

Sheriff: Kill all wolves in Lookout Mountain Pack

Lookout Mountain Pack killed another calf last week in Baker County

By JAYSON JACOBY
Baker City Herald

BAKER CITY — Wolves from the Lookout Mountain Pack in eastern Baker County killed a calf in the Lawrence Creek area north of Durkee last week, according to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Baker County Sheriff Travis Ash is calling on the state agency to kill all the wolves from that pack, citing an “unacceptable” level of depredation on livestock.

Wolves from the pack have killed five cattle and injured two others since mid July.

ODFW employees shot and killed two wolf pups from the pack on Aug. 1, but the permit that authorized that also prohibits the killing of the pack’s breeding pair.

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 of seven, two of which

were killed Aug. 1.

In a letter sent Monday, Sept. 13, to ODFW Director Curt Melcher, Ash wrote the nonlethal measures several ranchers have taken, including firing guns to try to frighten wolves away from cattle, are failing.

“The financial burden, physical strain and exhaustion they are going through in what has become a fruitless effort to keep the Lookout Mountain Pack from killing their animals is extreme,” Ash wrote. “I believe the most humane way of dealing with this problem wolf pack is to remove the adult breeding pair that are teaching the negative learned behavior of targeting cattle to their offspring.”

The most recent confirmed wolf attack happened last week, when Fish and Wildlife employees found a dead 600-pound calf the morning of Sept. 9 on a 2,800-acre pasture that includes private and public land.

Biologists who examined the carcass estimated the calf died the night of Sept. 7. The carcass was partially consumed but most of the hide was intact, according to an ODFW investigation report.

Biologists skinned the



A trail cam photo from May 30, 2021, of one of the two yearling wolves in the Lookout Mountain Pack. Wolves from the pack in eastern Baker County killed a calf in the Lawrence Creek area north of Durkee last week

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife/Contributed Photo

carcass and found numerous tooth scrapes on the calf’s rear right leg and on both front legs, along with tissue damage up to 2 inches deep, from when the animal was alive.

The location, size and

number of tooth scrapes, and the severity of the tissue damage, are both consistent with wolf attacks on calves, according to the report.

Melcher issued a permit on July 31 that allows ranchers who have lost cattle to kill

up to four subadult wolves from the pack. The permit also allows the ranchers to designate someone else to kill wolves, and ODFW employees also can kill wolves under the permit.

Fish and Wildlife employ-

ees shot and killed two wolf pups from the pack on Aug. 1. No other wolves have been killed since, according to the department.

The permit was set to expire Aug. 21, but Melcher extended the permit through Sept. 14 after wolves killed a calf on Aug. 19. It’s not clear whether Melcher will extend the permit again or change the parameters to allow the killing of adult wolves, including the breeding pair.

Ash included with his letter a list of the wolf attacks on livestock this summer.

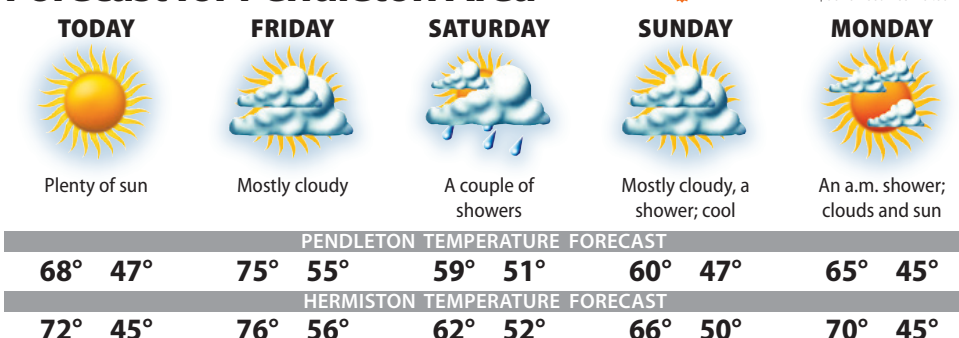
The two most recent, a calf killed in late August and the calf killed last week, both belonged to the Phillips Ranch, according to Ash’s letter.

Wolves have also killed one calf belonging to the Bloomer Ranch, and two calves owned by Deward and Kathy Thompson.

In his letter to Melcher, Ash wrote that in his estimation the balance between grazing and predation is skewed toward the latter in the Lookout Mountain area.

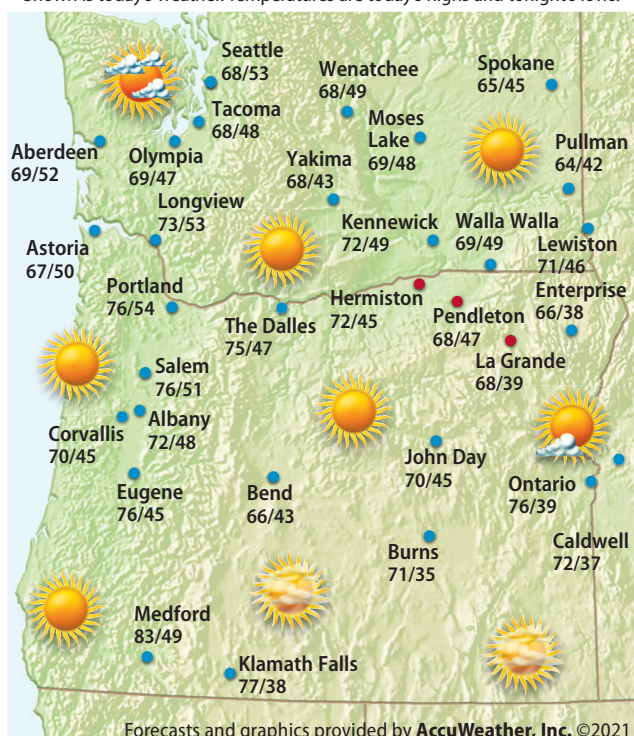
“Wolves are pursuing cattle as a food source rather than hunting their natural prey — elk and deer, which are plentiful in the area,” Ash wrote. “Wolves can spend much less energy killing a cow than chasing an elk or deer.”

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

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



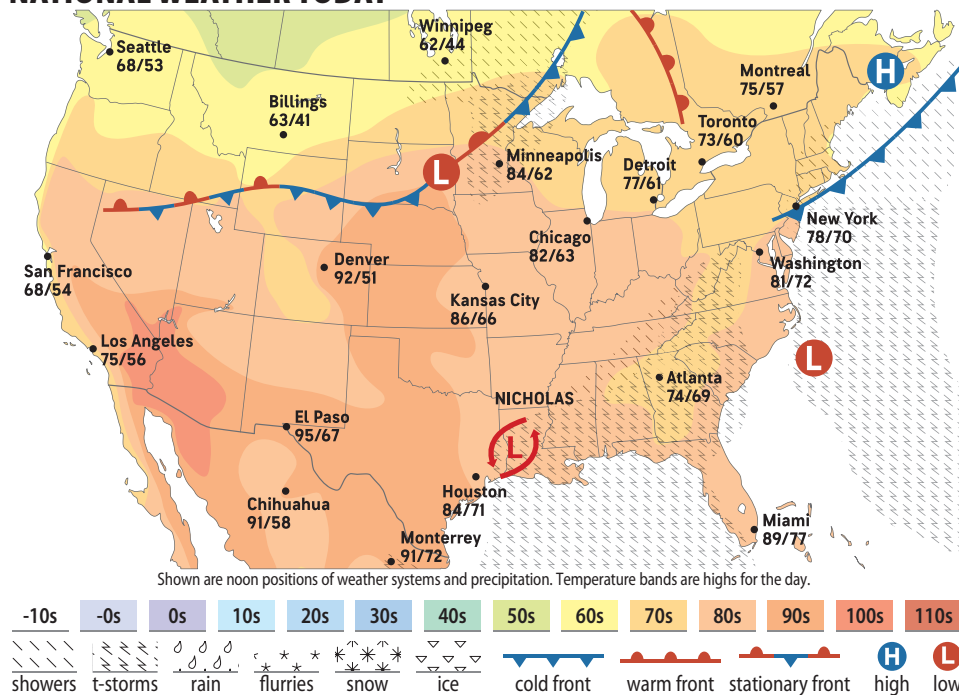
ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.	
TEMP.	HIGH LOW
Yesterday	78° 59°
Normals	80° 51°
Records	99° (2013) 32° (1921)
PRECIPITATION	
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	0.09"
Normal month to date	0.25"
Year to date	4.46"
Last year to date	8.68"
Normal year to date	8.90"
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.	
TEMP.	HIGH LOW
Yesterday	81° 65°
Normals	82° 48°
Records	97° (2013) 32° (1934)
PRECIPITATION	
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	0.04"
Normal month to date	0.15"
Year to date	1.97"
Last year to date	1.66"
Normal year to date	5.46"
WINDS (in mph)	
Today	Fri.
Boardman	N 3-6 WSW 4-8
Pendleton	NNW 4-8 W 4-8
SUN AND MOON	
Sunrise today	6:35 a.m.
Sunset tonight	7:04 p.m.
Moonrise today	5:30 p.m.
Moonset today	1:13 a.m.
Full	Oct 6
Last	Oct 12
New	Sep 28
First	Sep 20

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 107° in Needles, Calif. Low 23° in Yellowstone N.P., Wyo.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Grant Co. Farm Bureau urges ODFW to expand general elk damage season

By STEVEN MITCHELL
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — The Grant County Farm Bureau called on the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to expand the boundaries of a pilot program allowing for elk damage hunts on private land to encompass all Grant County private lands.

In a Sept. 1 press release, the Grant County Farm Bureau noted ODFW established its elk damage season in 2020. The program aims to control the number of elk that move onto the private property of cattle producers, eat grass, damage equipment and tear down fences, taking a big bite out of their profits.

Because the state governs elk populations, landowners must abide by hunting laws and wildlife management objectives.

Ryan Torland, a district biologist with ODFW, told the Eagle in a Sept. 2 email that elk distribution on private and public lands is a “priority concern” and one the department is working with federal and landowner partners to address.

According to ODFW’s website, the program allows landowners and hunters to work together to address damage occurring during the open season directly. With permission from the private landowner, hunters can purchase a cow elk tag to hunt on a specific property within the Murderers Creek and Northside units.

The agency notes the tag replaces 19 controlled hunts and will replace the need for landowner damage program tags in the areas and during the periods of the hunts. This is the hunter’s only elk-hunting opportunity, and they cannot hunt in a different hunting unit.

Torland said when the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission approved the pilot program for a three-year window, it also developed monitoring and reporting criteria to assess the new “tool” and make changes that could include a larger swath of private lands within the county.

More than 130 hunters participated in the program, and more than 40 of them harvested a cow elk. He said

landowners still were learning about the program and expect it to be more popular this season.

Grant County Farm Bureau President Shaun Robertson said the damage from elk populations feasting in pastures intended for livestock has been an ongoing problem on private lands since the federal government began reducing timber harvests in the 1990s.

“Unfortunately, the failure of the federal landowners to address the lack of high-quality forage on their own lands has directly resulted in large numbers of elk translocating to private lands seeking replacement feed,” said Robertson, a cattle producer and biologist.

Farm Bureau board member and local rancher Pat Holliday noted in the press release that this year’s drought — hottest and driest in over a century — has brought the problem on earlier and made it worse.

“Pastures that were already short of feed from poor growing conditions won’t have any fall feed for either cattle or wildlife,” Holliday said.

IN BRIEF

Hunter with broken leg carried out of Percival Creek

JOHN DAY — The Grant County Sheriff’s Office Search and Rescue teamed up with local ranchers and ambulance crews from John Day and Seneca on Saturday, Sept. 11, to carry a Bear Valley hunter out of the Percival Creek area to an Airlink helicopter.

Sheriff Todd McKinley said crews packed the victim out and flew him out successfully.

McKinley said the search and rescue team has had “quite a few” rescues this year.

from Ashland died Monday, Sept. 13, when he failed to negotiate a curve while riding his motorcycle on Highway 7 south of Sumpter.

Lawrence Drake was riding southbound on the highway near milepost 23 when his KTM 950 motorcycle went off the highway and crashed, according to Oregon State Police. He died at the scene.

The crash occurred shortly before 4 p.m., police said.

The curve is on the grade below Larch Summit, about 2 miles south of Sumpter Valley.

The Baker Fire Department, Powder River Rural Fire Department, Life Flight and the Oregon Department of Transportation assisted OSP.

Man killed in motorcycle crash in Baker County

BAKER CITY — A 78-year-old man

—EO Media Group

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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