



ODFW LIVESTOCK DEPREDACTION INVESTIGATION REPORT

Investigation ID: 140820 Umatilla

Date Investigated: 8/20/2014

General Area: Weston Mountain area – private land

General situation and animal information: At 9:30AM on the morning of 8/20/2014, a landowner turned out the sheep (17 adult sheep) from their night pen for daytime grazing. Approximately 30 minutes later the sheep were observed running back to the night pen area, and the owner discovered that one of the ewes was missing. After a 3.5 hour search, the dead ewe was found at 4:00PM about 400 yards from the night pen. Wolf depredation was suspected and ODFW investigated immediately upon finding the partially consumed ewe.

Physical evidence of attack by a predator: Though a significant portion of this ewe had been already consumed, premortem bite wounds with associated hemorrhaging and tissue damage were clearly observed on the ewe's remains indicating the animal was alive when attacked. In addition a kill scene was observed by disturbed vegetation and soil, and a 35 foot- long area, with dried blood, rumen contents and disturbed ground, was also observed leading to the carcass – both indicators that this animal was predated.

Evidence that the predator was a wolf: Multiple large bite wounds were observed on the neck. The tooth marks were large ($\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{3}{8}$ inch across) and paired bite marks on the anterior of the neck were spaced at $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches. The proximal ends of the humerus were broken, consistent with large predator jaw strength. The scene indicated a struggle over a large area (at least 35'). Wolf presence at or near the time of death and very quick consumption (less than 6 hours) and scattering of the carcass indicates multiple wolves feeding.

Evidence of wolf presence near the time of the animal(s) death/injury: A single wolf track (and no other predator sign) was observed at the carcass. Additional wolf tracks were found on the road .4 miles north of the night pens (tracks were heading toward the sheep area) and 60 feet from kill scene. GPS radio-collar data points from OR14 were between .3 - 1.1 miles of the carcass on the same day of the depredation. OR22 collar data showed that he was less than 300 yards from the night pen at 6AM of the same day.

Recent wolf depredation in the same or nearby area: ODFW confirmed sheep depredation by the Umatilla River wolves on this property in 2012. On 6/13/2014 and 6/14/2014, ODFW confirmed that wolves of the Umatilla River pack depredated multiple sheep and 1 cow approximately 7 miles from this location.

Cause of death/injury:

Confirmed Wolf

Probable Wolf

Possible/Unknown

Other

Summary: A struggle/kill scene was identified near the carcass, and multiple large pre-mortem bite wounds were observed. This information corroborated the report of distressed sheep running back toward the night-pen area. This is reasonable evidence the ewe died as a result of predation. There was evidence of wolf presence (tracks at the carcass and same-day GPS collar data) in the immediate area. Though largely consumed, the premortem bite wounds size and location, known wolf presence, and an observed kill scene, are adequate evidence that this ewe died as a result of wolf depredation.