

Gray Wolf Program Update

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

April 2018 – June 2018

Field Work

Lassen pack

The breeding female was suspected to have given birth to pups on April 18, as indicated by both ground and satellite tracking data. On June 29, trail camera video confirmed reproduction with a minimum count of two pups. Surveys for count data are ongoing.

Dispersing wolves

OR-44

OR-44, a GPS-collared two-year old male that dispersed from northeastern Oregon's Chesnimnus pack in fall 2017, entered California on March 13. His radio collar has not downloaded satellite locations since May 16. A VHF signal was detected on May 22, and the signal indicated that the collar had only 1-2 months of battery life remaining. The last confirmed location of OR-44 was on May 28, when a ranch trail camera captured a picture of him in Siskiyou County. Between March 13 – May 28, OR-44 traveled a minimum of 450 miles (minimum mean of six miles/day) in Siskiyou and Del Norte Counties.

OR-54

OR-54, a GPS-collared two-year old female that dispersed from southwestern Oregon's Rogue pack, entered California on April 15. By the end of June, OR-54 has been in California for 76 days traveling through Siskiyou, Shasta, Tehama, Plumas, Sierra, and Nevada counties, covering a minimum distance of 748 miles (minimum mean ten miles/day).

Uncollared black wolf (southern Lassen County)

A black wolf continues to be observed occasionally within the Lassen pack home range. Although this wolf is not known to be a member of the Lassen pack, it sometimes uses areas within the pack's territory. Pending genetic analysis of biological samples may shed light on the origin of this wolf.

Uncollared black wolf (northern Lassen County)

On April 16, a rancher reported an uncollared black wolf in Little Valley. The rancher collected hair samples for CDFW to have analyzed for its genetic origin, and captured images of the wolf with a trail camera on April 17 and April 20. The wolf apparently left the area after the 20th. CDFW surveyed the area with the rancher on April 27 and documented old tracks, but observed no fresh sign. This is a good example of how public cooperation and coordination help CDFW to more effectively monitor wolves in California.

Dispersing wolves are not settled within a territory, and as such, their movements are unpredictable. They often cover great distances within a 24-hour period. If these wolves remain at or repeatedly visit areas of concentrated livestock use or other sites that cause management concern, CDFW attempts to notify those landowners and producers in the immediate area.

CDFW continues to receive and investigate reports of wolf presence from many parts of California. Public reports are an important tool for us. Please report wolves or wolf sign on the CDFW Gray Wolf web page: <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Mammals/Gray-Wolf/Sighting-Report>. CDFW also continues to operate trail cameras and conduct field surveys in eastern Siskiyou County, in the general area used by the old Shasta Pack in 2015.

Livestock Interactions

CDFW and USDA Wildlife Services (WS) staff investigated seven reports of suspected wolf depredations. The results are as follows:

Date	Determination ¹	County	Investigators
5/26/18	Other	Lassen	CDFW WS
5/26/18	Possible/Unknown	Lassen	CDFW WS
6/1/18	Probable	Lassen	CDFW WS
6/10/18	Other	Lassen	CDFW WS
6/17/18	Other	Lassen	N/A WS
6/17/18	Possible/Unknown	Plumas	N/A WS
6/27/18	Possible/Unknown	Plumas	CDFW WS

¹ "Other" denotes "not wolf" or cause of death other than wolf. "Possible/Unknown" denotes in these cases "Unknown" because not enough of the carcass was present or in adequate condition for the investigation.

The individual Determination reports are available at www.wildlife.ca.gov/conservation/mammals/gray-wolf

Use of non-lethal deterrents

On June 6, deterrent-flagging (fladry) hung from fences was removed from a ranch in Indian Valley since the Lassen pack had moved to summer range away from the valley.

Communication

CDFW biologists have been in regular and frequent communication and coordination with CDFW wardens, US Fish and Wildlife Service, USDA Wildlife Services, US Forest Service, livestock producers, range riders, conservation organizations, and private timberland owners and managers.

Presentations:

- June 7 – Update to Plumas County Fish and Wildlife Commission, Quincy
- June 21 – Update to Lassen County Fish and Wildlife Commission, Susanville

Other Activities:

- April 5 – Attended Lassen Forest producer annual operating meeting in Hat Creek and gave a wolf update.
- April 14 – Visited with several producers in Scott Valley to discuss dispersing wolf OR-44 activities in the valley and consult with producers to deter wolf/livestock conflicts.
- May 9 – Met with the Siskiyou County Wolf Liaison, and ranchers in Scott Valley.
- May 13-20 – Assisted USFWS and ODFW in trapping to radio collar wolves in the Rogue pack in southwest Oregon.
- June 28 – Worked in the field with a private landowner to develop conservation measures for a wolf homesite.