

Summary from MFWP Weekly Wolf Reports. 2009.

June 6, - June 12, 2009

On 6/8, Idaho WS confirmed a sheep was killed on the U. S. Sheep Station near Humphrey, ID. The pack thought responsible is called Sage Creek and it is a border pack. ID WS heard the Sage Creek radio within about ½ mile of the depredation site. ID Fish and Game authorized ID WS to remove 1 wolf. The pack has since moved back into Montana and MT FWP has given ID WS or MT WS staff authorization to work on either side of the state line.

July 11 – July 24, 2009

On 7/16, IDFG called FWP (Ross) and reported that the Sage Creek pack (a MT-ID border pack that is counted in the MT population) had killed another sheep on the Experimental Sheep Station near Humphrey ID. FWP agreed to the IDFG request for lethal control and granted permission for IDWS to work within MT and to coordinate their work with MT WS. One adult male was killed on 7/23.

On 7/23, FWP (Lance) coordinated with ID Fish and Game and ID WS regarding confirmed sheep killed near Humphrey ID by a wolf pack that is a “border” pack. This pack resides in ID and is considered an ID pack, though it occasionally travels in Montana. IDFG had authorized full pack removal. FWP authorized ID WS to carry out lethal control efforts in MT should the wolves be found in MT and requested ID WS to coordinate their work with MT WS. ID WS killed one adult wolf about 1 mile across the state border into MT on 7/23. The carcass will be retained by IDFG as a part of their pack management / data collection effort.

July 25 – July 31, 2009

On 7/30, IDFG contacted FWP to report that 13 buck sheep were confirmed killed just across the MTID border in ID on the sheep experiment station. This is the same area as previous sheep losses on 6/10 and 7/16, totaling six dead sheep. The Sage Creek pack is suspected to have a rendezvous site 1-3 miles away from the sheep pasture on the ID side of the border, but the pack dens in Montana and is considered a Montana pack. FWP has been coordinating with IDFG since June. There is also close coordination between IDFG, ID WS and MT WS. FWP and IDFG decided to authorize removal of up to three adult wolves, which is ongoing. Monitoring suggests that two adults and a litter of pups would remain when this lethal control effort concludes.

Correction: FWP previously reported that a MT-ID border pack east of I-15 was a border pack that was counted in the ID population. After 3 incidents in which at least 10 sheep were killed in the Middle Creek / Pleasant Valley areas on the ID side of the border, MT FWP and IDFG decided to authorize lethal removal of the rest of the pack. During the control efforts, it was learned that the pack had indeed denned on the MT side of the state border and will in fact be counted / reported as a Montana pack – and not an ID pack. All control efforts concluded by 7/23, with the **removal of an adult male and 6 pups.**

July 31 – August 7, 2009

On 8/3, IDWS confirmed that wolves killed 7 buck sheep on the ID sheep experiment station near Humphrey in the same area as previous losses occurred on 6/10, 7/16, and 8/3. FWP had authorized removal of up to three adult wolves, which was completed by ID WS on 8/4.

August 14 - 21, 2009

On 8/17 WS confirmed one calf and had a second calf as probable killed by wolves in the West Fork of Corral Creek (public land) on the south side of the Centennial Valley in Montana and near the Idaho border. This is in the territory of the Sage Creek pack. This pack has been involved in confirmed livestock losses in Montana and Idaho in 2009. Six adult wolves have been killed thus far and with this newly confirmed incident, MT WS has been authorized to remove the remaining pack members.

August 22 - 28, 2009

On 8/17 WS confirmed one calf and had a second calf as probable killed by wolves in the West Fork of Corral Creek (public land) on the south side of the Centennial Valley in Montana and near the Idaho border. This is in the territory of the Sage Creek pack. This pack has been involved in confirmed livestock losses in Montana and Idaho in 2009. Six adult wolves have been killed thus far and with this newly confirmed incident, MT WS has been authorized to remove the remaining pack members.

September 19-25, 2009

The Sage Creek pack has had several incidents of confirmed cattle losses both in Montana and in Idaho. Incremental control in July and August by ID WS and MT WS and 6 adult wolves have been killed thus far and with this newly confirmed incident, MT WS has been authorized to remove the remaining pack members. FWP had authorized removal of the remaining wolves on August 19. No additional wolves have been killed and no further losses have been confirmed. The 45-day lethal control authorization expires on October 2.

September 26 – October 2, 2009

On 10/1, WS removed the 4 remaining wolves from the Sage Creek pack, including the radio collar, achieving full pack removal. The Sage Creek pack has had several incidents of confirmed cattle losses both in Montana and in Idaho.

Summary of Outlying Packs 2009(Centennial, Horn Mtn),

September 12-18, 2009

On 9/15, WS completed the lethal control effort to remove the second of 2 wolves in the Horn Mtn pack in southwest Montana. One wolf was opportunistically darted and fitted with a radio collar.

September 5 - 11, 2009

Catching up: FWP previously reported that on 8/31, WS confirmed a calf as being injured by wolves in the 3 Dollar Bridge area south of Ennis. In the past this has been part of the Horn Mountain pack territory. Because of recent confirmed depredations, efforts to remove 2 wolves

from this pack were already authorized and underway. An adult male wolf was killed on 9/3 in Antelope Basin. Efforts to remove the second wolf are ongoing.

August 29 – September 4, 2009

On 8/31, WS confirmed a calf as being injured by wolves in the 3 Dollar Bridge area south of Ennis. In the past this has been part of the Horn Mountain pack territory. Because of recent confirmed depredations, efforts to remove 2 wolves from this pack were already authorized and underway. No wolves have been killed yet.

August 22 - 28, 2009

WS completed its investigation and reported final results of the sheep incident south of Dillon. On 8/18, WS concluded 82 dead buck sheep as confirmed killed and 40 buck sheep as probable killed by wolves. WS also determined that the losses occurred within a short span of 1-3 days and likely comprise a single incident, as all appeared to have died at about the same time. The sheep owner has been putting lime on the carcasses to discourage scavenging. Nonetheless, bears had been scavenging and thus clear confirmation that 40 were killed by wolves was not possible – thus 40 were concluded as probable. The total of 122 includes injured animals that died during the August incident. Previously in July, WS confirmed 26 buck sheep were killed (includes injured which died as a result of the attack) in the same pasture. FWP authorized lethal control of three wolves that had been in the area and believed responsible for the July incident (1 gray was killed; 1 black was mortally wounded and suspected to have died; 1 black wolf is still alive). One uncollared adult wolf from the Centennial pack was killed on 8/18 upon authorization by FWP because it was found within about ½ mile of the sheep band on the morning of 8/18. The pack now consists of 2 collared adults and a litter of pups of the year. Control work is completed for the Centennial pack. However, WS is still authorized to kill one or both black wolves if found in the area where the sheep depredations occurred.

August 14 - 21, 2009

On 8/17, MTWS also got a call from a sheep producer that an unknown number of buck sheep had been killed in the Rock Creek area (private land) of the Blacktail south of Dillon. [This producer had lost sheep in late July from a group of three wolves (2 blacks and 1 gray). A control action to remove the three wolves was initiated in July in response to the sheep loss. FWP had also discussed the feasibility of increasing protection of the buck sheep through herders, dogs, or fladry. WS removed the gray and wounded one of the blacks on 7/27]. On 8/18, WS flew the sheep pasture looking for the one or two remaining blacks to complete the control work FWP had already requested and found the Centennial Pack within a 1/2 mile of the sheep pasture (3 adult grays and 5 pups). WS was then authorized to remove the uncollared adult from the Centennial pack, which they did that same morning (the 18th). This was the first depredation incident for the Centennial pack in 2009. WS was also still authorized to finish up control work for the 1 or 2 remaining black wolves. Also on 8/18, WS began the necropsy work on injured / dead bucks in this same pasture and losses are significant. The exact final tally of injured or dead bucks from this week's investigation is not available at this time, but it is estimated to be about 120 bucks. The remaining 12-14 bucks were gathered and taken to the home ranch. A couple of those were injured and are not expected to survive. The exact final tally of injured and dead buck sheep will be published in a future wolf weekly. The status of the 1-2 black wolves is unknown

at this time. During a monitoring flight on 8/20, no black wolves were seen in the area and the Centennial pack was not near any livestock.

August 8 - 14, 2009

On 8/12 WS looked at and confirmed two calves as killed by wolves on public land allotment. One of the calves appeared to be killed 3 or so days ago and the second was more recent and killed within the last day or so. They were about 100 yards apart and in the same area as the last confirmed kill on 7/28. This is in the territory of the Horn Mountain pack and there are 4-5 adults remaining in the group. WS was authorized to remove two uncollared adults from the pack.

July 31 – August 7, 2009

As of 7/27, WS had confirmed additional domestic sheep losses since 7/21 in the Rock Creek area south of Dillon. The tally is near 25 bucks. WS and sheep owners in the area have reported 2 blacks and 1 gray leaving the sheep and this is the same number and coloration of wolves seen in the Sweetwater where other sheep depredations occurred in recent weeks. FWP had made a new decision and requested removal of all three wolves. One wolf was killed on 7/27, one wolf was killed was mortally wounded. Efforts are ongoing. If additional wolves are seen, WS will attempt to collar a wolf.

On 8/7, WS confirmed one calf as injured by wolves on public land, the calf is expected to not live. This incident is linked with the Horse Prairie pack southwest of Dillon. On the FWP monitoring flight this week the pack was in the same area and mixed in with cattle. WS has been authorized to lethally remove one wolf from the pack.

July 11 – July 24, 2009

On 7/22, WS confirmed 6 dead buck sheep as killed by wolves on private land in the Rock creek area on the East Fork of the Blacktail. Additional dead sheep were investigated and confirmed as wolf depredation by the end of the week. Based on monitoring information and field reports, 3 uncollared 3 wolves from an unknown pack were in the immediate area of the sheep on repeated occasions. FWP had requested WS to collar and release a wolf to determine whether it was a new pack or the wolves were part of a different / known pack. Subsequent losses occurred on the same private land and totaled about 20-25 bucks. Because of repeated losses, FWP made a new decision and requested removal of the 3 wolves which appear to be unaffiliated with other known packs. Control work is ongoing.