

LIVESTOCK LOSS DETERMINATION

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Investigation ID: 093017-LAS-1

Date Investigated: 9/30/2017

General Area: Western Lassen County, Private Land

General situation and animal information: A livestock producer found a calf carcass on his property on 9/29/17. He notified DFW staff, who were already scheduled to investigate two other cattle carcasses on the same property the following day. CDFW and USDA Wildlife Services staff investigated the carcass on 9/30, as well as the two other carcasses on the same property (investigations 093017-LAS-2 and 093017-LAS-3). The livestock producer was present during the first 15 minutes of the investigation.

By the time of the investigation, the approximately 600 lb. carcass had been partially consumed. However, the front half of the carcass and the rear legs were relatively intact, and the heart and lungs were present. Maggots >1/4" long were present, and the date of death was estimated to have been approximately 9/26. Investigators searching the carcass site and surrounding for predator sign and evidence of a struggle/kill, and closely examined the carcass. The front legs, rear legs, back, flank, neck, and face of the calf were skinned to facilitate assessment of pre-mortem wounds and hemorrhaging.

Physical evidence of attack by a predator: No evidence of a chase or kill scene was observed. Examination of the hide and tissue beneath it did not reveal wounds consistent with predation by wolves or another carnivore (i.e., bite marks or scrapes, punctures, pre-mortem hemorrhaging, etc.). On the left (down) side of the carcass, extending from the lower throat/neck to the back, a diffuse pattern of red fluid/discoloration was observed, consistent with postmortem lividity (settling of blood and fluids due to gravity).

Evidence that the predator was a wolf: N/A

Evidence of wolf presence near the time of the animal(s) death/injury: Based on GPS-collar locations, LAS01F was first recorded very near the site at midnight on 9/27.

Recent wolf depredation in the same or nearby area: None. However, the livestock producer has stated to DFW staff several times that he is missing several newborn calves in the area.

Cause of death/injury:

Confirmed Wolf

Probable Wolf

Possible/Unknown

Other

Summary: Although the cause of death is unknown, there was no evidence the calf was killed by wolves or another carnivore. At the time of investigation, the carcass was sufficiently intact that evidence of death by predation would have been apparent.

Wolf and coyote tracks were observed near the carcass, and available evidence suggests the adult wolves of the Lassen Pack fed on the carcass between the time of death and the time of the investigation.