

Report: Record number of wolves in Oregon

By **ANDREW SELSKY**
Associated Press

SALEM — A record number of wolves are roaming the forests and fields of Oregon, 20 years after the species returned to the state.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife reported Monday that the number of known wolves in Oregon at the end of 2018 was 137, a 10% increase over the previous year. There are likely more wolves because not all individuals or packs are located during the winter count.

Sixteen packs — defined as four or more wolves traveling together in winter — were documented during the count, up from 12 packs in 2017.

“For the second year in a row, resident wolves were documented in a new area of the state,” the 2018 Oregon Wolf Conservation and management report said. “In late 2018, wolves were discovered in the central portion of the Oregon Cascades.”

Despite the territorial expansion, wolves still have a tentative toe-hold in all but the eastern part of the state. The objective of wolves maintaining four breeding pairs in central and western Oregon for three years had



This February 2017 file photo provided by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife shows a wolf of the Wenaha Pack captured on a remote camera on U.S. Forest Service land in Oregon’s northern Wallowa County.

not been reached. In the east, the objective of seven breeding pairs was exceeded.

Meanwhile, several wolves crossed into California and Idaho last year.

The resurgence of the

gray wolf in Oregon reflects a trend in the West.

— In Washington state, the number of gray wolves increased by four in 2018 to a minimum of 126, with one pack living for the first time

west of the Cascade Range.

— In California, one pack has established itself, with the breeding male an offspring of a wolf that had wandered south from Oregon in 2011. A California judge recently upheld protection for gray wolves under the state’s Endangered Species Act, rejecting a legal challenge from ranchers and farmers.

— The number of Mex-

ican gray wolves in Arizona and New Mexico has increased to at least 131 — the most since federal biologists began reintroducing them into the Southwest more than two decades ago.

In Oregon, wolves are more prevalent in the far eastern part of the state, where they are delisted under the Oregon List of Endangered Species but are protected as a special status game mammal. Wolves in central and western parts of the state continue to be federally listed as endangered species.

Last month, the U.S. Interior Department proposed lifting protections for gray wolves across the Lower 48 states. The proposal would give states the authority to hold wolf hunting and trapping seasons. Wildlife advocates have blasted the proposal.

Wolves received endangered species protections in 1975. Then, only 1,000 remained, only in northern Minnesota, after being almost exterminated in the Lower 48 states. Now, more than 5,000 wolves roam the contiguous U.S. The species returned to Oregon in 1999 when one wolf that had been re-introduced into Idaho walked across the state line.

Forecast for Pendleton Area

TODAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

PENDLETON TEMPERATURE FORECAST

55° 39° 56° 43° 51° 37° 56° 38° 58° 38°

HERMISTON TEMPERATURE FORECAST

62° 42° 62° 45° 58° 37° 63° 43° 64° 41°

OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.

ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP. HIGH LOW Yesterday 57° 46° Normals 60° 38° Records 83° (1925) 21° (1929)

PRECIPITATION 24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.60" Month to date 0.82" Normal month to date 0.36" Year to date 6.90" Last year to date 4.19" Normal year to date 4.32"

HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP. HIGH LOW Yesterday 55° 47° Normals 63° 38° Records 87° (1977) 22° (1952)

PRECIPITATION 24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.05" Month to date 0.19" Normal month to date 0.19" Year to date 3.78" Last year to date 2.84" Normal year to date 3.30"

WINDS (in mph) Today Wed. Boardman W 10-20 W 10-20 Pendleton W 12-25 WSW 10-20

SUN AND MOON Sunrise today 6:21 a.m. Sunset tonight 7:33 p.m. Moonrise today 9:02 a.m. Moonset today none

First Full Last New Apr 12 Apr 19 Apr 26 May 4

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)

High 100° in Thermal, Calif. Low 13° in Bodie State Park, Calif.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY

Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation. Temperature bands are highs for the day.

-10s -0s 0s 10s 20s 30s 40s 50s 60s 70s 80s 90s 100s 110s

showers t-storms rain flurries snow ice cold front warm front stationary front high low

Trump officials blamed for slowing nuke site cleanup

By **NICHOLAS K. GERANIOS**
Associated Press

SPOKANE, Wash. — The slow pace of cleaning up the nation’s largest cache of radioactive waste left over from the production of nuclear weapons is frustrating Washington state officials from both major political parties, who blame the Trump administration for not doing more.

The U.S. Department of Energy recently proposed hundreds of millions of dollars in budget cuts for cleaning up the vast Hanford Nuclear Reservation in southeastern Washington, even though the estimated cost of the cleanup has at least tripled and could reach more than \$600 billion.

“That’s a huge, huge cost increase,” said Tom Carpenter, director of the watchdog group Hanford Challenge.

At a hearing in Washington, D.C., last week, Democratic Sen. Patty Murray questioned Energy Secretary Rick Perry’s assertion that his agency can still meet a legally binding cleanup schedule despite the proposed budget cuts. Much of the site’s aging infrastructure is deteriorating, including underground waste storage tanks and tunnels.

The Energy Department issued a report in January that raised the remaining cost of Hanford’s environmental cleanup to between \$323 billion and \$677 billion, with the work lasting until 2079 or 2102, depending on which estimate proves true. That is much higher than the previous estimate of \$107 billion in costs to complete the cleanup by 2066.

That is “a pretty shocking



AP Photo/Ted S. Warren, File
In this July 9, 2014, file photo, workers wearing protective clothing and footwear inspect a valve at the “C” tank farm on the Hanford Nuclear Reservation near Richland, Wash.

number,” Perry told members of the House Appropriations Committee last month.

Shortly after the higher estimates were revealed, the Trump administration proposed a \$416 million cut in its budget for Hanford that would reduce it from about \$2.5 billion for the fiscal year ending Sept. 30 to \$2.1 billion for the next fiscal year that starts Oct. 1.

Republican U.S. Rep. Dan Newhouse, whose district encompasses the site, said the administration’s “budget request numbers would fall short of fulfilling the federal government’s obligation to clean up the Hanford site.”

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, an Oregon Democrat, estimated it will take 300 years to clean up the site under the Trump administration’s proposed budget.

“Trump’s combination of bad math and shifty word-play adds up to tragicomic incompetence,” said Wyden, a frequent critic of efforts to clean up the site.

Washington state officials have said previously — even before the cuts were

announced — that the federal government has not provided enough funding to meet cleanup costs. They have suggested that least \$3 billion annually is needed.

“We believe that the lack of adequate funding translates into a longer, more drawn-out cleanup, and that in turn is a significant factor in the increased cost of the total cleanup,” said Alex Smith, manager of nuclear waste programs for the Washington Department of Ecology.

Hanford was created by the Manhattan Project during World War II as the nation raced to build atomic bombs. The plutonium for the atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki, Japan, at the end of the war was made at the site, which then produced about 70% of the plutonium for the U.S. Cold War arsenal.

That left the country’s largest volume of radioactive waste at the site about half the size of Rhode Island, where the most dangerous 56 million gallons of waste is stored in 177 giant underground tanks, some of which have leaked.

CORRECTIONS: The *East Oregonian* works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

EAST OREGONIAN

— Founded Oct. 16, 1875 —

211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton 541-276-2211
333 E. Main St., Hermiston 541-567-6211
Office hours: Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Closed major holidays

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East Oregonian (USPS 164-980) is published daily except Sunday,
Monday and postal holidays, by the EO Media Group, 211 S.E. Byers
Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801. Periodicals postage paid at Pendleton, OR.
Postmaster: send address changes to
East Oregonian, 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801.
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\$1.50 Tuesday through Saturday

Circulation Manager:
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