

LEACHMAN: Man charged with several felony counts

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106 when an eastbound full-size Ford van drove across the centerline and nearly collided with the patrol vehicle. The sergeant reportedly had to take evasive action to avoid a crash.

The sergeant turned around and attempted to stop the van. According to police, the van did not stop and continued driving at highway speeds, not exceeding 60 mph. Two Deschutes County Sheriff’s Office Deputies were in the same area already, responding to citizen reports that the van driver might be impaired. The DCSO deputies and an Oregon State Police Fish & Wildlife Trooper joined in the pursuit of the van.

Additional Redmond police officers responded to the area of S.W. Highland Avenue and S.W. 31st Street and blocked traffic on Highland (Highway 126). Spike strips were deployed near the intersection and other officers set up at key intersections on Highland, at S.W. 27th Street and S.W. Rimrock Way, to control traffic.

The van eventually stopped on its own prior to reaching the spike strips, stopping next to several other vehicles, which had stopped while the highway was blocked. According to police, the driver of the vehicle, later identified as Scott Leachman, 64, from Sisters, initially followed commands to exit the vehicle but

became non-compliant and verbally challenged officers while standing outside of his vehicle. Officers approached Leachman and put him on the ground and placed him in custody.

Police reported that Leachman was extremely intoxicated and was injured during the arrest. Redmond Fire & Rescue medics responded to the scene at law enforcement’s request. Leachman was transported to St. Charles Medical Center – Redmond for treatment.

Leachman was alone in the vehicle during this incident and no one else was injured.

Leachman was later booked into jail on charges of DUII – Felony; Driving While Suspended – Felony; Attempt to Elude a Police Officer – Felony; Reckless Driving; Interfering with a Peace Officer; and Attempted Assault in the Second Degree.

“In this incident, choosing to continue the pursuit was deemed appropriate and justified due to speeds traveled and the amount of traffic on the road, in addition to the belief the driver may be impaired and was driving poorly prior to the start of the pursuit,” said Sergeant Curtis Chambers of the Redmond Police Department. “Discontinuing this pursuit would have allowed a suspected impaired driver to continue driving and put everyone at risk. We are very appreciative of everyone’s understanding why the highway was blocked and apologize for the inconvenience caused by Leachman’s actions.”

Wolf population grew in 2015

Oregon’s known wolf population continued to grow in 2015. The minimum Oregon wolf population is now 110 wolves, a 36 percent increase over the 2014 population.

ODFW released the 2015 Wolf Report today, after completing late-winter surveys to establish how many wolf packs had bred and the minimum known number of wolves for the year 2015. The department uses hard evidence (tracks, sign, remote camera footage, visual observations) when counting wolves, and that is why the population figures are referred to as a minimum known population. Wildlife biologists believe the actual number of wolves is likely higher.

ODFW documented 11 breeding pairs of wolves in 2015, up from nine last year. A breeding pair is an adult male and female wolf that produce at least two pups which survive through the end of the year. (Pups are born in mid-April each year.) Reproduction was confirmed in 14 groups of wolves, and 33 pups born in 2015 are known to have survived through Dec. 31. ODFW also documented three new pairs of wolves. Known wolf groups occurred in parts of Baker, Grant, Jackson, Klamath, Lake, Morrow, Umatilla, Union and Wallowa counties.

“As predicted, Oregon’s wolf population has continued to expand its range and grow in number,” said Russ

Morgan, ODFW wolf coordinator. “While northeast Oregon continues to have the highest number of wolves, there is also continued movement of wolves into southern Oregon.”

“As predicted, Oregon’s wolf population has continued to expand its range and grow in number.”
— Russ Morgan

The rate of depredation of livestock by wolves decreased in 2015, despite the increase in wolf population. ODFW investigations confirmed nine incidents of wolves killing livestock and two probable incidents. A total of 10 sheep, three calves and one working dog were killed by wolves, and another two calves and one lamb were injured. This is down from 11 confirmed incidents and 32 livestock (2 cattle and 30 sheep) lost last year.

A total of 29 percent of Oregon wolf packs were involved in livestock depredation. The majority of depredations (77 percent) occurred on private land and most happened during the months of May, June, August, September. The Oregon Department of Agriculture’s

Wolf Depredation Compensation and Financial Assistance program distributed \$174,428 in grants to 10 counties to proactively address wolf-livestock conflict and compensate landowners who lost animals to wolves. Most funds were used for preventative measures (\$119,390) and for direct payment (\$14,018) to livestock producers for confirmed losses.

While no wolves were killed by ODFW, agents or landowners due to livestock depredation, ODFW documented seven wolf mortalities in 2015. A five-month-old pup was found dead in the Catherine Pack rendezvous area and appeared to die of natural causes. One wolf that died had a rodent in its stomach and the wolf tested positive for a chemical that is poisonous to animals. The cause of the death of the Sled Springs breeding male and female found dead in August is unknown. Three wolves were illegally shot.

ODFW continued its efforts to monitor Oregon’s wolf population by collaring an additional eight wolves over the year. At the end of 2015 there were collars on 11 percent of Oregon’s wolf population.

To see the full report or learn more about wolves, visit www.odfw.com/wolves. The Wolf Area of Known Activity (AKWA) maps with updated 2015 information will be posted later this week.

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