

WOLVES

Continued from Page A1

seems relatively unscathed. The calf’s hide is examined for puncture and scrape marks. Matthews asks the cowboys for weight estimates, which they offer as 375-425 pounds.

Matthews takes more photos and begins clipping the hide with a pair of shears. More bites and scrapes become evident with the shearing. Those are photographed and measured by Matthews. Much of the hide is skinned from the calf and more shearing ensues as Matthews thoroughly examines the carcass for premortem trauma that will indicate whether the calf was chased down by wolves rather than being scavenged.

Matthews keeps his opinions to himself, and the cowboys are polite and attentive through the process, turning the calf over or helping hold the hide as Matthews works. Talk is pleasant and references either the issue at hand or hunting.

The process takes more than an hour, and it is nearly dark before the biologist is finished. He doesn’t give an indication of his findings but offers to dispose of the carcass, which the cowboys load and watch Matthews drive away.

Not a new experience

The is not new to the Warnocks, who are cousins. Both are working cowboys with good reputations, and they know the country well. They have assisted on nearly a dozen of these incidents in their careers.

“You get a little used to it,” said Wyatt.

Both men think that the calf will go down as a confirmed



ODFW File photo

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife authorized the lethal take of four additional Harl Butte Pack wolves last week.

depredation, although Matthews hadn’t said. Wyatt said the two cowboys have spent the last few days working in the area, and the range rider also makes frequent stops, but he has an idea the Harl Butte Pack might be in the area, which radio collars would subsequently confirm.

“I don’t know if you can blame wolves, but the fact that we’re out as many cows as we are right now, and the cows are getting pushed around and scattered out, you know,” Wyatt Warnock said. “They’re not in the normal places ... There’s all that traffic and they got that (wolf) highway going back and forth at the head of Marr Creek.”

Matthews eventually confirmed the depredation. He spoke of the investigative process, which he’s performed dozens of times, Oct. 2.

“Number one, I have to know there are wolves at the site, and tracks tell me that,” he said. “If I just skin the animal, there could be hemorrhaging like we saw on that particular one, and by shaving, those bite marks show up so much better.”

He also said that if there’s bruising on the muscle tissue but no accompanying bite marks on the hide, he can’t

confirm a depredation.

“It’s a way of putting a puzzle together and documenting everything with photos so if I end up in court two years from now on that investigation, I can go and look back at my report and the photos,” he said.

That hasn’t happened yet.

For this depredation, Matthews knows that a radio-collared wolf from the Harl Butte Pack was in the area at around 6 a.m. the morning the calf was killed, and numerous wolf tracks were found in the vicinity.

“Then it’s a matter of determining whether they killed it or not,” he said. “When we skinned the left back leg, it still had some hide and meat left on it with pretty severe hemorrhaging and bite marks on top of the skin in that location. That tells me these bite marks weren’t from postmortem feeding.”

He also spoke of using his ruler to determine the length and width of tooth scrapes, which can also help determine the type of predator, in this case, a wolf. The ruler in his photos is protection so he isn’t accused of making the bites appear larger or smaller than they are.

Matthews is convinced the evidence, including the fresh carcass, points to a wolf depredation.

“There’s no doubt in my mind that’s what took place,” he said.

Finding a solution

For Nash, this is his second depredation in the same area, the last having taken place in July. He’s been gathering cattle for several weeks from Forest Service leases to private property. About 500 cow and calf pairs are in the area.

“Those wolves have been

on Marr Flat for four days,” he said. “They have a whole wilderness to go to, and they’re choosing to go where there’s a concentration of cattle.”

He said that Matthews called him the following Monday and confirmed the depredation.

The rancher said it’s frustrating that the depredation issue get puts back on the rancher as to what nonlethal action is being taken.

“We’ve had someone there every day, and multiple guys there most days,” he said. “You beat the crap out of your rig, burn up fuel and spend your man hours doing that instead of other jobs you should be doing. It’s ridiculous.”

Nash said that taking wolves from the pack incrementally was a ridiculous plan. He noted the ODFW has no idea who the offenders are, and claims all the wolves in the pack are bad at this point. Pup tracks are now among the adults, which indicate to him and other ranchers that the entire pack is compromised. He also said he believes the pack is a remnant of the Imnaha Pack and thus responsible for close to 60 confirmed depredations since 2010.

“If they had done what ranchers requested in the first place, we wouldn’t be having this conversation. When a pack becomes depredators, they need to be removed. It’s clean and simple.”

The ODFW met that day and the following day to determine a course of action for the pack.

“If they’re going to take any action — who knows,” Nash said.

On Oct. 1, another rancher on Marr Flat found a calf still alive but badly wounded. The incident is under investigation.

INTERNET

Continued from Page A1

Young people are having their minds patterned in ways their parents would not approve, said Crawford. Even if parents believe that children approaching adulthood should be free to engage in sexual behavior with same-age peers, the type of material presented as “normal sexual behavior” can be shocking.

Porn, he said, has been legitimized. In a survey of church-going girls ages eight to 13, respondents were asked to rate behaviors that were morally reprehensible and most rated failure to recycle as worse than watching porn, he reported.

Also, according to their own reports, one of the largest online purveyors of porn, Pornhub, claimed 92 billion porn videos were watched in 2016. That’s 12.5 video views for every person on earth.

“If you didn’t watch that porn, perhaps the person sitting next to you watched your share as well as their own,” he said.

But beyond the danger of children getting ahold of devices or computers owned by adults, or being allowed unrestricted Internet access, children can click their way to porn or other disturbing material through sites their parents may have thought were safe.

“The difference between awesome and awful is just one click,” Crawford warned.

Children can navigate to sites unapproved by their parents through online video games, music sites, Pinterest, Facebook, You Tube and others.

The problem is both computer literacy — children know how to navigate within sites and out of one site to another better than many parents — and poor controls in the applications children are using.

“Just because the software engineer says an app is safe for 13-year-olds, doesn’t mean it is,” Crawford warned.

Another danger is that “where the kids are is where the predators are.”

Aps that promise anonymity, such as After School, are

particularly worrisome, he said. Anonymity means that anyone can post — including a predator, who can simply “verify” that he or she is a high school student by connecting to a fake Facebook account.

Commonly used apps such as Snapchat or Musical.ly can also be dangerous for children because they allow users to upload their own content.

“The nature of the content always eventually gives way to an abundance of pornographic material,” according to the Protect Young Eyes review of the app. Improperly managed, these apps also offer communication openings for skilled predators.

All sites and apps need to be monitored by parents who have also spoken to their children about dangers, Crawford said. Parents should maintain control of all electronic devices: installing software that prevents some usage or allows parents to monitor usage; requiring “shut off” times or shutting off the router at specific times to facilitate family interaction or signal bed time; and using other methods to protect their children from a variety of dangers, he advised.

Parental consistency with regard to maintaining rules for Internet and app usage is essential, Crawford said. Crawford shared his own philosophy of parenting as an example. His philosophy is that a father’s responsibility is to provide, prepare, and protect.

“Even if my teens do not like my decision (with regard to technology use), it is consistent with my parenting values, and they know that,” he said.

Protect Young Eyes offers advice, reading or study materials, reviews of apps, and recommendations of software to install to protect children — even advice on how to talk to a five year old about porn.

Chris McKenna founded the program after a career in business advising and six years in full-time middle school ministry. He has done research in hopes of leveling the playing field for parents and to inform teens of the risks of using the Internet recklessly. Visit: protectyoungeyes.com

ODFW

Continued from Page A1

Permits allow lethal take by ODFW staff or by livestock producers affiliated with a local grazing association. The permit is valid until Oct. 31 and allows holders to kill wolves in pastures on public or private land currently occupied by their livestock.

The Harl Butte pack is currently estimated at nine wolves, which includes six adults and three wolves born this past spring. Any wolf in the pack

may be taken.

The agency has removed four adult wolves from the Harl Butte pack since Aug. 3, when it first authorized lethal control after nonlethal measures failed to prevent depredations to livestock. The ODFW killed the last of the four on Aug. 25.

“We were hoping to see depredations stop after removing four wolves,” said Roblyn Brown, ODFW acting wolf coordinator. “And six weeks had passed with no depredations. Unfortunately, it didn’t last.”

She also noted that grazing season is not over and the cattle will occupy public land until Oct. 31 and private land even later depending on weather conditions. She added that the agency is responsible for balancing the conservation of wolves with the obligation to manage the pack to curb livestock damage.

Brown said the ranchers used nonlethal preventive measures to limit wolf and live-

stock interaction. The measures included increasing human presence during the day and spending nights outside to protect the cattle.

Livestock was grouped into one pasture instead of several. Ranchers also removed horses from a pasture after ODFW observed a wolf interacting with them, and a county and a volunteer range rider have patrolled the area and hazed wolves away from cattle.

In a statement released late last week, Steve Pedery, conservation director of environmental group Oregon Wild, blasted the ODFW decision while denouncing what the group called Gov. Kate Brown’s lack of attention to the ODFW in terms of wolf management.

“For the fourth time in three months, under an outdated Wolf Plan, Gov. Kate Brown’s Department of Fish and Wildlife has announced that wolves will be killed to appease the livestock industry.”

He also disputed the ODFW claim that ranchers attended the livestock or that the governor did not involve herself with the ODFW.

“Given that cattle companies get compensation checks

and dead wolves when untended livestock go missing in wolf country, there’s no incentive to do things differently,” he concluded. “Without her involvement, the direction of Brown’s Department of Fish and Wildlife is clear — killing wolves is the new definition of ‘conservation.’”

Wallowa County commissioner and Marr Flat rancher Todd Nash said the wolf harvest order didn’t go far enough.

“There’s nine wolves left, and they’re taking four more,” Nash said. “I want them to be effective, and I want them to take them all at this point.”

The rancher said that he was unhappy the ODFW allowed the pack to remain on private ground for the summer while the wolves continued to harass and attack cattle in the area. He added that some cattle would remain in the area and through the spring.

Nash also said the agency’s hunters would only hunt the wolves from the ground rather than using a helicopter because of the ongoing hunting season.

“The consideration for a few deer hunters as opposed to cattle and cattlemen who have been doing their due diligence over the summer ... They need to take action and take action responsibly,” he said. “It took them more than a week to make a decision to go to lethal take ... they need to let the local biologist make the decision and take action.”

SCHOOLS

Continued from Page A1

Districts will next request reimbursement for funds spent on Career Tech, dropout prevention or college readiness programs.

Going forward, the districts will have to submit a plan covering the next four years and get it approved by ODE before they can get funding for the 2018-19 year. That money will be available prior to July 1, 2018.

Both Enterprise and Joseph are taking some time to determine where they will spend their funds, according to their superintendents.

“There are lots of areas where we could spend it,” said Joseph Superintendent Lance Homan. “I want to take a look at those and prioritize.”

Wallowa had already

begun shaping new programs they previously identified as both valuable and desired prior to receiving Measure 98 funding.

“We may use the Measure 98 funds for business and leadership programs,” said Wallowa School District Superintendent Bret Uptmor. “But I budgeted for those in any case.”

The infusion of money into districts due to special measures is very rare, according to the Oregon Department of Education.

“We are not aware of any other time in which this happened,” said Peter Rudy, public affairs specialist for the Office of the Deputy Superintendent of ODE. “There have been times when ballot measures have changed state or local revenue which has impacted how much money is delivered to programs, but nothing as specific as this.”

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