

LIVESTOCK LOSS DETERMINATION

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Investigation ID: 093017-LAS-2

Date Investigated: 9/30/2017

General Area: Western Lassen County, private land

General situation and animal information: On 9/27/2017 CDFW staff called a livestock producer to report several GPS-collar locations from the female wolf LAS01F on the producer's property, in close proximity to an area of concentrated cattle use. The producer reported finding two calf carcasses that day near the locations in question. The producer was not able to schedule an investigation of the carcasses until 9/30/17. CDFW and USDA Wildlife Services staff investigated the two carcasses (this investigation and 093017-LAS-3) on 9/30, as well as a third carcass that the livestock producer found on 9/29 (093017-LAS-1).

Despite the fact that the carcass was not investigated until three days after its discovery, very little of the approximately 600-700 lb. carcass had been consumed by the time of the investigation. The abdominal area had been opened and the stomach had been partially consumed, and the lips and one ear had been consumed by birds. Otherwise the carcass was intact. The right hoof was chipped, the dew claw was missing, and there were abrasions above the hoof. Investigators searched the carcass site and surrounding for predator sign and evidence of a struggle/kill, and closely examined the carcass. The front legs, left rear, back, 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 side of the carcass that was lying against the ground, a diffuse pattern of red fluid/discoloration was observed from the throat to the past the front shoulder. This discoloration was 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 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.

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Tracks from an adult wolf and a coyote were observed near the carcass, and although the carcass was largely intact, it is possible that a wolf or wolves from the Lassen Pack fed on the carcass between the time of death and the time of the investigation.