

ODFW employees kill 2 wolf pups in Eastern Oregon

BY JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
The Oregonian

BAKER CITY — Officials from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife shot and killed two wolf pups Sunday, Aug. 1, days after approving a permit for ranchers to kill up to four wolves in Baker County.

The agency confirmed that officials in a helicopter shot and killed two 3½-month-old pups from the Lookout Mountain Pack.

Just one day earlier, the state agency said it had approved a rancher's permit to kill up to four uncollared wolves in Baker County, where officials said the Lookout Mountain Pack had attacked four cows over the last two weeks of July.

Agency spokesperson Michelle Dennehy said Aug. 2 that the killing of the pups was “reducing the pack’s food needs and disrupting the pack’s behavior so they don’t associate livestock with an easy meal.”

She said while the pups are not a threat to livestock, they could be as they grow and learn to hunt.

“Killing pups is not something we want to be doing,” Dennehy said. “But in this case, despite nonlethal measures, chronic depredation continues which we have a responsibility to address.”

The killing of the two pups has caused serious concern among advocacy and conservation groups. Steve Pedery, the conserva-



ODFW 165 Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife/Contributed Photo

A trail cam photo from May 30, 2021, of one of the two yearling wolves in the Lookout Mountain pack.

tion director for Oregon Wild, said conservation organizations have been concerned that without the right training in managing endangered species, handing over supervision of wolf populations to the state agency could have some tragic outcomes.

“It’s hard to see any justification other than ODFW wanted to kill some wolves, and all they could find was some three-month-old puppies,” Pedery said.

The adult wolves in the Lookout Mountain Pack — a breeding male and female — have radio collars for state tracking, and were not eligible

to be killed by livestock producers. The breeding pair had two pups last year, Dennehy said, and the state documented another seven pups in May.

Dennehy said the remaining pups would still have two experienced hunters to feed them.

Dennehy said in an email to The Oregonian/OregonLive that both ODFW and the rancher tried to find uncollared wolves on July 30, but only saw the breeding adults, which are collared. She said ODFW does not have plans to pursue other wolves, but the rancher has the permit until Aug. 21.

Dennehy said they also saw at least five pups, but did not see the yearling wolves they were looking for.

As of April, Oregon had 173 wolves in 22 identified packs.

Oregon rules allow ranchers to kill wolves if they repeatedly attack and present a significant risk to livestock, and when nonlethal methods such as electric fences or hazing don’t stop the attacks. Kill permits allow livestock producers or ranchers to shoot a wolf from the ground, and ODFW staff are authorized to shoot wolves from the air.

Sristi Kamal, a representative for

the Northwest branch of Defenders of Wildlife, said the group was “enraged” by the state’s actions and called on the state agency to facilitate coexistence between livestock producers and wolves.

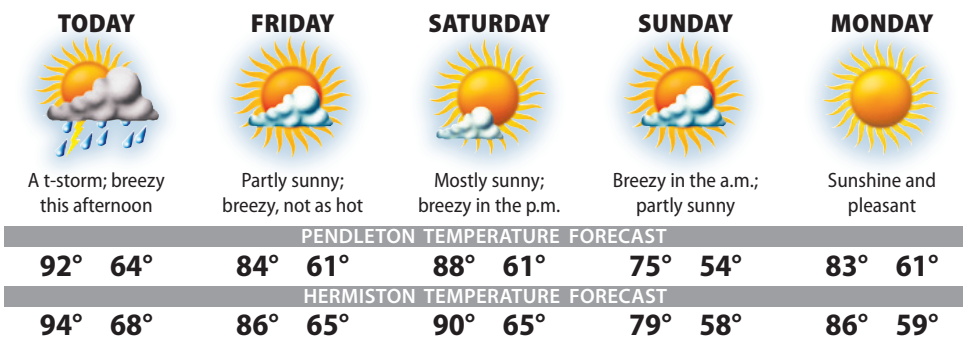
“The use of lethal measures is never a long-term solution to depredations and killing pups is simply unacceptable,” Kamal said in a written statement. “Defenders will continue to work with livestock producers to help implement proactive nonlethal practices and strategic grazing practices.”

Pedery disputed the agency’s assertion that killing the pups would significantly reduce the caloric needs for the pack, noting that 3-month wolf pups weigh 20 to 30 pounds.

“ODFW has just joined the ranks of Idaho, Wyoming and Wisconsin in demonstrating why they are unfit to manage endangered wildlife in an ethical manner,” Pedery wrote in an email to The Oregonian/OregonLive. “If Gov. Brown refuses to reign [sic] in her agency, it is clear that President Biden and (U.S. Secretary of the Interior) Deb Haaland need to step in and reinstate federal Endangered Species Act protections.”

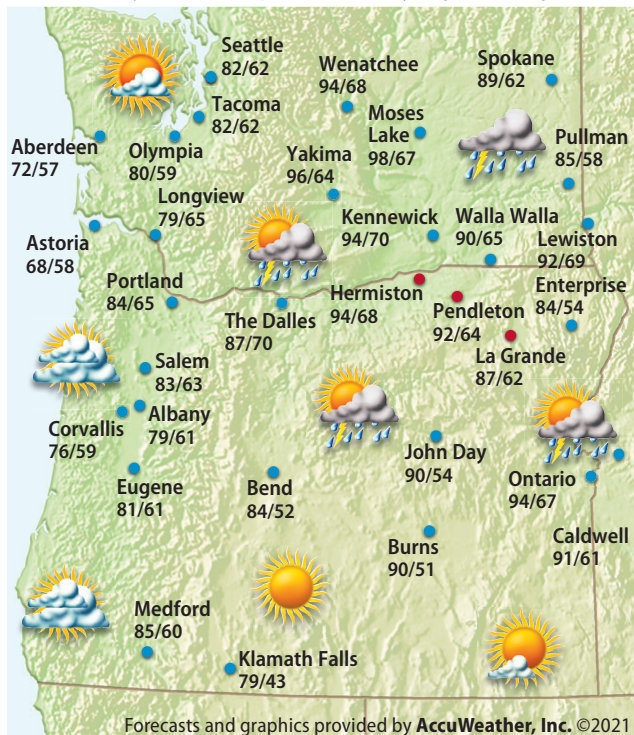
Gray wolves were removed from the federal Endangered Species list in January, allowing Fish and Wildlife to take over the management of their population. But just last week, a coalition of 70 groups filed a formal petition to relist the gray wolf as an endangered species in the western United States.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

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



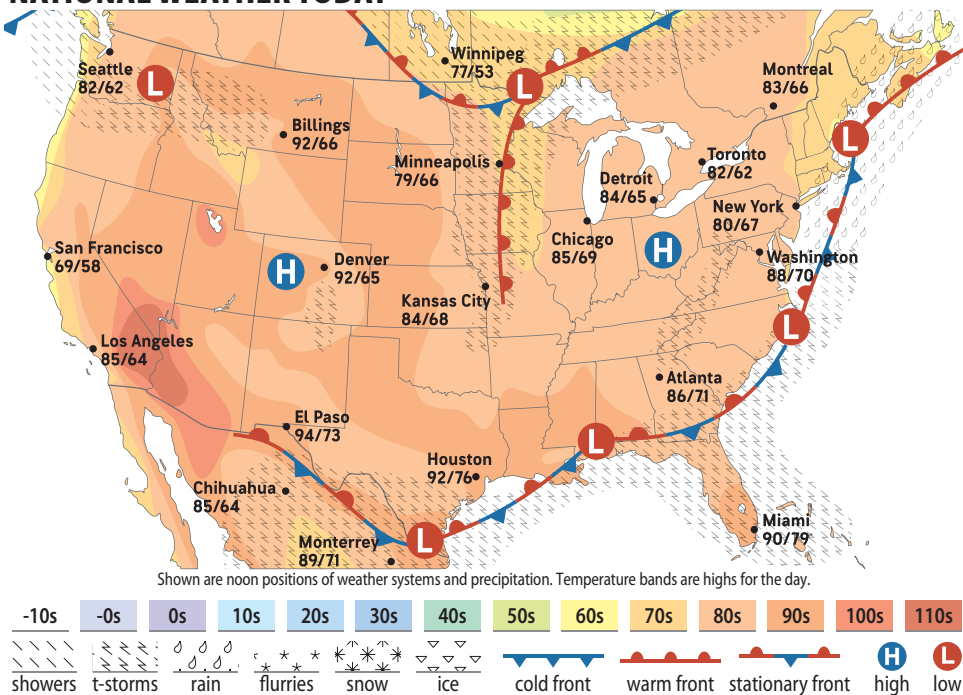
ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.				
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW		
Yesterday	96°	69°		
Normals	91°	60°		
Records	113° (1961)	40° (1911)		
PRECIPITATION				
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"			
Month to date	0.01"			
Normal month to date	0.04"			
Year to date	4.37"			
Last year to date	8.63"			
Normal year to date	1.93"			
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.				
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW		
Yesterday	96°	66°		
Normals	94°	60°		
Records	105° (1961)	42° (1934)		
PRECIPITATION				
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"			
Month to date	0.00"			
Normal month to date	0.02"			
Year to date	1.93"			
Last year to date	1.66"			
Normal year to date	5.16"			
WINDS (in mph)				
	Today	Fri.		
Boardman	WNW 6-12	WSW 10-20		
Pendleton	W 7-14	WSW 10-20		
SUN AND MOON				
Sunrise today	5:43 a.m.			
Sunset tonight	8:18 p.m.			
Moonrise today	2:28 a.m.			
Moonset today	6:57 p.m.			
	New	First	Full	Last
	Aug 8	Aug 15	Aug 22	Aug 29

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 122° in Thermal, Calif. Low 36° in Daniel, Wyo.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Cougar sightings reported in La Grande

The Observer

LA GRANDE — During the past week, cougar sightings have been reported in north La Grande near the Grande Ronde River.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife received two calls, one of which was confirmed last week just north of the river outside city limits.

The unconfirmed sighting was reported Monday, Aug. 2, on Russell Avenue near Interstate 84, but no new confirmed sightings have been recorded over the last five days, according to ODFW District Wildlife biologist Matthew Keenan.

“We are continuing to monitor and respond to any other reports at this point,” he said.

ODFW has cellular camera footage from the

sighting last week, Keenan said. The agency relies on video footage to gather information regarding potential dangerous animals in residential areas. The camera footage confirmed the cougar sighting last week, but no new footage has been submitted to ODFW from the Russell Avenue incident. According to Keenan, cougars have appeared near the river in the past.

“I wouldn’t say it’s common, but occasionally we have seen cougars that utilize that river corridor for movement,” he said. “It’s usually a temporary thing where they’re passing through, but we’re careful to continue monitoring in case they’re not.”

The fish and wildlife agency is keeping a close eye on any new information.

“We still have cameras up

and we’re monitoring it, but at this point we don’t have any reason to believe one way or the other if (a cougar is) still in residential areas,” Keenan added.

According to Keenan, the best approach for a person who identifies a cougar is to report it to ODFW immediately. In the case of an encounter, the department recommends standing your ground and avoiding running away from the cougar. The department’s website details precautionary measures for encountering large wildlife.

“The big thing is don’t run away and report it to us,” he said. “If someone is concerned for their immediate safety, you can always contact law enforcement.”

The La Grande office of the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Department can be contacted at 541-963-2138.

IN BRIEF

County seeking comment on East Moraine plan

ENTERPRISE — The Wallowa County Commissioners are seeking public comments on the East Moraine Community Forest Management Plan, which will dictate the use of 1,800 acres of property around the East Moraine of Wallowa Lake.

Wallowa County purchased the land in January 2020 after a decade of efforts by the Wallowa Lake Moraines Partnership, which is made up of Wallowa County, Wallowa Land Trust, Wallowa Resources and Oregon Parks and Recreation.

According to Kathleen Ackley, executive director of Wallowa Land Trust, this space has much potential for public use, which is why the partnership is seeking public comment.

In the year and a half since the purchase, the partnership has worked with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon Department of Forestry and the Nez Perce Tribe cultural and forestry divisions to create a management plan that will divide the land for multiple uses, including forestry, grazing, cultural resources, habitat and recreation.

County Commissioner Susan Roberts said that public comments are essential for helping the county make decisions that benefit the maximum number of residents.

The plan is on the Wallowa County website at co.wallowa.or.us.

Residents can submit their comments via

email to eastmorainecommunityforest@gmail.com or via mail to 101 S. River St., Enterprise, OR 97828.

Comments must include name, contact information and a reference to the page and section of the plan.

A public meeting takes place Sept. 1 at the Wallowa County Fairgrounds Cloverleaf Hall to receive more public feedback.

The comment period ends Oct. 2.

Army Corps limits fires at Walla Walla’s Rooks Park, Bennington Lake

WALLA WALLA — Officials are increasing fire restrictions for the areas in and surrounding Rooks Park, Mill Creek Dam and Bennington Lake near Walla Walla.

According to a release from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Walla Walla District on Tuesday, Aug. 3, increasingly hot and dry weather prompted the change.

All open flames are prohibited until further notice, including charcoal. Propane stoves are permitted if someone is attending at all times and no flammable materials are within 5 feet of the device.

The Army Corps owns and manages the land in the Rooks Park area for camping, picnicking and other recreation.

— EO Media Group and Walla Walla Union-Bulletin

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