at the throat. There were no apparent wolf bite scrapes anywhere on the hide, and no bites on the hide of the hindquarters, where wolves commonly bite. However, the heavily scavenged carcass was missing hide and muscle

tissue from several other common wolf attack areas. Because of the lack of diagnostic evidence to confirm species, the determination is possible/unknown.

March 18, 2021 – Baker County (Pritchard Creek area)

Date Investigated: 3/18/21

Cause of death/injury: Possible/Unknown

General situation and animal information: On the evening of 3/17/21, a producer found the lower jawbones of a few-day-old calf on public land adjacent to a large private-land pasture. ODFW was notified late in the evening and investigated the next morning. The remains consisted of two separated lower jawbones and the front incisors. The producer reported that his cows were stirred up on the morning of 3/16, and that he saw a black radio-collared wolf leaving the area carrying a leg bone on the evening of 3/17.

Physical evidence and summary of findings: There was no muscle tissue or hide on either of the jaw bones and no pre-mortem bite marks were found. There was a chase scene with wolf and adult cow tracks that started about 75 yards up the hill then led down to a larger area of trampled vegetation and turned over soil with sliding adult cattle tracks at the bottom. The chasing incident is estimated to have occurred on the morning of the 3/16 to midday on the 3/17. There was no blood on the scene to indicate whether the calf was attacked or already dead. Three GPS collar locations from a radio-collared Lookout Mt wolf were at the scene between 3/16 at 10pm and 3/17 at 6am. Due to the absence of hide and muscle tissue and the absence of a kill scene, the determination is possible/unknown.

March 9, 2021 – Union County (Cabin Creek area)

Date Investigated: 3/9/21

Cause of death/injury: Other

General situation and animal information: On the morning of 3/8/2021, a livestock producer found a three-year-old adult cow deceased in a 105-acre private-land pasture. ODFW staff was notified the evening of 3/8/2021 and responded the morning of 3/9/2021. The cow had a previously injured rear leg, all muscle tissue and hide remained on the fully intact carcass. The estimated date of death was the night of 3/7/2021 or morning of 3/8/2021.

Physical evidence and summary of findings: There was no evidence of a chase or struggle scene. Parts of the animal were shaved and the entire carcass was skinned and examined thoroughly. There were no bites, tooth scrapes, or predator-related marks on the cow. No evidence suggested the animal was attacked or killed by a predator. The cause of death is unknown, but was not wolf-related.

February 23, 2021 – Grant County (Gilbert Ridge area)

Date Investigated: 2/23/21

Cause of death/injury: Other (3)

General situation and animal information: On the morning of 2/23/21 an agent of a livestock producer found three dead calves in a 30-acre private pasture. Calf 1 and 3 were less than 24 hours old. Calf 2 was 4 days old. For calves 1 and 2, the carcasses were largely intact with the majority of muscle tissue and hide remaining. Calf 3 was mostly consumed, with the majority of hide and part of the skeleton remaining. All three calves had died the night prior to the investigation.

Physical evidence and summary of findings: All three carcasses were skinned and examined. No pre-mortem hemorrhaging or wounds were located on calf 1. Calf 2 had areas of hemorrhaging located at and below both hocks, left stifle, left front elbow, and right front elbow, extending down to the lower leg. The bruises were less than ½ inch in depth. Pre-mortem bite marks measuring 1/8" diameter were found on the hide of the neck. No pre-mortem hemorrhaging or wounds were located on the hide of calf 3. The cause of death of calves 1 and 3 is unknown but was not wolf-related. The pre-mortem bite marks and hemorrhaging on calf 2 are clear signs of predator attack, however the size and shallow depth of injuries are not consistent with wolf attacks on calves.

February 18, 2021 – Wasco County (Antelope area)

Date Investigated: 2/18/21

Cause of death/injury: Other

General situation and animal information: On the morning of 2/17/21, a livestock owner found two approximately 150 pound injured calves in their feeding corral. The rancher euthanized one calf with extensive injuries that morning. ODFW was called late in the afternoon and investigated the next morning. The live calf was mobile and was able to move fine with the rest of the herd upon ODFW's arrival the next day. The injuries were estimated to have occurred overnight on 2/16-2/17.

Physical evidence and summary of findings: Several domestic dog tracks were found in and around the corral. The euthanized calf was skinned and examined. There were several tooth scrapes and punctures with pre-mortem hemorrhaging on the hindquarters, both front legs, neck and face. Depth of trauma associated with these wounds was ¼ - ¾ inch deep. There was also an open wound on the right shoulder that was approximately five inches in diameter and up to two inches deep. The injured calf was briefly restrained and examined. There were fresh tooth scrapes on the nose and inside the right hind leg. The pre-mortem bite marks are a clear sign of predator attack and the size, location, and shallow depth of injuries are consistent with domestic dog attacks on livestock.

February 9, 2021 – Deschutes County (Millican Valley area)

Date Investigated: 2/9/21

Cause of death/injury: Other

General situation and animal information: On the morning of 2/9/21, a livestock producer found a dead 7-week-old calf in a private-land pasture. Organs and muscle tissue around the pelvis, upper rear legs, and ribs had been scavenged. The hide was intact other than portions of the chest and abdomen. It was estimated that the calf died the night prior to the investigation.

Physical evidence and summary of findings: The calf carcass was skinned and examined. There was no evidence of pre-mortem hemorrhaging or injuries consistent with a predator attack. The cause of death is unknown, but not wolf-related.

February 8, 2021 – Wallowa County (Prairie Creek area)

Date Investigated: 2/8/21

Cause of death/injury: Other

General situation and animal information: The producer found the recently born, 40 lb., dead calf around 10:00 am on 2/8/21. The calf was found in an approximately 260-acre private grassland pasture with approximately 100 pregnant cows. The calf carcass was largely intact except for the abdominal organs and some muscle tissue from the inside of the rear legs had been scavenged. The calf was estimated to have died within the last 24 hours.

Physical evidence and summary of findings: The entire carcass was skinned and no evidence of pre-mortem trauma or tissue damage was found. The calf's hooves still had the soft newborn hoof cap, which had not dried out or worn off, indicating that the calf may have never stood and may have been dead at birth. The cause of the death of this calf is unknown, but was not wolf-related.

February 4, 2021 – Lake County A (Goose Lake Basin area)

Date Investigated: 2/4/2021

Cause of death/injury: No Determination

General situation and animal information: On the evening of 2/4/21, ODFW staff received notice of two dead newborn calves (approximately 60lbs) as well as cougar tracks approximately .39mi north of the dead calves. ODFW confirmed that the reported cougar tracks were actually tracks of a wolf that traveled through the area on 2/4. The carcasses were located in a 5-acre calving pen on private property close to the ranch home. Investigation report February 4, 2021 – Lake County A describes the first carcass. The calf was largely consumed with disarticulated appendages cleaned of muscled tissue. All internal organs and skeletal muscle was scavenged. It was estimated that this calf died around 2/1/21.

Physical evidence and summary of findings: At the direction of the owner of the dead calf, the carcass remains were not skinned. No pre-mortem hemorrhage was observed on the hide. Significant evidence of both coyote and avian scavenging was present. No wolf or cougar tracks were found in the snow near the pen. Since the carcass could not be skinned, insufficient access to information was available to ODFW staff to make a determination in this case.

February 4, 2021 – Lake County B (Goose Lake Basin area)

Date Investigated: 2/4/2021

Cause of death/injury: No Determination

General situation and animal information: On the evening of 2/4/21, ODFW staff received notice of two dead newborn calves (approximately 60lbs). The carcasses were located in a 5-acre calving pen on private property close to the ranch home. Calf carcass B was mostly intact with only the front left quarter missing. It was estimated that this calf died around 2/3/21.

Physical evidence and summary of findings: At the direction of the owner of the dead calf, the carcass was not skinned. No pre-mortem hemorrhage was observed on the hide or visible tissue. The hooves were clean and retained the soft newborn hoof caps, indicating the calf may have never stood and may have been dead at birth. Since the carcass could not be skinned, insufficient access to information was available to ODFW staff to make a determination in this case.

January 17, 2021 – Baker County (Foster Gulch area)

Date Investigated: 1/17/21

Cause of death/injury: Confirmed as wolf-caused

General situation and animal information: On the morning of 1/16/21, an approximately 1100 lb. 3-year-old injured cow was found on public land adjacent to a large private rangeland pasture. The cow was euthanized because it could not get up or walk. The carcass was partially skinned and examined by the ranch manager, and then buried to eliminate the predator attractant. Photographs of the injuries and an approximately 18x18-inch section of hide were provided to ODFW for examination. The injuries to the cow were estimated to have occurred late on 1/15/21 to early on 1/16/21.

Physical evidence and summary of findings: The pictures showed evidence of attack by a predator, with pre-mortem tissue damage and bleeding around the anus and on the tail, and pre-mortem tooth scrapes with associated muscle tissue bruising on the right hind leg. The section of hide from above the right hock was shaved and examined. There were more than 30 pre-mortem tooth scrapes that were up to 1/4 inch wide and 3 inches long with bruising apparent on the inside of the hide. Paired canine tooth scrapes were measured at approx. 1 7/8 to 2 inches. The location, size, number, and direction of tooth scrapes and underlying muscle tissue trauma are consistent with wolf attack injuries to adult cows. The incident was wolf-caused but it may not meet the Wolf Plan definition of depredation (lawfully present livestock on public land). This attack is attributed to the Cornucopia Pack.