



Capital Press

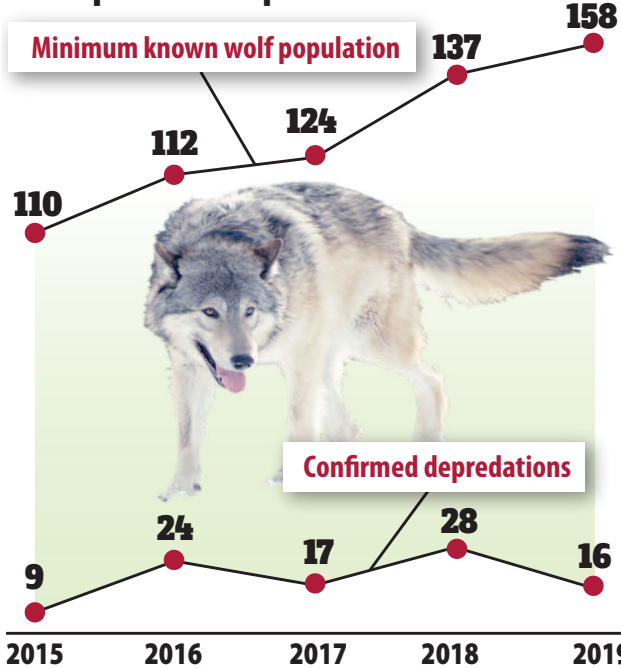
EMPOWERING PRODUCERS OF FOOD & FIBER



WOLFE CALL

Oregon ranchers frustrated by criteria of state investigators when cattle are killed

Wolf population growth compared to reported depredations



Source: Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Capital Press graphic



George Plaven/Capital Press
Rod Childers, of RL Cattle Co., runs livestock during the summer about 40 miles north of Enterprise, Ore., in Joseph Creek Canyon.

By **GEORGE PLAVEN**
Capital Press

ENTERPRISE, Ore. — Two days after Easter, rancher Rod Childers rode on horseback down Joseph Creek Canyon in far northeast Oregon, herding cattle through the steep and remote countryside.

His dogs were the first to spot the dead calf, its carcass chewed down to the bones. Instinctively, Childers suspected wolves. But rather than report the gruesome discovery to state wildlife biologists, he simply cursed to himself and kept going.

The reason, he would say later, was the rigid criteria state biologists use to confirm whether wolves had indeed killed the calf. That, plus the

fact that evidence of wolf-related trauma was already lost to scavengers or the elements, made the effort futile despite the fact the Chesnimnus pack had been seen in the area.

“You can go murder somebody and be convicted quicker than you would convict a wolf, with the criteria they have,” said Childers, owner of RL Cattle Co. in rural Wallowa County, where livestock and poultry sales totaled more than \$23 million in 2017. “It just makes it so difficult that ranchers have given up on it.”

The issue boiled over again April 16, when the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife



George Plaven/Capital Press
A cow grazes on grass overlooking the Zumwalt Prairie in Wallowa County, Ore.

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Farmer fined for pesticide drift in Washington

By **DON JENKINS**
Capital Press

A grower has been fined \$4,950 in a pesticide drift incident last year that sickened 65 farmworkers picking apples in a neighboring orchard in Walla Walla County, Wash.

The state Department of Agriculture finalized the sanction against Doug Strebin of Basin Farming on June 9. The incident occurred Oct. 13. Workers reported symptoms such as irritated eyes and nausea. Twenty-two were treated at a hospital. The department originally

planned to fine Strebin \$6,600. The penalty was reduced after the department met with Strebin in May. The fine remains the largest levied this year for a pesticide violation.

Strebin blamed the pesticide drift on a power outage that took place 15 minutes after the workers arrived to pick apples, according to the department.

The outage caused a center pivot in Strebin’s field to stop moving at about 6:45 a.m. on a Sunday morning. The pivot was at the point closest to the orchard. Pesticide-laden irrigation water drained and pooled on the surface.



The workers were outside a 765-foot buffer zone, but the puddling of the pesticide significantly contributed to gases drifting in their direction, according to department records.

Within an hour of the power outage, the workers were sick, some vomiting.

The department also noted that Strebin had checked several times

with the orchard manager over the previous week about whether workers would be in the orchard.

The orchard manager said repeatedly, including the day before the incident, that the apples were not ready to pick, according to the investigation.

The department, however, faulted Strebin for not informing the orchard in writing about the application, in which a pesticide was injected into the irrigation system.

The 107-acre field was being treated with Vapam HL over 50 hours to prepare it for potatoes. The application began Friday

afternoon, about 39 hours before the drift incident.

Strebin also did not post warning signs, another requirement, according to the department. The vans and buses that brought the workers to the orchard on Sunday morning parked in the buffer zone, according to the investigation.

Strebin is a licensed applicator, but his soil-fumigant certification was expired, according to the department. Besides paying a fine, Strebin agreed to take online training.

The department credited

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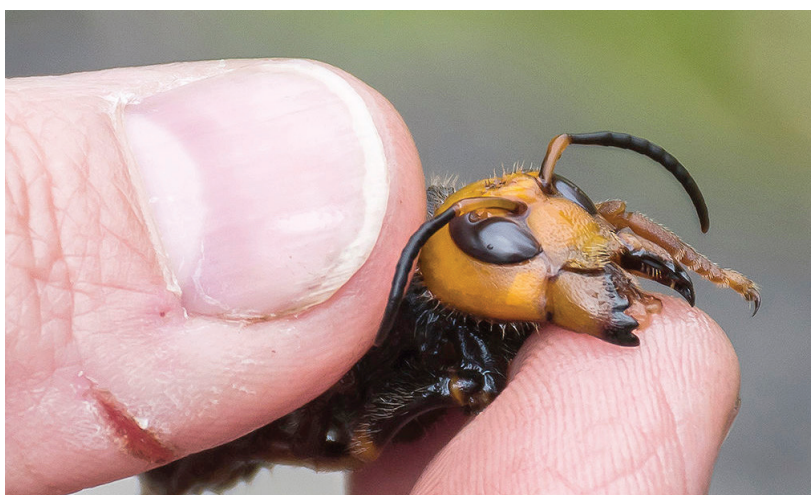
Asian giant hornet panic is oversized – and threatens native insects

By **SIERRA DAWN MCCLAIN**
Capital Press

The U.S. has 3,141 counties, but just one, Whatcom County in northern Washington state, has documented sightings of the Asian giant hornet, dubbed “murder hornet.” Even there, only three specimens have been confirmed.

But news reports about the hornets that went viral early May have sparked nationwide panic. For over a month, entomologists coast to coast have been swamped with questions and false sightings, and they say the frenzy has prompted a backlash: people are indiscriminately killing beneficial bumble bees, wasps, hornets and native species.

“I think the issue was blown way out of proportion with over-the-top headlines and even the term ‘murder hornets.’ It’s caused people to react in a very uninformed way,”



An Asian giant hornet.

Karla Salp/WSDA

said Scott Black, executive director of the Xerxes Society, a Portland-based invertebrate conservation group.

Chris Looney, an entomologist

at the Washington State Department of Agriculture who is driving the hornet research, said his team has received thousands of calls — from people with “ideas, demands,

reports, questions” — in a matter of weeks.

The callers are not just from Washington state, said Looney. People are calling from Alabama, Maine, even overseas.

Entomologists across the country have received a similar avalanche of public inquiry.

Matthew Bertone, director of the Plant Disease and Insect Clinic at North Carolina State University, told the Capital Press he has received 173 emails about “murder hornets” since May. Many of the emails contain images of squished insects people mistook as Asian giant hornets and southern yellow jackets.

In the West, researchers say people are killing native species.

“People keep submitting pictures asking me if they’ve killed an Asian

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