

Oregon's wolf population grew 11 percent and breeding pairs increased

Wildlife biologists counted 124 wolves in Oregon during the winter, an 11 percent increase over the number counted last year.

The count is based on verified wolf evidence such as visual observations, tracks and remote camera photographs and is considered the minimum known wolf population, not an estimate of how many wolves are in Oregon.

Twelve wolf packs were documented by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife at the end of 2017. Eleven packs were successful breeding pairs, meaning that at least two adults and two pups survived to the end of the year. It was a 38 percent increase in breeding pairs from 2016.

"The wolf population continues to grow and expand its range in Oregon," said Roblyn Brown, ODFW wolf coordinator. "This year, we also documented resident wolves in the northern part of Oregon's Cascade Mountains for



Courtesy ODFW

An adult and pup from the Catherine Pack on private property in eastern Union County in May 2017.

the first time."

Other highlights from the report:

- The 12 wolf packs documented had a mean size of 7.3 wolves, ranging from 4 to 11 wolves. Another nine groups of two or three wolves each also were counted.

- Known resident wolves can be found in Baker, Grant, Jackson, Klamath, Lake,

Umatilla, Union, Wallowa and Wasco counties.

- Twenty-five radio-collared wolves were monitored, including 19 wolves that were radio-collared during 2017.

- Four collared wolves left the state (two to Idaho, one to Montana, one to Washington).

- Thirteen wolf deaths were documented, 12 of them at

the hands of humans.

- Just over half the documented wolf locations were on public lands, 44 percent were on private lands, and 2 percent were on tribal lands.

ILLEGAL TAKING OF WOLVES

Four wolves were killed illegally in 2017, two in areas of the state where wolves remain on the federal Endangered Species List (west of highways 395, 78 and 95). Three of the poaching investigations are ongoing, with rewards of \$2,500 to \$15,000 offered for information.

The fourth case, involving a wolf trapped and then shot in Union County, was prosecuted.

The defendant was penalized with 24 months of bench probation, 100 hours of community service, a hunting/trapping license suspension of 36 months and a \$7,500 fine paid in civil restitution to ODFW. He forfeited the firearm and all trapping-related items seized during the investigation and was sentenced to an additional \$1,000 court fine.

LIVESTOCK DEPREDAATION

ODFW investigated 66 reports of livestock depredation by wolves and confirmed wolves were the culprit in 17, compared to 24 confirmed depredations in 2016.

ODFW confirmed losses of 11 calves, one llama, one alpaca and 23 domestic fowl to wolves in 2017 (compared to 11 calves, 7 sheep, one goat and one llama lost in 2016.) During 2017, 24 percent of known wolf packs depredated livestock, compared to 57 percent in 2016.

Since 2009, 75 percent of confirmed wolf depredations have occurred on private land with most during four months -- May, August, September and October.

"It is encouraging to see the continued recovery of Oregon's wolf population into more of their historic range," Gov. Kate Brown said.

"(Still), ongoing issues of poaching and livestock depredation must be carefully considered as we explore more effective management and conservation practices."

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