

LIVESTOCK LOSS DETERMINATION

California Department of Fish and Wildlife



Investigation ID: 080419-LAS

Date Investigated: 8/4/19

Cause of Death:

- Confirmed Wolf
- Probable Wolf
- Possible Wolf
- Non-Wolf Depredation
- Non-Depredation
- Unknown

General Area: Western Lassen County, public land

General situation and animal information: On August 3 ranch hands moving cattle in an open valley observed two wolves. They also discovered two adult cow carcasses they thought might be wolf kills, and a ranch employee notified USDA Wildlife Services (WS) that evening. The next morning a WS specialist investigated the carcasses, which were too old and decomposed for him to determine the cause of their deaths. He then surveyed the surrounding valley because of the two wolves observed the previous day. During the survey, scavenging birds led him to a fresh calf carcass of a 250 pound, 2-month-old calf. The hind legs had external tooth scrapes, so he performed a necropsy.

Physical evidence of attack by a predator: External tooth scrapes with associated subcutaneous and muscle hemorrhage indicated the animal was alive when bitten.

Evidence that the predator was a wolf: Tooth scrapes and significant associated hemorrhage were found on both hind legs and the right flank. The nature and location of the wounds were consistent with typical wolf attack patterns.

Evidence of wolf presence near the time of the animal(s) death/injury: A GPS location from a tracking collar indicated the breeding female of the Lassen Pack (LAS01) was 1.4 miles from the carcass at 6:00 AM on August 3. Wolves were also observed in the valley later that day. Wolf tracks were seen near the carcass, and on the morning of August 5 three wolves including LAS01F were seen by CDFW and Wildlife Services personnel in the vicinity of the carcass.

Summary: The investigator had enough carcass remaining to complete a thorough investigation of the calf and concluded the cause its death was wolf predation. He was unable to determine the cause of death for the two other adult cattle because they were too decomposed.