

Wolves kill calf north of Durkee

Baker City Herald

BAKER CITY — Wolves from the Lookout Mountain Pack have killed another calf in eastern Baker County, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife reported on Tuesday, Aug. 31.

Wolves from that pack have killed four head of livestock and injured two others since mid July, according to ODFW depredation investigations.

Those attacks prompted ODFW Director Curt Melcher to issue a permit on July 31 allowing the livestock owners, their designated agents or ODFW employees to kill up to four subadult wolves from the pack, not including its breeding pair.

On Aug. 1, Fish and Wildlife employees shot and killed two wolf pups, part of the litter of seven pups that the breeding pair produced this spring.

The permit, the first ODFW had issued since 2018, was set to expire Aug. 21. But after Fish and Wild-

Biologists said the calf was killed late Aug. 29 or early the following day

life biologists confirmed that Lookout Mountain wolves killed a calf on Aug. 19, the agency extended the permit through Sept. 14. The permit does not add to the number of wolves that can be killed. The limit remains at four, meaning no more than two additional subadult wolves from the pack can be killed, following the two pups killed Aug. 1.

As of Sept. 1, no wolves had been killed since the two on Aug. 1, according to ODFW.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife biologists believe the pack consists of the breeding pair, two yearlings born in the spring of 2020, and the five remaining pups from this spring's litter.

The most recent depredation was reported the morning of Aug. 30, when a rancher checking cattle

found the carcass of a 600-pound calf in a 2,800-acre pasture that includes a mixture of public and private land. The site is in the Lawrence Creek area northeast of Durkee. All of the wolf depredations have been in that general vicinity.

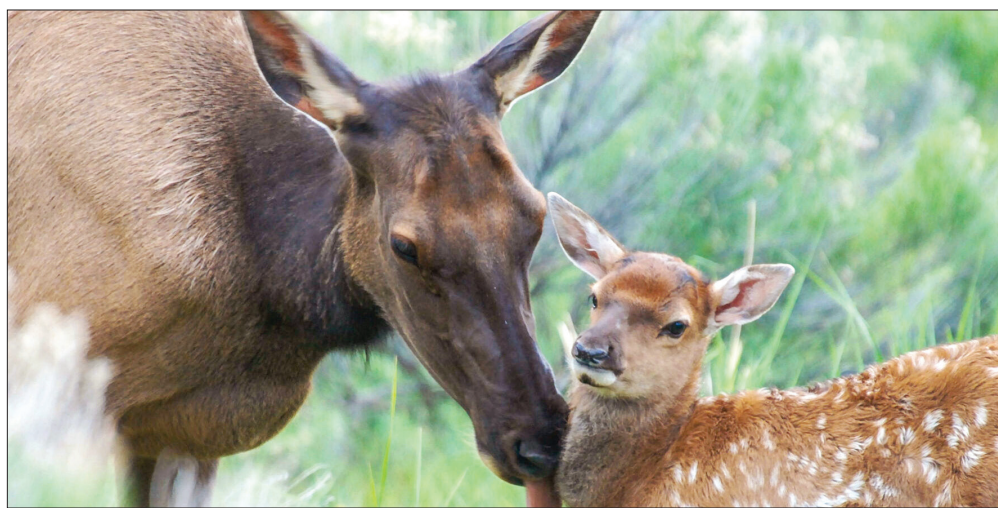
The carcass was partially consumed but most of the hide was intact, according to an ODFW report.

Biologists found a struggle scene with broken vegetation and a blood trail leading about 25 yards to the carcass, along with wolf tracks.

Biologists examined the calf and found numerous premortem tooth scrapes on both rear legs above the hock, and on the left front leg near the elbow, with tissue damage up to 1-1/2 inches deep.

The location and size of the wounds are consistent with wolf attacks on cattle, according to the ODFW report.

Biologists estimated the calf was killed late Aug. 29 or early the following day.



Jim Ward/Contributed Photo

A cow elk licks her calf in this undated photo. A study at the Starkey Project, about 28 miles from La Grande, is helping to determine if climate change is hurting Rocky Mountain elk reproduction by leaving less time in the spring and early summer to build up fat reserves, which are critical for having successful pregnancies and producing the milk needed to raise their calves.

Biologists research how climate change may be impacting elk

By DICK MASON
The Observer

STARKEY — Rocky Mountain elk in Northeastern Oregon may fall prey to climate change.

U.S. Forest Service research biologist Mike Wisdom and Casey Brown, a research biologist with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, are among a growing number of people who are concerned about the role climate change is playing in nature. Wisdom and Brown are helping conduct a Starkey Project study aimed at determining if climate change will hurt Rocky Mountain elk reproduction.

The study is not complete and intensive data analysis remains to be done, but its preliminary findings indicate that climate change could cause elk populations to decline in Northeastern Oregon and other areas.

"We are definitely concerned," Wisdom said.

The reason for the worry is that rising temperatures resulting from climate change are reducing the amount of time quality vegetation is available to elk.

"The nutrition window for elk is shifting," Wisdom said. "It is more compressed."

were available in Northeastern Oregon from early spring to early summer. This vegetation now is available on a less nutritious — but still valuable level — from early summer to mid-summer, followed by a brown period when there is little precipitation, from mid-July through the fall, a time when most of the vegetation available is dried out and offers little nutritional value.

Today, the best forage for elk is available for about two fewer weeks than before, and the "brown" periods runs three to four weeks longer.

"There is now a more pronounced period of low precipitation during the summer and fall," said Wisdom, co-project leader of the Starkey Project with Darren Clark of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Brown anticipated, when she and research biologist Priscilla Coe started their plant study at Starkey in 2015, they would find less forage was available to elk than three decades ago. But she was surprised by how much it had decreased.

"It was greater than I thought it would be," she said.

Rising temperatures are impacting vegetation growth for a number of reasons, Brown said. Snowpacks in mountains are melting earlier and faster each winter and early spring. Previously, snowpacks would melt slowly, allowing rivers and streams to maintain strong flows longer.

"Winter snowpacks before provided a steady, slow delivery of water to the region during the spring and summer," Wisdom said.

Slow melts of winter snow meant moisture needed for the growth of grasses and forbs was available longer, giving cow elk more time to consume them and develop fat

reserves needed for successful pregnancies and lactation.

Groundbreaking work

Biologists understand how changing weather patterns impact the growth of grasses and forbs because of extensive studies conducted at the Starkey Project site in the 1990s by Coe and research biologist Bruce Johnson, now both retired. The biologists measured plant growth at plots there throughout the year and determined how changes in temperature and precipitation in the region impacted it.

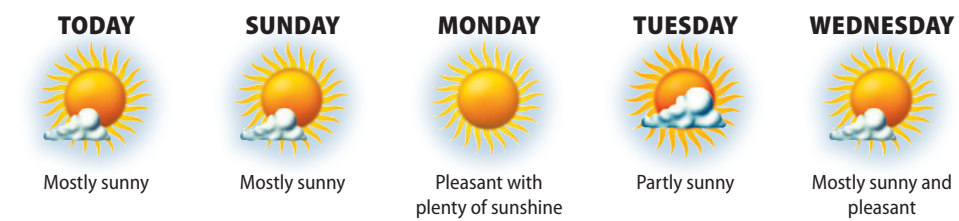
The plant study conducted in the 1990s by Coe and Johnson was followed by Brown and Coe's study from 2015 to 2019. Brown and Coe measured plant growth at the same plots used in the 1990s study.

The Starkey Project, based at a 25,000-acre fenced facility, is a joint wildlife research project conducted by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and the U.S. Forest Service at the Starkey Experimental Forest and Range, 28 miles southwest of La Grande.

The project is designed to measure the population response of deer and elk to the intensively managed forests and rangelands of the future. Research at the Starkey Project began in 1989.

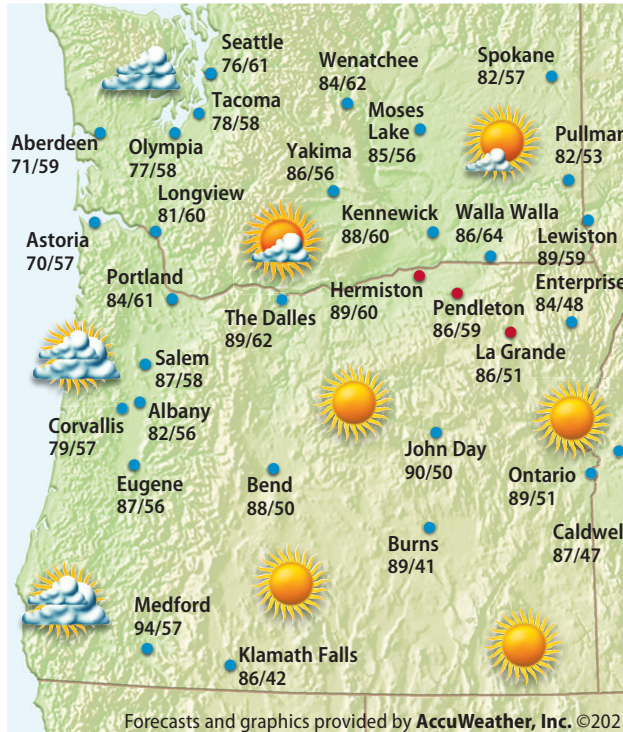
Research at the Starkey Project is one reason scientists understand how critical it is for cow elk to develop fat reserves needed for successful pregnancies and to raise their young. The Starkey Project site is one of the places that body fat levels of cow elk were measured during a study by John and Rachel Cook, a husband and wife team of biologists who were working for the National Council for Air and Stream Improvement.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

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



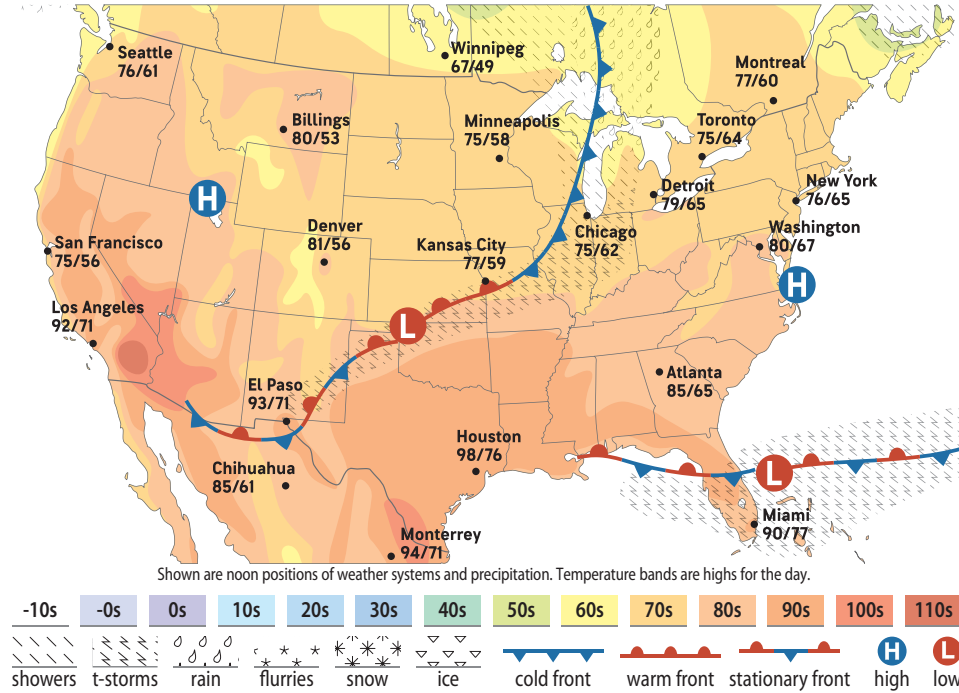
ALMANAC

| PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest. | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|------------|
| TEMP. | HIGH | LOW |
| Yesterday | 82° | 48° |
| Normals | 84° | 54° |
| Records | 104° (1930) | 31° (1892) |
| PRECIPITATION | 24 hours ending 3 p.m. | 0.00" |
| Month to date | | 0.00" |
| Normal month to date | | 0.04" |
| Year to date | | 4.37" |
| Last year to date | | 8.68" |
| Normal year to date | | 8.69" |
| HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest. | | |
| TEMP. | HIGH | LOW |
| Yesterday | 85° | 44° |
| Normals | 86° | 52° |
| Records | 101° (1950) | 36° (1932) |
| PRECIPITATION | 24 hours ending 3 p.m. | 0.00" |
| Month to date | | 0.00" |
| Normal month to date | | 0.03" |
| Year to date | | 1.93" |
| Last year to date | | 1.66" |
| Normal year to date | | 5.34" |
| WINDS (in mph) | Today | Sun. |
| Boardman | SW 4-8 | WSW 7-14 |
| Pendleton | WNW 4-8 | W 6-12 |
| SUN AND MOON | | |
| Sunrise today | 6:20 a.m. | |
| Sunset tonight | 7:27 p.m. | |
| Moonrise today | 3:15 a.m. | |
| Moonset today | 6:52 p.m. | |

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 107° in Palm Springs, Calif. Low 24° in Stanley, Idaho

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



IN BRIEF

Workers 'take cover' near Hanford nuclear reservation

HANFORD — Workers in the 200 West Area at the center of the Hanford nuclear reservation were ordered to take cover for almost four hours Wednesday, Sept. 1.

Access to the site was restricted and the Rattlesnake Barricade secure entrance to the site was closed as a precaution. No action was necessary for the public, according to the Department of Energy.

The take cover order was issued after two work crews at the REDOX facility in the 200 West Area noticed an unusual odor, said Hanford officials.

During a take cover alert, workers are told to go inside the nearest facility and close windows and doors.

No radiation or chemical contamination above background levels was detected

and about 11 a.m. some workers were being allowed to leave the buildings.

The take cover order for workers closest to the REDOX plant was lifted about noon.

No injuries were reported, and Hanford workers who smelled the odors were encouraged to visit Hanford's onsite medical provider if they have concerns.

Some Hanford workers have reported serious respiratory and neurological illnesses they suspect are linked to exposure to chemical vapors after smelling odors where waste from Hanford's defunct reprocessing plants is stored in underground tanks.

The two crews who reported the odors were doing work outside the REDOX plant.

One was there with well drilling equipment, and the other crew was using equipment at ground level to scan for buried materials in preparation for excavation work, according to Hanford officials.

— Tri-City Herald

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.

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