

PARTING SHOTS

A weekly snapshot from The Daily Astorian and Chinook Observer photographers



A heron looks for food in Youngs Bay Tuesday, while seagulls rest on pilings. Saddle Mountain stands in the background.

SUE CODY — The Daily Astorian

New wolf confirmed in southern part of state

By JES BURNS
Oregon Public Broadcasting

KLAMATH FALLS — Wildlife officials in Oregon say a new wolf is roaming the wooded hills near Klamath Falls. It's in some of the same territory staked out by OR-7, the famous wandering wolf.

Over the past month, wildlife biologists have found wolf tracks and a trail camera captured a partial image of a wolf in the southwest Oregon Cascades, near the border with California. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Michelle Dennehy says the wolf is not member of the newly-designated Rogue Pack, which is tracked by GPS collar.

"The area that this wolf is using is actually within an established Area of Known Wolf Activity for the Rogue Pack, OR-7's pack. That's the wolf that went to California," she said. "But data from OR-7's collar shows they have not been using this area recently."

In addition, Dennehy says OR-7's uncollared pups are too young to have left the pack.

The confirmation of a new wolf, or possibly wolves, in south-central Oregon is positive news for Rob Klavins, a field coordinator with Oregon Wild.

"We know that there are probably more wolves out there just the ones that can be documented, but Oregon still has a pretty small, fragile recovering population," he says.

The area where the wolf has been confirmed is protected by both the state and federal Endangered Species Act.

Klavins says there's a still a lot of habitat in Oregon that can support wolf populations. Wolves are slowly beginning

to move in to places like Southern and Eastern Oregon.

Just last month, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife confirmed regular wolf traffic in another new area south of Pendleton. Officials designated the region an "Area of Known Wolf Activity" after the tracks of two wolves were documented in mid-December.

ODFW officials are working up similar documentation for the sightings in the Klamath Falls area, providing a map and resources to local communities to help avoid conflict.

"That allows us to coordinate with any livestock producers in the area. To let them know where the wolf might be and things that they might do to reduce any risk of problems with the wolf," says ODFW's Dennehy.

The Oregon Cattlemen's Association advocates the use of lethal force against wolves that kill livestock. The Jackson County Stockmen's Association did not return a request for comment, but the Capital Press reports the group is mobilizing to tap into a state compensation fund in case of livestock depredation.

Dennehy says ODFW has received no reports of wolf conflict in the region where it was sighted.

Not much is currently known about the new wolf — including its sex, age or origin. It's also unknown if the wolf will remain in the area long term. Oregon Wild's Klavins says finding a new wolf separate from the Rogue Pack in Southern Oregon is a big step forward in recovery.

"It gives an indication that things are maybe better than we hoped that they would be," he said.

Governor to propose Oregon GMO bill

Questions loom over coexistence measures

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Bureau

islatore pre-empted most local governments from restricting genetically modified crops at Kitzhaber's urging.

The governor then appointed a task force to frame the controversy over genetically modified organisms and inform lawmakers' decisions on possible statewide legislation.

The task force's recently completed report does not make any policy recommendations but lays out the points of contention between critics and proponents of genetically engineered crops.

However, its members did agree that more clarity is needed about the state's role in regulating GMOs and how it diverges from federal authority.

The main question now is what measures Kitzhaber or state lawmakers will put

forward to prevent unwanted cross-pollination among these crops or if farmers can agree on a voluntary system to avoid such gene flow.

"All eyes are going to be on the Legislature and what the governor is planning to do," said Ivan Maluski, executive director of Friends of Family Farms, which wants stronger biotech regulation. "This task force marks the beginning of the process, not the end."

One subject of debate will probably be the Oregon Department of Agriculture's "control area" authority over biotech crops, said Maluski.

Currently, ODA can restrict where genetically engineered crops are planted as long as the USDA retains jurisdiction over them, but the state agency believes it loses that power once

the crop is deregulated by federal officials.

State legislation could establish that ODA may still create or retain "control areas" even after USDA lifts its own restrictions on biotech crops, said Maluski.

For example, such state control areas could require biotech farmers to maintain "isolation distances" to mitigate the risk of cross-pollination with non-GMOs, he said.

"It's going to be on a case-by-case basis, as it should be," Maluski said.

Another concept involves compensating organic and conventional growers if their crops are contaminated by pollen from biotech plants, said Chris Schreiner, executive director of Oregon Tilth, an organic certification agency.

There should be a way to compensate non-GMO farmers for damages from cross-pollination that wouldn't require them to buy insurance policies, he said.

Proponents of biotechnology say farmers who grow biotech, conventional and organic

crops can work out their differences without interference from the government.

"Farmers have learned to coexist for years," said Paulette Pyle, grass roots director for Oregonians for Food and Shelter, an agribusiness industry group.

Decades ago, a conflict between cherry growers and wheat farmers over drift from 2,4-D herbicides threatened to spur legislation or erupt into litigation, but neighbors were ultimately able to resolve the issue through communication, Pyle said.

The potential for biotech varieties to pollinate organic crops isn't actually a problem under USDA organic rules, which regulate farm practices but don't set up standards for genetic purity, she said.

"The organic folks have put themselves in that market box," Pyle said. "They can advertise their product any way they want, but they've got to accept responsibility."

Bills that would increase government oversight of biotech crops would actually im-

pede coexistence by limiting crop choices for farmers, said Greg Loberg, manager of the West Coast Beet Seed Co.

"It sounds threatening," he said. "There will be winners and losers in a situation where government intervention occurs through legislation."

Voluntary coexistence measures for biotech, conventional and organic crops would be preferable to those mandated by regulators, he said.

For example, seed growers in Oregon's Willamette Valley are already able to reduce the chances of cross-pollination among related crops through a voluntary mapping system, Loberg said.

"It's not a broken system," he said. "It's quite functional."

Schreiner of Oregon Tilth said a mapping system is one possibility for co-existence but he's skeptical that it would be effective without regulatory oversight.

"The voluntary system we don't see as having a high likelihood of success due to the lack of incentive for GE producers to participate," he said.

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From left: Peter Wong, Hillary Borrud, Mateusz Perkowski

