

LIVESTOCK LOSS DETERMINATION

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Investigation ID: 052521-PLU

Date Investigated: 05/25/2021

Cause of Death:

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

General Area: Eastern Plumas County, private land

General situation and animal information: On the morning of 5/25, ranch hands discovered a fresh adult cow carcass that they thought might be a wolf kill. A ranch employee notified the Department and CDFW and USDA Wildlife Services investigated the same day. The carcass had been scavenged but was mostly intact (80%) and allowed for a thorough investigation.

Physical evidence of attack by a predator: Subcutaneous and muscle hemorrhage associated with bite marks were present along the throat.

Evidence that the predator was a wolf: The bite marks and associated hemorrhage on the throat are consistent with a wolf attack. Coyotes generally bite animals on the throat too, but the size of an adult cow generally precludes attacks by coyotes.

Evidence of wolf presence near the time of the animal(s) death/injury: During the investigation, wolf tracks were observed near the carcass. Ranch employees also reported seeing three wolves the day before and observed one wolf harassing a cow. Trail cameras set up on carcass confirmed the presence of three wolves returning to the carcass during multiple nights.

Summary: Investigators had enough carcass to complete a thorough investigation and concluded the cause of death was wolf predation based on the attack pattern and wolf sign present.

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Figure 1: Carcass overview 1



Figure 2. Carcass overview 2



Figure 3. Skinned head, neck, shoulders, and head with obvious bruising.