

# Wolves in Colville Valley worry state wildlife managers

Predators seen in close proximity to humans, domestic animals

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**  
Capital Press

**SPOKANE VALLEY, Wash.** — State officials say they are worried that wolves in the Colville Valley of northeastern Washington may be getting too accustomed to humans.

Two or three wolves in the Stranger Pack have shown up near the homes of residents, several of which have dogs, said Jay Shepherd, conflict specialist for the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Department officials are monitoring the predators, but for now they say there's no risk to public safety.

Shepherd spoke to members of the state wolf advisory group during their July 7 meeting in Spokane Valley, Wash.

"The more times wolves come into contact with humans and human-occupied areas with dogs, the more they become accustomed to that being part of their ritual, behavior and home range,"



Matthew Weaver/Capital Press

Jay Shepherd, conflict specialist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife in Colville, Wash., chats with Conservation Northwest representative Paula Swedeen July 6 during the wolf advisory group meeting in Spokane Valley, Wash.

Shepherd said. "That's starting to occur on the periphery of the Colville Valley."

The area includes residents who own dogs and ranches, Shepherd said.

The department advises residents to haze the wolves, including clapping at the animal, throwing rocks and possibly installing fences to protect their dogs and other animals.

"The wolves do travel in between populated areas, but they tend to also avoid people," said Donny Martorello, wolf policy manager for WDFW. "We want them to maintain their fear of people

and avoid areas with people."

Wolves see dogs as other wolves, which can lead to territorial disputes, Martorello said. Pet owners should keep their animals enclosed at night.

Officials are looking for opportunities to help with hazing and considering future steps.

Trent Roussin, a wolf biologist at the department, said GPS data doesn't show any unusual activity for the area.

"If you see wolves interacting with your dogs, you're going to want to scare them off whatever non-lethal way you can ... unless you fear for your dog's life," he said.

Residents are more likely to successfully haze the wolf than department staff, Roussin said.

"They're going to be the ones who see it," he said. "The chances of us getting up there at the right time are pretty slim."

Wolves are not known for aggression towards humans unless severely habituated, Shepherd said. He believes the wolves are near the beginning of that stage.

"It's definitely a concern — what you want to do is stop it now," he said.

Don Dashiell, a Stevens County commissioner, said the rural county has a dense population and enough wolves that the animals are likely to be exposed to people.

"Our level of comfort with habituation might be lower than what the game department might want to wait for," Dashiell said.

County officials want to be aware of potential problems, Dashiell said. He wondered how long the department will allow non-aggressive interactions before stepping in.

"They at least have raised their hand to say, 'We've got a problem,' they just haven't quite convinced themselves they've got to do something about it yet," he said.

## Wolves kill two calves in northeastern Washington

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**  
Capital Press

Wolves have killed another calf in northeastern Washington, and two more were eaten by wolves, a rancher says.

This is the second confirmed case of wolves killing calves in the region in a week.

"It's an ongoing thing," said Len McIrvine of the Diamond M Ranch near Laurier, Wash. He said the Profanity Peak Pack, Sherman Pack and another pack are in the vicinity.

"According to the famous wolf plan that has no bearing on anything, we're supposed to let them kill four of our cows, and then the game department might take action, although that's not a guarantee," McIrvine said.

McIrvine has declined compensation from the state. He has alerted the Ferry County sheriff and commissioners in Stevens and Ferry counties.

A Diamond M worker has been near the livestock daily, McIrvine said.

"These wolves are killing right where there's a lot of people — huckleberry pickers are there continually where they're killing the cattle," McIrvine said. "People being on the ground has no bearing, because the wolves kill at night. They might go lay up in a dense thicket during the day a mile from people, but as soon as the people are out of there, they come right out and are killing cattle."

In the other case, wolves from the Profanity Peak pack killed a calf last week, according to a state wildlife official.

The calf, weighing about 250 pounds, was killed by one or more members of the pack, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife wolf policy lead Donny Martorello said in an email to state wolf advisory group members.

Martorello declined to name the rancher.

## Reduced penalties proposed for Oregon pesticide applicator

Judge calls 5-year license revocation 'an excessively harsh sanction'

By **MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI**  
Capital Press

An Oregon pesticide applicator could face reduced penalties for allegedly ignoring the Oregon Department of Agriculture's order to stop spraying herbicides.

The ODA originally wanted to revoke the pesticide-spraying licenses of Applebee Aviation and its owner, Mike Applebee, for five years in addition to levying \$160,000 in fines.

Applebee admitted that his company carried out multiple herbicide operations after ODA suspended its license in September 2015, but claimed he wasn't timely notified of the order. He also claimed it wasn't clear the state agency had the jurisdiction to prohibit spraying on federal property.

Senior Administrative Law Judge Jennifer Rackstraw has now found that Applebee Aviation and its owner violated Oregon pesticide law, but has recommended suspending their pesticide-spraying licenses for one year and imposing fines of less than \$55,000.

While the company shouldn't have sprayed without a license and "engaged in a pattern of misconduct," Rackstraw found that a five-year revocation would be "an



Mateusz Perkowski/Capital Press

Applebee Aviation's airport near Banks, Ore. The company is fighting the Oregon Department of Agriculture's revocation of its license to spray pesticides.

excessively harsh sanction" for Applebee Aviation's violations.

The ODA suspended Applebee's pesticide license when he was on an out-of-state hunting trip and had limited means to respond to the order, which meant that several operations carried out directly after it was issued weren't "willful or grossly negligent," the judge said.

However, Applebee and his company could have done more to shut down spraying once they had "reasonable knowledge" of the emergency suspension order, Rackstraw said.

He also "recklessly disregarded" the ODA's opinion that the company wouldn't be able to spray on federal land managed by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, she said.

Applebee proceeded with

the operations with the "hope" it was outside ODA's jurisdiction but without contacting an attorney or BLM for advice, she said.

As for previous incidents in which Applebee's company allowed herbicide drift and sprayed a pesticide on a prohibited site, Rackstraw said the violations were relatively isolated and "should not weigh heavily" on the penalty analysis.

The ODA did properly consider the impact of insufficient "personal protective equipment" being provided to Applebee employees, the judge said.

While the agency initially sought \$160,000 in fines against Applebee and his company, it has since revised that number to roughly \$60,000.

In light of her findings, Rackstraw further adjusted it to about \$55,000.

## Potato and onion storage company locates U.S. headquarters in Boise

By **SEAN ELLIS**  
Capital Press

**BOISE** — The president of an international company that specializes in potato and onion storage technology said the decision to locate the company's U.S. headquarters in Idaho was easy.

Tolsma Storage Technology officials spent a lot of time looking for the right location in North America to expand the company's operations, but Boise was the ideal location, said CEO and President Pieter Wesseling.

"Idaho being potato country in the United States and us being in the potato business, at the end it was an easy choice," he told Capital Press following an official

opening ceremony July 1.

Tolsma, a 75-year-old company based in Holland, produces technology and equipment that controls and regulates the climate in potato and onion storage facilities.

The company's Boise headquarters is near the Idaho-Eastern Oregon onion growing region, the largest in the nation by volume.

The company's chief commercial officer recently moved his family to Boise.

Tolsma recently expanded into the U.S. market and is already producing some equipment at manufacturing facilities in Idaho at Nampa and Idaho Falls.

Wesseling said the company has an ambitious growth strategy and plans within the

next few years to build a new manufacturing facility in Boise that will employ about 100 people.

"We want to double sales in the next five years, and that's feasible," he said. "The market is there."

According to a Tolsma news release, the company has 500 clients in Idaho, Eastern Oregon and Washington.

Tolsma is the latest of several ag-related companies that have expanded or located in the state, said Idaho Department of Commerce Director Megan Ronk.

"Idaho is known around the world for agriculture, whether it's the actual raw agricultural products we produce or the value that we add to them," she said.

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