

State's wolf management now handled by ODFW

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has formally removed most gray wolves in the lower 48 from the Endangered Species List, which turns management over to state fish and wildlife agencies including ODFW. In Oregon, wolves west of Highways 395-78-95 had remained on the federal ESA when the area east of this boundary was delisted in 2011.

While U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was the lead agency in the western two thirds of the state, ODFW has always played a significant role in wolf conservation and management statewide since wolves began to re-establish themselves in Oregon in the 2000s.

Wolves in Oregon remain protected under the state's Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan (Plan). The Plan is the product of enormous public, stakeholder and scientific input and has already led to substantial conservation accomplishments since it was first adopted in 2005.

Oregon's known wolf count has grown from 14 wolves in 2009 to 158 at the end of 2019. The 2020 count is happening now, and updated numbers will be available in Spring 2021.

How will wolf management change in Oregon?

Wolves remain protected throughout the state. Hunting and trapping of wolves remain prohibited statewide.

Under the state's Plan, wolves in Oregon's West Wolf Management Zone (west of Hwy 97-20-395) are in phase one, the con-

serva-tion phase of recovery. (There are fewer than four breeding pairs of wolves in this zone). Wolves east of that boundary (East Wolf Management Zone) are in phase 3 three wolf recovery.

According to the 2019 minimum wolf count, there are 17 known wolves including three packs in the West Wolf Management Zone and 141 known wolves including 19 packs in the East Wolf Management Zone.

The major change from federal delisting is that under the state's Wolf Plan, lethal control could be allowed in situations of chronic livestock depredation when non-lethal measures have been unsuccessful at eliminating conflict. However, a number of other criteria must also be met.

The rules guiding lethal removal of wolves in phase one are the outcome of a 2013 settlement agreement between Cascadia Wild-lands, Oregon Wild, Center for Biological Diversity, ODFW and the Oregon Cattlemen's Association.

Among other criteria, phase one rules require ODFW to create an Area of Depredating Wolves (ADW) after a pack has depredated. This alerts livestock owners to focus non-lethal measures where there is the most risk to livestock. The agency also creates a Conflict Deterrence Plan, identifying appropri-

ate tools area landowners can use to reduce conflict (these documents can be found at https://www.dfw.state.or.us/Wolves/specific_wolf_info_west_zone.asp).

Guidance for livestock producers

Livestock producers concerned about wolves are encouraged to visit ODFW's wolf webpage (<https://dfw.state.or.us/wolves/>) and review preventive measures.

Producers are also encouraged to sign up for Wolf-Livestock Updates at https://dfw.state.or.us/wolves/wolf_livestock_updates.asp or call their local district office with questions.

Oregon Department of Agriculture continues to provide financial assistance for livestock producers to implement non-lethal measures in areas with wolves and compensation for livestock killed or injured by wolves.

"We thank all landowners in areas with wolves for going the extra mile to implement non-lethal measures over the past few years," said ODFW Director Curt Melcher. "We know that regardless of whether or not you lose livestock to wolves, their presence requires changes to your business practices, and we thank you for taking these steps to reduce conflicts with wolves."



Wolves in Oregon are now managed by Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife rather than being on the federal Endangered Species list.



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