

**State of Idaho**  
**Department of Fish and Game**  
**Boise, Idaho**

February 10, 2010

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Regional Supervisors  
**FROM:** Cal Groen, Director  
**SUBJECT:** Response to wolf depredations on livestock  
**C:** Fish and Game Commissioners, Jim Unsworth, Virgil Moore, Mark Collinge, Nate Fisher, Bonnie Butler

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Despite our increased response to controlling wolves depredating on livestock in recent years, wolf depredation complaints continued to increase. In November 2008 the Idaho Fish and Game Commission directed IDFG "To develop and aggressively utilize all available tools and methods to control wolf caused depredation of domestic livestock." Responding to that directive, our control efforts have progressed as follows:

- Decentralized decision-making to Regional Supervisors when authorizing removal of depredating wolves.
- Extended the effective period for take orders by USDA Wildlife Services (WS) and kill permits (livestock owners) from 45 to 60 days following the most recent depredation incident.
- Authorized additional WS wolf removals and extended kill permits based on recurring incidents or chronic history of the wolf pack involved.
- Allowed kill permit designees to include all members of a grazing association during their entire grazing season.
- Increased authorization to remove most or all of the members of wolf packs involved in chronic depredations where there has been a history of depredations from previous years.
- Developed area-specific harvest objectives for the 2009-2010 wolf hunting season to address livestock conflicts.
- Authorized take orders during open hunting season when hunting proved ineffective to remedy chronic depredations.
- Increased coordination between Montana and Idaho WS.

IDFG authorized WS control actions in response to 160 confirmed and 43 probable wolf depredations on livestock during federal FY2009. These control actions resulted in removal of 107 wolves including complete, or nearly complete removal of 6 entire packs (Middle Creek, Snake River, Applejack, Falls Creek, Sage Creek, Blue Bunch) as authorized by IDFG. Fish and Game authorized the removal of the Blue Bunch pack but complete removal was not achieved during the federal FY2009 period. Since the end of the federal FY in September 2009, IDFG has authorized the complete removal of all, or nearly all, members of 3 additional packs (*Basin Butte, Steel Mountain, Sweet-Ola*) in response to repeated depredations caused by these packs.

Although the Department has documented nearly 300 wolf mortalities in 2009, livestock losses continue at an unacceptable level. As a result, we need to renew our commitment to meeting the Commission's directive to reduce livestock depredations.

With due consideration to maintaining linkage corridors, we will recommend to the Commission increasing harvest limits in 2010 and expanding season dates in wolf zones with chronic depredations.

Further, in high conflict areas where a history of depredations exists, we will respond to a confirmed depredation incident more aggressively by authorizing WS to remove all involved depredating wolves. Additionally, I am committing staff to work cooperatively with WS to evaluate the effectiveness of alternative methods, such as sterilization or other nonlethal measures, to alleviate wolf damage. We would like to keep all options available to manage wolf depredations in the future.