

Federal/State Coordination Plan

For Gray Wolf Activity in California

Coordinating Agencies

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



WS Wildlife Services

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PURPOSE AND NEED

This document describes the planned coordination between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Wildlife Services (WS) on matters related to gray wolves (*Canis lupus*) in California (State). The purpose of the plan is to prepare for a coordinated, effective, and efficient response to potential incidents involving wolves 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 coordination plan has been developed in recognition of the recent establishment of gray wolves in California and the likelihood that both collared and uncollared wolves will continue to disperse into the California from adjacent states. This document is not a gray wolf management plan or recovery plan. It does not contain objectives for establishing, removing, or conserving gray wolves in California.

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.

Federal status. 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 in California 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).

State status. In June 2014, gray wolves were listed as Endangered under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA). CDFW implements CESA under the California Fish and Game Code (FGC), sections 2050-2115.5. “Take” (defined as hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill, or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill) of listed species is prohibited except through a few limited exceptions (FGC sections 2080.1, 2081 and 2800).

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

GENERAL AGENCY ROLES

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

CDFW: CDFW currently has a cooperative agreement with the USFWS, under Section 6 of the ESA that provides CDFW authority to manage for the conservation of federally endangered or threatened species (including wolves within California). That 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 CDFW has developed a draft State wolf conservation 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. As wolves sometimes depredate livestock and/or other domesticated animals, WS is an important partner in wolf management. WS staff have extensive experience investigating depredation events as well as experience in management intervention to prevent or minimize further depredation. WS completed informal consultation with the USFWS in 2014 (08E00000-2014-I-0011), in accordance with section 7 of the ESA on their management of wildlife damage in California, including development and implementation of appropriate conservation measures for the gray wolf.

INFORMATION SHARING

All media inquiries regarding gray wolves in California should be referred to USFWS Public Affairs, Pacific Southwest Region and/or Klamath Basin; CDFW Office of Communication, Education, and Outreach (OCEO); and 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 through 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 Klamath Falls Fish and Wildlife Office (Klamath Falls FWO) is the lead Ecological Services office for coordination of wolf activity within northern California (Modoc, Siskiyou, Humboldt, Del Norte, Trinity, Shasta, Lassen, Plumas, Tehama, and Sacramento counties) of the Pacific Southwest Region (Region 8). The USFWS Pacific Southwest Regional Office is the lead for coordination of wolf activity in other portions Region 8. The Klamath Falls FWO will coordinate information sharing with personnel at the USFWS Pacific Southwest Regional Office and other Region 8 field offices. USFWS field offices will then coordinate with local Federal agencies within their respective jurisdictions. As appropriate, the USFWS and WS will also coordinate with their Nevada and Oregon Federal counterparts.

CDFW will have the lead responsibility for coordination 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 county Boards of Supervisors and departments, as needed. CDFW 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 CDFW will coordinate with the Tribes, as appropriate. Private landowners may be contacted by USFWS, CDFW, or WS if a wolf is in the area of their property, or on it, and remains there for more than a few days.

CDFW has prepared a draft gray wolf conservation document that provides the biological and sociological implications of , and the management challenges of wolves occurring in California. The document is available at: <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Mammals/Gray-Wolf>.

Other information regarding wolves (FAQs, depredation, etc.) is also available at the same website location. CDFW also maintains an online database where persons with information on wolf activity can report the activity. The online reporting database can be accessed via <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Mammals/Gray-Wolf/Sighting-Report>. If additional wolves are known to enter the State or become established, additional methods of sharing information with the public will be developed. These methods could include press releases, updates to the CDFW wolf website, and notifications to landowners and elected officials.

RESPONSE STRATEGY FOR POTENTIAL SITUATIONS

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

- 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 based on those circumstances. The cooperating agencies will coordinate their responses to the various situations as they arise. Responding staff should notify their respective agency's public affairs contacts, as appropriate.

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

The following strategy is based on the presence of only a few known wolves in California (i.e., the Shasta Pack and occasional dispersers from Oregon). If additional packs are established in the future, the level of response will be modified accordingly.

Agency Roles and Responsibilities:

CDFW: CDFW will be the lead agency for investigating reports of wolf activity and presence (e.g., sightings, detection of wolf sign, encounters with humans), and through its Section 6 agreement, has authority to capture and radio-collar wolves and monitor their activity. CDFW will work cooperatively with USFWS and WS to determine when and how wolves should be captured for the purpose of monitoring wolf activity. CDFW will determine when to contact State or local government, landowners, and managers. CDFW 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 landowners and managers. USFWS will communicate to CDFW 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 CDFW. WS will be available to assist with monitoring, capturing, and collaring of wolves. WS will communicate to USFWS and CDFW when they are contacting State or local governments, landowners, and land managers.

All Agencies: If a monitored wolf remains in a particular location or on a piece of private property for more than a few days (roughly 3-5 days, but the length of time will vary given the specific situation), USFWS, CDFW 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:

The USFWS, CDFW, WS, and other agencies occasionally receive reports from people who have observed large dog-like tracks, large animals that they think may be wolves, the remains of potential wolf prey, or other potential signs of wolf activity. All agencies will encourage reporting parties to enter reports of wolf activity into CDFW's online database. Individuals reporting potential wolf activity to the USFWS should be directed to the Klamath Falls FWO (see "Agency Phone Directory of Key Contacts" at end of document for contact information). Individuals reporting potential wolf activity to CDFW should be directed to the CDFW'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, credible information should be provided to the USFWS, CDFW, and WS as soon as possible.

In most cases, the USFWS or CDFW will interview the individual(s) reporting the sighting and record all relevant information regarding the sighting, including location information. If the information has not already been entered into CDFW's online database, the individual who receives the information will enter the data online as soon as possible. When warranted and resources are available, the USFWS, CDFW, 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, and will coordinate with USFWS, CDFW, and WS, 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. Additionally, season and timing may preclude effective or safe wolf capture. Potential alternative approaches include periodic surveillance from the ground and air to document tracks and any wolf activity, remote camera surveys, track surveys, and 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). Location information will not be distributed unless there

is a need to share information to provide for the protection of the species; this will be assessed on a case-by-case basis by USFWS and CDFW.

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

Agency Roles and Responsibilities:

CDFW: CDFW is the lead agency for investigating and determining if livestock depredations by a wolf or wolves have occurred. CDFW Law Enforcement will assist as necessary. USFWS and CDFW will coordinate to implement non-lethal wolf control actions in California, as appropriate. CDFW will work cooperatively with WS and USFWS to coordinate with livestock producers and other landowners in the local area to provide relevant information to reduce potential conflicts.

WS: WS will assist CDFW 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 and WS will coordinate to implement non-lethal wolf control actions in California, as appropriate. WS will work cooperatively with CDFW and USFWS to coordinate with livestock producers and other landowners in the local area to provide relevant information to reduce potential conflicts.

USFWS: USFWS will assist CDFW/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 (e.g., cattle, sheep, goats, horses, mules, llamas, alpacas, and donkeys), livestock guarding and herding dogs, or other domestic animals, should be directed to CDFW and 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 CDFW and 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 and if possible keep watch over the carcass to ensure that it is not disturbed by predators or scavengers
- If possible, use cans or other objects to cover tracks and scats that can confirm the depredating species.
- Inform caller that CDFW and WS investigators will be notified of the incident.

CDFW Wildlife Management staff, WS, and USFWS, should be contacted immediately. CDFW Law Enforcement will assist when a biologist is not available. The Klamath Falls FWO will coordinate with the USFWS Regional Office, USFWS Office of Law Enforcement, and other field offices.

CDFW has developed investigation protocols (which build on prior work from WS and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife) which will be followed for any potential wolf-caused livestock depredation investigation in California. CDFW, in conjunction with WS (and USFWS if available to assist) will strive to determine if the cause of injury or death of a domestic animal (or animals) was as a result of depredation by wildlife, and if so, whether wolf-caused. CDFW will prepare a report summarizing its investigation and findings. Upon completion of the investigation report, USFWS, in consultation with CDFW, 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 CDFW will notify other appropriate Federal and State agencies and local governments. If wolf activity is within or adjacent to Tribal lands, the USFWS field office involved will work with the affected tribe.

3. Report of a Captured or Injured Wolf

Agency Roles and Responsibilities:

USFWS: USFWS is responsible for investigating cases that involve unauthorized take of a federally listed species. USFWS is the lead for investigating the capture or injury of a wolf. Reports of captured animals should be directed to the USFWS Office of Law Enforcement. For reports of injured wolves, the Klamath Falls FWO will coordinate with USFWS Regional Office and USFWS Office of Law Enforcement, as appropriate.

CDFW: CDFW Law Enforcement and biologists will assist USFWS in investigating the capture or injury of a wolf. In many cases, CDFW will be the first agency on the scene. CDFW is responsible for investigating violations of State wildlife laws. CDFW'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:

Reports of a wolf being captured should be directed to the USFWS Office of Law Enforcement to make a legal determination about the capture, ensure proper documentation of the event, and initiate further action if necessary. Reports of injured wolves should be directed to the Klamath Falls FWO, who will then coordinate with USFWS Regional Office and USFWS Office of Law Enforcement, as appropriate. The Klamath Falls FWO should be notified if USFWS Law Enforcement has been contacted by CDFW or WS. 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 CDFW personnel will respond to the scene immediately. USFWS, CDFW Law Enforcement and biologists, and WS should immediately be contacted in order to get someone onsite as quickly as possible. The Klamath Falls FWO will coordinate with USFWS Office of Law Enforcement when making contact with other appropriate USFWS Field Offices. 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 Office of Law Enforcement will authorize necessary actions to stabilize the wolf's condition. CDFW'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 Office of 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. CDFW'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 Office of 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:

- 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 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.
- If an on-site release is being considered, an evaluation of the animal's health will be conducted prior to release.
- 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. CDFW's Wildlife Veterinarian should be consulted to determine the best method of euthanasia. If CDFW'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 Office of Law Enforcement should be consulted to concur and authorize euthanasia. If CDFW or WS believe euthanasia is necessary and USFWS Office of 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 Office of Law Enforcement immediately.

USFWS Office of Law Enforcement will determine if a forensic investigation is necessary. A euthanized wolf that requires forensic investigation will be processed by USFWS Office of Law Enforcement and transported to the National Forensics Lab in Ashland, Oregon. A

ethanized wolf that does not require forensic investigation will be processed by CDFW and transported to the UC Davis California Animal Health and Food Safety (CAHFS) lab under the care of the CDFW'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 Office of Law Enforcement is the lead for investigating the report of a dead wolf. A dead wolf will be processed by USFWS Office of Law Enforcement and transported to the National Forensics Lab in Ashland, Oregon.

CDFW: CDFW Law Enforcement will assist USFWS in the investigation of the report of a dead wolf. CDFW 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 CDFW personnel will respond to the scene immediately.

USFWS (Office of Law Enforcement and Klamath Falls FWO), CDFW Law Enforcement and biologists, and WS should immediately be contacted in order to get someone onsite as quickly as possible. The Klamath Falls FWO will coordinate with USFWS Office of Law Enforcement when making contact with other appropriate USFWS field offices.

USFWS Office of Law Enforcement and CDFW 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	Front Desk		(916) 414-6464	
	Regional Office, Sacramento	Law Enforcement	Dan Crum	(916) 414-6660	(916) 396-9513
	Regional Office, Sacramento	Listing, Recovery, and Environmental Contaminants Division Chief	Michael Long	(916) 414-6464	(916) 499-7740
	Regional Office, Sacramento	Fish and Wildlife Biologist	Bjorn Erickson	(916) 414-6741	916-335-5476
	Regional Office, Sacramento	Public Affairs	Scott Flaherty	(916) 978-6156	(916) 612-3042
	Yreka Fish and Wildlife Office	Klamath Basin Public Affairs	Matt Baun	(530) 841-3119	(530) 340-2387
	Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office (Lassen, Shasta, Tehama, Plumas Counties)	Deputy Field Supervisor	Jan Knight	(916) 414-6600	
	Klamath Falls Fish and Wildlife Office (Modoc, eastern Siskiyou Counties)	Field Supervisor	Laurie Sada	(541) 885-8481	
	Klamath Falls Fish and Wildlife Office (Modoc, eastern Siskiyou Counties)	Deputy Field Supervisor	Daniel Blake	(541) 885-2512	
*	Klamath Falls Fish and Wildlife Office (Modoc, eastern Siskiyou Counties)	Fish and Wildlife Biologist	Elizabeth Willy	(541) 885-2525	(541) 891-2174
	Yreka Fish and Wildlife Office	Field Supervisor	Vacant-TBD	(530) 842-5763	
	Arcata Fish and Wildlife Office (Humboldt, Trinity, Del Norte)	Field Supervisor	Bruce Bingham	(707) 822-7201	
CDFW	(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	Tina Bartlett	(916) 358-2898	(916) 204-9004
	(R2) Rancho Cord.	Wildlife Program Manager	Garry Kelley	(916) 358-1131	(916) 903-8763
	N. California	Asst. Chief Enforcement	Tony Warrington		916-826-9416
	HQ- Sacramento	Public Affairs - OCEO	Jordan Traverso	(916) 654-9937	(916) 212-7352
*	HQ-Sacramento	Wildlife Branch Chief	Vacant-TBD	(916) 445-3555	
	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
	Fort Collins, CO	Legislative and Public Affairs	Pam Boehland	301-851-4093	
National Parks	San Francisco	National Resources Program Manager	Jay Goldsmith	(415) 623-2206	
USFS	Vallejo	Regional Mammal Coordinator	Diane Macfarlane	(707) 562-8931	
BLM	Sacramento	California Threatened and Endangered Species Lead	Amy Fesnock	(916) 978-4646	
BIA	Washington, DC	Fisheries, Wildlife, and Recreation Chief	David Wooten	(202) 513-0355	

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