

LIVESTOCK LOSS DETERMINATION

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Investigation ID: 101317-LAS

Date Investigated: 10/13/2017

General Area: Western Lassen County, private land

General situation and animal information: On the morning of 10/13/17 a livestock producer called CDFW and USDA Wildlife Services staff to report observing five wolves in close proximity to a cow carcass. He reported seeing the same cow alive the previous evening, and suspected wolf depredation. CDFW and USDA Wildlife Services staff investigated the site and carcass that afternoon.

Investigators searched the carcass site and surroundings for predator sign and evidence of a struggle/kill, and closely examined the carcass. The yearling heifer weighed approximately 600 pounds. At the time of investigation one of its front legs was missing, the neck had been largely consumed, and the ribcage was exposed and seven ribs had been consumed. The vital organs, stomach, and rumen were intact. To facilitate the investigation, the right front leg and both rear legs were skinned.

Physical evidence of attack by a predator: The carcass was located adjacent to an approximately 10-foot circular area that included kick marks and disturbed ground consistent with a struggle. Wolf tracks were observed within that area. The hide contained numerous pre-mortem bite marks on the right front shoulder and both rear flanks and legs. The bite marks on the legs and flanks were associated with significant hemorrhaging and muscle tissue damage.

Evidence that the predator was a wolf: The location and nature of the bite marks and the significant associated tissue hemorrhaging are consistent with attacks by wolves. Many of the bite marks penetrated tissues to a depth of approximately 1.5 inches.

Evidence of wolf presence near the time of the animal(s) death/injury: Based on GPS-collar locations, the wolf LAS01F was present at the site at midnight, 3:00 AM, and 6:00 AM on 10/13. While staff were investigating the site, the wolf was on a forested slope approximately 620 meters from the carcass.

Recent wolf depredation in the same or nearby area: None. However, LAS01F and other members of the Lassen Pack have repeatedly visited and/or fed on cow carcasses in the same meadow/pasture in recent weeks (see depredation investigations 092117-LAS-1, 093017-LAS-1, 093017-LAS-2, and 093017-LAS-3).

Cause of death/injury:

<u>Confirmed Wolf</u>	Probable Wolf	Possible/Unknown	Other
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Summary: The locations and extent of the pre-mortem bite wounds are consistent with that of a wolf attack. LAS01F was at the carcass location for at least 6 hours the night the cow died, and wolves were observed at the carcass the following morning. These factors are sufficient to confirm this incident as a wolf depredation.