

~ Letters to the Editor ~

The Heppner Gazette Times will print all letters to the Editor with the following criteria met: letters submitted to the newspaper will need to have the name of the sender along with a legible signature. We are also requesting that you provide your address and a phone number where you can be reached. The address and phone number will only be used for verification and will not be printed in the newspaper. Letters may not be libelous. The GT reserves the right to edit. The GT is not responsible for accuracy of statements made in letters. Any letters expressing thanks will be placed in the classifieds under "Card of Thanks" at a cost of \$15 Email to editor@rapidsolve.net or upload to Heppner.net.

He's Back!

So much to process this week. As I write this, Inauguration is happening, and hopes are high...unless you're a DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) worshiper who might be crying in a corner somewhere. I do hope you have plenty of tissues; it's gonna be a long day for you.

I had some serious doubt that we would get to this point, oh me of little faith. Wasn't the hole-in-the-ear miracle enough? And then the next assassination almost happened. I have faith in a God who performs miracles and uses imperfect people, so I believe there is a good reason Trump made it this far.

I'd love to see our borders closed and the threat to our country eliminated, both internal and external. I'd love to see our children safe from Liberal liars, sexual predators and Planned Parenthood, and criminals justly prosecuted, especially sex and drug traffickers.

It also wouldn't hurt my feelings if all the DEI garbage disappeared, and we started seeing (and hiring) each other for the quality of our character. And, of course, a restored economy would help us all.

So, I wonder how the Dems will respond. Has the fire in LA taught anyone anything? Has Newsome's lousy leadership and ridiculous priorities made them rethink their mantra? Maybe some...but admitting you were wrong can be a humbling experience. Plus, you have to risk losing a few friends. Who wants to step across that line and become the enemy? It's a hard task and takes a strong character, but being on the side of common sense has its benefits.

Then there's the subject of evil. I've lived quite a while and I've never seen a rapid societal decline like I have the last few years. The Biden Admin has accelerated the decline just a tad.

These days good is bad and bad is good. Tolerance is a priority at all costs as long as it's aimed at anyone but Christians and Jews...and straight white men. So it's good to tolerate evil while evil has no tolerance for good. That's the plan.

Can a Trump presidency fix all this? Well, it's a nice thought. But I believe God is still boss and how it all plays out is up to Him. Should we pray for our new President and his Cabinet? You bet. Pray for our country. Pray for our people. And pray for a reprieve from what Jesus said was coming in the last days. "People will be lovers of self..." (See 2 Timothy 3:1-5).

One last thought. What about God's punishment... or is it discipline? Does He bring about disasters? Or does he just step aside and let Satan wreak havoc? Sometimes I wonder if God doesn't say "Fine...you guys have ignored me long enough...now watch this." I've said it before...it's a good thing I'm not God. I'd be using my zapper frequently. But I know this. He is all-powerful, all-knowing, and loves us beyond what we can imagine.

If our new President succeeds, it will be by God's grace and mercy. Our repentance and prayers count. Prophecy will continue to be fulfilled, and America's fate is in God's capable hands. Thank you, Jesus.

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose," (Roman's 8:28).

Susie Crosby
Prineville, OR

Reward increased to \$20,000 for wolf poaching case in Morrow County

\$130,000 in rewards offered for wolf poaching cases across Oregon



Gray wolf. - Contributed Photo

On January 2, 2025, US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) officials announced a \$10,000 cash reward for information regarding the poaching of a gray wolf identified as OR-159 on private property in Morrow County. Combined with the Oregon Wildlife Coalition's (OWC) standing \$10,000 reward for wolf poaching in the area, the total reward now stands at \$20,000 for information leading to an arrest or citation. The wolf was found dead approximately 20 miles south of Heppner on private property. Gray wolves are federally protected under the Endangered Species Act in the western two-thirds of Oregon. Initially, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offered a \$10,000 reward, which was later matched by the Oregon Wildlife Coalition, bringing the total to \$20,000.

The incident in Morrow County is one of several wolf poaching cases reported across Oregon. In Grant County, a yearling male wolf was shot south of Prairie City in May 2024, with rewards totaling \$12,100 or five Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) hunter preference points offered for information.

In Wallowa County, between February and March 2024, three gray wolves and two golden eagles were poisoned in the Snake River Wildlife Management Unit and Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, prompting rewards amounting to \$38,700.

Similarly, in Klamath and Lake Counties, three endangered gray wolves were found dead east of Bly in December 2023, with

rewards totaling \$60,000. Altogether, more than \$130,000 in rewards have been offered statewide to address these cases.

Funding for these rewards comes from non-profit organizations and advocacy groups like the Oregon Wildlife Coalition and The Humane Society of the United States. State agencies, including ODFW, contribute funds generated from hunting and fishing license fees, federal grants and excise taxes. Private donations and conservation grants from federal and state programs also support enforcement efforts. ODFW's Turn In Poachers (TIP) Program provides additional incentives for reporting poaching activities.

Tracking the Wolves
ODFW monitors Oregon's wolf populations through various methods, including GPS collars to track movement and pack behavior, trail cameras to record visual data, and snow tracking and scat surveys that provide insights during winter months.

Aerial surveys help monitor wolves in rugged terrain, while verified public reports from hunters, ranchers and citizens contribute to monitoring efforts.

At the end of 2023, Oregon recorded a minimum of 178 wolves in 22 packs, including 15 breeding pairs. However, annual reports compiled by ODFW suggest the actual population may be higher.

Wolves have high reproductive potential, which allows their populations to grow quickly under favorable conditions. Wolves typically mate once per year in late winter, with pups born in April or May after a 63-day gestation period.

Average litter sizes range from four to six pups, though litters of up to 11 have been documented. In the wild, 30-60 percent of pups survive their first year, depending on food

availability, disease and predation.

Wolves reach sexual maturity at one to two years and can start breeding by two years of age. Young adults often disperse to form new packs, contributing to rapid expansion into new areas.

Under ideal conditions, wolf populations can double in three to four years if mortality rates are low and food sources are abundant.

Despite official counts, some people believe the wolf population in Oregon is significantly underreported. Wolves are highly mobile, nocturnal and skilled at avoiding humans, making them difficult to track and count accurately.

Survey methods rely on camera traps, radio collars and visual observations, which may miss uncollared or transient wolves. Additionally, unverified sightings by ranchers and residents may not be included in official data.

Wolves' high reproductive rates and long-distance dispersal patterns also complicate tracking efforts, potentially leading to undercounts.

Protected by Geography

Although biologically identical, these wolves face vastly different treatment depending on which side of the state border they inhabit. While Idaho enforces aggressive predator management policies, Oregon takes a more protective approach. Both states' wolves belong to the same species, *Canis lupus*, and many of Oregon's wolves originally migrated from Idaho.

Reintroduced to Idaho in the mid-1990s as part of a federal recovery program, the wolves expanded their range, naturally dispersing into Oregon.

This migration laid the foundation for Oregon's more gradual and conservation-focused wolf management strategy, contrast-

ing sharply with Idaho's emphasis on population control.

Oregon removed wolves from state Endangered Species Act protections in 2015, but they remain federally protected west of Highway 395.

Wolves in western Oregon fall under U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service jurisdiction, while eastern Oregon wolves are managed by the state.

Proposals to federally delist wolves continue to face legal challenges and delays.

Legal protections further highlight the differences. Wolves in Idaho were delisted from the Endangered Species Act in 2011, transferring management to the state, which allows hunting and trapping to control populations.

In Oregon, wolves remain federally protected in the western part of the state, while state management applies in the east. Even under state control, Oregon emphasizes non-lethal deterrents and compensation programs for livestock losses rather than predator removal.

Wolf Predation

Reports of livestock predation by wolves have been documented in Oregon. In March 2024, a calf was killed in the Balm Creek area, linked to the WA123 group.

In April 2024, a two-day-old calf was injured in Upper Rhea Creek by the Madison Butte Pack, and later that month, a two-month-old calf was found dead in the same area.

The Madison Butte Pack was also responsible for killing a four-day-old calf in May and a seven-month-old calf in the Road Canyon area in October 2024.

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