

Federal/State Coordination Plan

For Gray Wolf Activity in California

Coordinating Agencies

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
California Department of Fish and Game
USDA/APHIS – Wildlife Services



WS Wildlife Services

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PURPOSE AND NEED

This document describes the coordination plan among the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Wildlife Services (WS) as it relates to gray wolf (wolf) activity in California (State). The purpose of the plan is to prepare for a coordinated and effective response to possible situations involving a wolf that may occur in California. The guidelines adhere to Federal and State law and policy and emphasize close interagency and inter-governmental coordination and a mutual understanding of specific roles and responsibilities of the cooperating agencies.

This document is not a gray wolf management plan or a gray wolf recovery plan. It does not contain objectives for establishing or conserving gray wolves in California.

The first confirmed gray wolf detection in California since 1924 occurred in December 2011 with the arrival of “OR7,” a radio-collared, sub-adult wolf that dispersed from a pack in Oregon. OR7’s arrival necessitated development of a coordination strategy given that his presence and/or the presence of other wolves in California in the future might necessitate a coordinated response to wolf-related situations. It is believed that OR7 is exhibiting normal dispersal behavior for a young male wolf who is seeking a mate or seeking an existing wolf pack to join.

Wolves may continue to disperse into California from adjacent states in the future. This plan has been developed in recognition of the fact that wolves may become established in California. Such a plan will assist USFWS, CDFG and WS in responding efficiently to incidents involving wolves.

LEGAL STATUS OF GRAY WOLVES IN CALIFORNIA

The following information provides some background on the legal status of gray wolves in California and management authorities of the relevant State and Federal agencies.

The gray wolf is listed as endangered throughout portions of its range, including California, under the Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) (ESA). Wolves that enter the State are therefore protected by the ESA, which is administered and enforced by the USFWS. For species listed as endangered under the ESA, activities that may result in “take” of the species are prohibited (50 CFR 17.21). The ESA defines “take” to mean “to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.” Harass is further defined as “an intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding or sheltering” (50 CFR 17.3).

Wolves are not specifically addressed in the California Fish and Game Code (FGC) and the gray wolf is not a listed species under the California Endangered Species Act. However, wolves are considered non-game mammals, the taking of which is prohibited by State law except under limited circumstances. The California Fish and Game Commission may promulgate regulations to authorize management of fish and wildlife resources.

Wolf hybrids and domestically-raised wolves are not protected under Federal or State law.

GENERAL AGENCY ROLES

USFWS: The ESA is administered and enforced by USFWS which has lead responsibility for wolves where the species is listed, including California. USFWS has the authority to authorize take of federally listed species. Law Enforcement is responsible for investigating cases that involve unauthorized take of a federally listed species.

CDFG: CDFG currently has a cooperative agreement with the USFWS, under Section 6 of the ESA that provides CDFG authority to manage for the conservation of endangered or threatened species (including wolves within California, but the agreement does not authorize lethal take of those species. If/when the wolf is removed from the Federal List of Threatened and Endangered Species management authority will revert to the State. In anticipation of this possibility, the CDFG is initiating development of a State wolf conservation and management framework in advance of an implementable management plan. Tribal governments manage wildlife on their reserved lands and they maintain certain rights to wildlife resources on ceded lands in the State.

WS: WS is the Federal agency with nationwide responsibilities for managing wildlife damage problems. Wolves sometimes depredate livestock and/or other domesticated animals and this type of depredation must be investigated, making WS a key partner in wolf management. WS is also experienced in management intervention to prevent or minimize further depredation, as may be warranted in some circumstances. WS is currently consulting with the USFWS in accordance with section 7 of the ESA on their activities managing wildlife damage, including development and implementation of appropriate conservation measures.

INFORMATION SHARING

All media inquiries should be referred to USFWS Public Affairs, Pacific Southwest Region; CDFG Office of Communication, Education, and Outreach (OCEO); or APHIS Legislative and Public Affairs, Sacramento (see “Agency Phone Directory of Key Contacts” at end of document for contact information). It is important that agency public affairs contacts identified above be informed as soon as possible of incidents involving wolves in California, especially those identified in items 1-4 in the *Response Strategy for Potential Situations* section of this plan. Release of information to the public regarding possible incidents will be coordinated by the agencies.

USFWS will have the lead responsibility to coordinate with Federal land management agencies such as the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, as needed. The USFWS Pacific Southwest Regional Office (Region 8) will coordinate with counterparts at these agencies. USFWS Field Offices will coordinate with individual Federal parks, national forests, etc., within their respective jurisdictions. CDFG will have the lead responsibility to coordinate with other State agencies such as the California Department of Food and Agriculture and the Department of Parks and Recreation, and with local governments such as Boards of Supervisors, as needed. CDFG will coordinate closely with the Nevada Department of Wildlife should it become apparent that any wolf is known to be near the California/Nevada border. Both the USFWS and CDFG will coordinate with the Tribes, as appropriate. Both the USFWS and WS will also be in regular communication with their Nevada and Oregon Federal counterparts.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) maintains a database on the only radio-collared wolf (OR7) currently in California because he was originally radio-collared in Oregon. This database contains location information downloaded from the radio-collar and is updated

daily. USFWS and CDFG have access to the GPS coordinates of OR7 through ODFW's database and are responsible for disseminating appropriate information to partner agencies as outlined above. As other wolves, radio-collared or not, enter the State, a similar pattern of information dissemination will occur to the extent practicable and necessary.

CDFG has prepared a document that provides an initial evaluation of historical information, current conditions, potential natural recolonization, and management implications of wolves in California. The document is downloadable at:

http://www.dfg.ca.gov/wildlife/nongame/wolf/docs/Gray_Wolf_Report_2012.pdf.

Additionally, current information on the single known wolf OR7 in California is available at:

<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/wildlife/nongame/wolf/>

If additional wolves enter the State or become established, an additional method of disseminating information to the public may be developed. Private landowners may be contacted if a wolf is in the area of their property, or on it, and remains there for more than a few days.

RESPONSE STRATEGY FOR POTENTIAL SITUATIONS

The goal of the USFWS, CDFG and WS is to be prepared to respond to potential situations involving wolves in an efficient and effective manner. Four situations are discussed below that might arise in California along with an overview of the recommended response for each situation. The four situations are:

- 1. Investigating Reports of Wolf Activity, Notifying Landowners, and Monitoring Wolf Activity**
- 2. Report of possible wolf-caused livestock depredation or other domestic animal conflict**
- 3. Report of a captured or injured wolf**
- 4. Report of a dead wolf**

Specific incidents will have unique circumstances and responses will vary to account for individual situations. The cooperating agencies will coordinate their responses to the various situations as they arise.

1. Investigating Reports of Wolf Activity, Notifying Landowners, and Monitoring Wolf Activity

As the presence of a wolf in California is a recent (2011) and significant event, the following strategy is based on this limited presence of one, or at most a few wolves. If wolves become established as a pack(s) in the state in the future, the level of response will be modified accordingly.

Agency Roles and Responsibilities:

CDFG: CDFG will be lead for investigating reports of wolf sightings and, through its Section 6 agreement, has authority to capture and radio-collar wolves and monitor their activity. CDFG will work cooperatively with USFWS and WS to determine when and how wolves should be captured; for the purpose of monitoring wolf activity. CDFG will determine when to contact State or local government land owners and managers. CDFG will

communicate to USFWS and WS when they are contacting state or local governments, landowners, and land managers.

USFWS: USFWS will assist with investigating reports of wolf sightings, capturing wolves, and monitoring wolf activities in areas where wolves are federally listed. USFWS will determine when to contact Federal land owners and managers. USFWS will communicate to CDFG and WS when they are contacting state or local governments, landowners, and land managers.

WS: WS will work closely with livestock producers and share reports of possible wolf activity with USFWS and CDFG. WS will be available to assist with monitoring, capturing, and collaring of wolves. WS will communicate to USFWS and CDFG when they are contacting state or local governments, landowners, and land managers.

All Agencies: If a monitored wolf remains in a location or on a piece of property for more than a few days (roughly 3-5 days, but the length of time will vary given the specific situation), USFWS, CDFG and WS will work cooperatively to determine when private landowners will be contacted. Upon agency agreement, contact may be made by personnel from any of the cooperating agencies.

Coordination:

USFWS, CDFG, WS, and other agencies occasionally receive reports from people who have observed large tracks, large animals that they think may be wolves, the remains of potential wolf prey, or other potential signs of wolf activity. Individuals reporting potential wolf activity to the USFWS should be directed to the Pacific Southwest Regional Office and the appropriate USFWS Field Office (Sacramento, Klamath Falls, Yreka, or Arcata), based on County (see “Agency Phone Directory of Key Contacts” at end of document for contact information). Individuals reporting potential wolf activity to CDFG should be directed to the CDFG’s Regional Office in Redding. Individuals reporting potential wolf activity to WS should be directed to the appropriate District Office (see phone directory). Regardless of the agency receiving the report, the information should be provided to the USFWS, CDFG, and WS as soon as possible.

The USFWS or CDFG will interview the individual(s) reporting the sighting and record all relevant information regarding the sighting, including location information. Information will be shared between agencies and, when warranted and resources are available, the USFWS, CDFG, and WS will conduct a follow-up field investigation. During these investigations, the three agencies will work cooperatively to determine if wolves are in fact in the area, particularly when multiple credible reports come in from the same area. If wolf activity is verified, partner Federal and State agencies will be notified as appropriate.

If wolves are confirmed and the animal(s) has not been implicated in a livestock depredation or other problem incident, agencies will collaborate to monitor the wolf activity to the best of their ability as deemed necessary, given available resources. Other agencies may also participate in monitoring activities, as appropriate. The preferred monitoring approach is to capture and radio-collar wolves to facilitate regular tracking of movements. However, funding and personnel may be limiting and decisions on monitoring methods will be made on a case-by-case basis. Potential alternative approaches include periodic surveillance from the ground and air to document tracks and any wolf activity, remote camera surveys, or track

surveys along with scent post surveys. Confirmed observations of wolf presence will be mapped, and reports stored by the agency main point of contact in their respective agency (see “Agency Phone Directory of Key Contacts” at end of document for contact information).

2. Report of Possible Wolf-Caused Livestock Depredation or Other Domestic Animal Conflict

Agency Roles and Responsibilities:

WS: WS is the lead agency for investigating and determining if livestock depredations by a wolf have occurred. After authorization by USFWS, WS will implement non-lethal wolf control actions in California. WS will work cooperatively with CDFG and USFWS to coordinate with livestock producers and other landowners in the local area to provide relevant information to reduce potential conflicts.

CDFG: CDFG Law Enforcement and biologists will assist WS, as needed, in investigation of livestock depredations and coordination with livestock producers and other landowners in the local area to provide relevant information to reduce potential conflicts.

USFWS: USFWS Law Enforcement and biologists will assist WS, as needed, in the investigation of livestock depredations and coordination with livestock producers and other landowners in the local area to provide relevant information to reduce potential conflicts.

Coordination:

Reports of possible wolf depredation of livestock (cattle, sheep, goats, horses, mules, llamas, donkeys), livestock guarding and herding dogs, or other domestic animals, should be directed to WS. The agency receiving the report should take the caller’s name and call back information for follow-up and to provide this information to WS, and ask for specific directions on how to reach the scene (street names, landmarks, gates, etc.). Give the caller the following instructions to protect the scene:

- Avoid walking in and around the area.
- Keep dogs and other animals from the area to protect evidence.
- Place a tarp over the carcass.
- If possible, use cans or other objects to cover tracks and scats that can confirm the depredating species.
- Inform caller that a Wildlife Services investigator will be notified of the incident.

WS, USFWS Law Enforcement, and CDFG Law Enforcement and biologists should be contacted immediately. USFWS Law Enforcement will contact the appropriate USFWS Field Office.

WS has an established standardized method of investigating reports of livestock depredation which will be followed. CDFG and USFWS will be available to assist. WS will provide a report of their investigation to the USFWS and CDFG, including if they have determined that the depredation was wolf-caused. Upon receipt of the investigation report, USFWS, in consultation with CDFG, will evaluate possible response actions, assess the efficacy of non-

lethal measures and document that process, and determine the appropriate response measure. Site-specific circumstances will dictate what type of response action will be used.

The agencies will contact livestock producers in the area and describe what they can do to discourage wolves from frequenting their property or grazing allotment. USFWS and CDFG will notify other appropriate Federal and State agencies and local governments. If wolf activity is within or adjacent to Tribal lands, the USFWS office involved will work with the affected tribe.

3. Report of a Captured or Injured Wolf

Agency Roles and Responsibilities:

USFWS: USFWS Law Enforcement is the lead for investigating the capture or injury of a wolf. USFWS is responsible for investigating cases that involve unauthorized take of a federally listed species.

CDFG: CDFG Law Enforcement and biologists will assist USFWS in investigating the capture or injury of a wolf. In many cases, CDFG will be the first agency on the scene. CDFG is responsible for investigating violations of State wildlife laws. CDFG's Wildlife Veterinarian will be the lead advisor for medical care for an injured wolf, as well as overseeing the treatment and holding of an injured wolf.

WS: WS may assist USFWS in investigating the capture or injury of a wolf.

Coordination:

Wolves may be caught in traps or snares set for other animals, or may be intentionally trapped or injured. Because these situations may be difficult to distinguish, USFWS Law Enforcement will make the determination of the cause. Site-specific circumstances will influence how such captures are handled; however, a rapid response and decision will be necessary to ensure the health and well-being of the animal.

Reports of a wolf being live-captured or injured should be directed to the USFWS Office of Law Enforcement to make a legal determination about the capture or injury, proper documentation of the event, and initiate further action if necessary. The agency receiving the report should take the caller's name and call back information and ask for specific directions on how to reach the scene (street names, landmarks, gates, etc.). Inform the caller that USFWS or CDFG personnel will respond to the scene immediately. USFWS Law Enforcement, CDFG Law Enforcement and biologists, and WS should immediately be contacted in order to get someone onsite as quickly as possible. USFWS Law Enforcement will contact the appropriate USFWS Field Office. Personnel from the first agency on the scene will confirm that the captured or injured animal is a wolf, will evaluate the animal's condition, and will ensure that the animal and onlookers are safe. USFWS Law Enforcement will collect necessary data for their investigation.

If the wolf is injured, USFWS Law Enforcement will authorize necessary actions to stabilize the wolf's condition. CDFG's Wildlife Veterinarian will be immediately consulted. A local veterinarian or qualified wildlife biologist may be enlisted to recommend and administer initial on-site medical care and treatment as approved by USFWS. Interagency coordination

will be initiated to determine what should be done with the animal. Depending on the severity of the injury, a decision will be made on whether or not to release the animal. The final decision will be authorized by USFWS Law Enforcement. If a decision is made to hold the animal to recover from injuries, arrangements will be made with an appropriate facility and veterinary care will be arranged. CDFG's Wildlife Veterinarian will oversee veterinary care in collaboration with USFWS, and work with the best staffed facilities and veterinarians as indicated by the level of care and anticipated time period in captivity needed.

If the wolf is not injured or does not require long-term treatment, USFWS Law Enforcement will determine, in cooperation with the other agencies, if the wolf is releasable. Case-by-case determinations will be made on the location of the release.

If the wolf is releasable, factors that will be considered include:

- If there is no history of wolf problems in the area where the animal is captured, the preferred approach is on-site release. However, decisions regarding how to manage the issue will be made on a case-by-case basis. An evaluation will be made to determine if there have been any reported wolf problems in the area prior to making a release decision. Interagency coordination will be initiated to determine what should be done with the animal.
- If an on-site release is being considered, an evaluation of the animal's health will be conducted prior to release. Female wolves with dependent pups captured on public lands prior to October 1 should be released in the same area as captured unless there have been repeated depredations in the area. Typically, pups of the year (born in spring) are able to travel with the pack by October.
- If the animal is collared and released, collaborating agencies will monitor its movements as regularly as possible.

If the animal is severely injured, in extreme pain or discomfort, and has no chance of survival, immediate euthanasia may be necessary. CDFG's Wildlife Veterinarian should be consulted to determine the best method of euthanasia. If CDFG's Wildlife Veterinarian is not able to be onsite, a local veterinarian or veterinary technician should be consulted as necessary in order to prevent undue suffering. If any of the cooperating agencies recommend euthanasia, USFWS Law Enforcement should be consulted to concur and authorize euthanasia. If CDFG or WS believe euthanasia is necessary and USFWS Law Enforcement is not available, other USFWS personnel should be contacted for concurrence. If no USFWS personnel are available, the need for euthanasia should be clearly articulated, documented, and made available to USFWS Law Enforcement immediately.

USFWS Law Enforcement will determine if a forensic investigation is necessary. A euthanized wolf that requires forensic investigation will be processed by USFWS Law Enforcement and transported to the National Forensics Lab in Ashland, Oregon. A euthanized wolf that does not require forensic investigation will be processed by CDFG and transported to the UC Davis California Animal Health and Food Safety (CAHFS) lab under the care of the CDFG's Wildlife Veterinarian.

4. Report of a Dead Wolf

Agency Roles and Responsibilities:

USFWS: USFWS is responsible for investigating cases that involve unauthorized take of a federally listed species. USFWS Law Enforcement is the lead for investigating the report of a dead wolf. A dead wolf will be processed by USFWS Law Enforcement and transported to the National Forensics Lab in Ashland, Oregon.

CDFG: CDFG Law Enforcement will assist USFWS in the investigation of the report of a dead wolf. CDFG is responsible for investigating violations of State wildlife laws.

WS: WS may assist USFWS in the investigation of the reported dead wolf.

Coordination:

Reports of a dead wolf should be directed to the USFWS Office of Law Enforcement to make a legal determination about the death, properly document the event, and initiate further action if necessary. The agency receiving the report should take the caller's name and call back information and ask for specific directions on how to reach the scene (street names, landmarks, gates, etc.). Give the caller the following instructions to protect the scene:

- Avoid walking in and around the area.
- Keep dogs and other animals from the area to protect evidence.
- Place a tarp over the wolf carcass.
- Inform the caller that USFWS or CDFG personnel will respond to the scene immediately.

USFWS Law Enforcement, CDFG Law Enforcement and biologists, and WS should immediately be contacted in order to get someone onsite as quickly as possible. USFWS Law Enforcement will contact the appropriate USFWS Field Office.

USFWS Office of Law Enforcement and CDFG Law Enforcement personnel will immediately be called in to investigate all reports of dead wolves and make a determination about the cause of death, properly document the event, and initiate further action as necessary.

Agency Phone Directory of Key Contacts

Northern California					
Agency	Location	Position	Name	Office	Cell
USFWS	Regional Office, Sacramento, CA	Front Desk		(916) 414-6464	
	Regional Office, Sacramento, CA	Law Enforcement	Dan Crum	(916) 414-6660	(916) 396-9513
*	Regional Office, Sacramento, CA	Listing, Recovery, and Environmental Contaminants Division Chief	Michael Long	(916) 414-6464	(916) 499-7740
	Regional Office, Sacramento, CA	PublicPublic Affairs	Scott Flaherty	(916) 842-5763	
	Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Field Office (Lassen, Shasta, Tehama, Plumas Counties)	Field Supervisor	Susan Moore	(916) 414-6600	
	Klamath Falls Fish and Wildlife Field Office(Modoc County)	Field Supervisor	Laurie Sada	(541) 885-8481	
	Yreka Fish and Wildlife Field Office (Siskiyou County)	Field Supervisor	Erin Williams	(530) 842-5763	
	Arcata Fish and Wildlife Field Office (Humboldt, Trinity, Del Norte)	Field Supervisor	Nancy Finley	(707) 822-7201	
CDFG	(R1) Redding	Regional Manager	Neil Manji	(530) 225-2363	(916) 212-1268
	(R1) Redding	Wildlife Program Manager	Karen Kovacs	(530) 225-2312	(707) 498-1930
	(R2) Rancho Cord.	Regional Manager	Kent Smith	(916) 358-2382	
	(R2) Rancho Cord.	Wildlife Program Manager	Tina Bartlett	(916) 358-2898	
	N. California	Asst. Chief Enforcement	Mike Carion	(530) 225-2361	
	HQ- Sacramento	Public Affairs - OCEO	Dana Michaels	(916) 322-2420	
*	HQ-Sacramento	Wildlife Chief	Eric Loft	(916) 445-3555	(916) 996-8019
	Rancho Cordova	Wildlife Veterinarian - lead	Dr. Deana Clifford	(916) 358-2378	(916) 616-0809
	Rancho Cordova	Wildlife Veterinarian - backup	Dr. Ben Gonzales	(916) 358-1464	(916) 813-6323
	Redding	Wildlife Rehabilitation Facilities	Nicole Carion	(530) 357-3986	
Wildlife Services	McArthur	District Supervisor	Jim Shuler	530-336-5623	530-524-5101
*	Sacramento	State Director	Dennis Orthmeyer	916-979-2675	916-201-2504
	Sacramento	Legislative and Public Affairs	Larry Hawkins	916- 930-5509	
National Parks	Sacramento	National Resources Programs Chief	Ray Sauvajot	(415) 623-2201	
USFS	Vallejo	Regional Mammal Coordinator	Diane Macfarlane	(707) 562-8931	
BLM	Sacramento	California Threatened and Endangered Species Lead	Amy Fesnock	916-978-4646	
BIA	Sacramento	Natural Resource Chief	Ron Recker	916-414-6065	

*Main point of contact for USFWS, CDFG, and WS in bold.