# The wolves of Oregon

By Jim Anderson
Correspondent

In the 1800s, westward expansion of settlers and their livestock brought them into direct contact with wolves — because much of the wolves' prey base was destroyed as agriculture ate up what was once wildlife habitat.

With their prey base removed, wolves had no alternative but to prey on domestic livestock, which resulted in humans eliminating wolves from most of their historical range in the West. They were trapped and shot for a bounty, trapped for fur, and killed just because they were wolves.

Predator control was carried out throughout Central Oregon with methods ranging from trapping and snaring to digging out dens, and the use of cyanide and the lethal chemical 1080.

Predators such as weasels, bears, cougars, badgers, eagles, owls and hawks were also killed by 1080 poison to "protect livestock" — especially sheep. During both World Wars, wool was king, and wool-growers considered forests and sagebrush deserts of the West ideal for free sheep grazing.

In the 1950s, the idea of protecting "more desirable" wildlife species, such as deer and elk, became a significant motivation for predator control.

During this time of predator-killing, however, some wildlife biologists questioned the wisdom of removing the wolf from the ecosystem, and with the help of conservation organizations — and Congress — put a plan together to reintroduce the wolf to the West, choosing Yellowstone National Park as a good place to start.

In 1995-96, 31 gray wolves from western Canada were relocated to Yellowstone.

Since then, wolves have expanded their territory, including forays into Oregon.

A local hunter, Mark Gorman, recently reported what he is certain was a multiple-wolf sighting in the Round Lake area.

"August 29, 2015 my son and his friends are hunting near Round Lake off of Road 430, off of the Santiam Pass, and they were trying to call in elk when they heard what they thought was a coyote," Gorman wrote in an email to *The Nugget*. "One



USFW PHOTO

Adult gray wolf, Canis lupus. Will they eventually rid the town of Sisters of all the tame deer?

of them pulled out a coyote call, and called. What they got in return was at least five wolves on all sides of them... Really, how many wolves are in Oregon?"

We know for certain the wanderings of one wolf. In the fall of 2011, a radio-collared Oregon wolf with the designation OR-7, from the Imnaha Pack in northeast Oregon, made history. After an epic journey across the state, the 2-year-old male became the first confirmed wolf west of the Cascades since the last wolf bounty had been collected in 1947.

(In a moment of rare historic symmetry, OR-7, in its meanderings, passed by the very spot in the Umpqua National Forest where Oregon's "last" wolf was killed.)

As of this moment, according to ODFW wildlife biologist Simon Wray of the Bend Regional Office, there are currently 81 wolves in Oregon, but Wray says that should be considered a minimum. ODFW's website breaks that number down at http://dfw.state.or.us/Wolves/population.asp.

These figures can become more accurate if anyone who spots a wolf would report their observation to their local ODFW office, or go to the ODFW website and follow the reporting instructions.

# Oregon SAT scores show little change

PORTLAND (AP) — Oregon's class of 2015 did about the same as the class of 2014 on the SAT college entrance exam.

Students are tested in reading, writing and math, and each is scored on a scale of 200 to 800.

The College Board said Thursday that Oregon students scored 518 in reading, 516 in math and 496 in writing. That totals 1,530 points out of a possible 2,400. The class of 2014 scored one point higher — 1,531.

A combined score of 1,550 or higher is considered the benchmark for whether a student is likely ready for college. About half the Oregon test-takers met the threshold.

The average SAT score in the U.S. was a combined 1,490 points – 40 points lower than Oregon. Test-takers in The Beaver State easily topped the national average in reading and writing, and did slightly better in math.