

WYOMING WOLF PROGRAM WEEKLY REPORT

To: Regional Director, Region 6, Denver, Colorado
From: USFWS Wyoming Wolf Recovery Project Leader, Jackson, WY
Subject: Status of Gray Wolf Management in Wyoming and the NRM

WYOMING WOLF WEEKLY- Dec. 6, 2010 through Jan. 7, 2011

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2010 Annual Report

The 2010 Interagency Annual Wolf (*Canis lupus*) Report for the NRM DPS will be available in early March 2011 on-line at <http://westerngraywolf.fws.gov> . The Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks section of the annual wolf report will also available on-line on its websites at <http://fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/management/wolf/default.html>. The annual wolf report is composed of five Sections: 1) Montana; 2) Wyoming; 3) Idaho; 4) USFWS overview of dispersal, funding, litigation, and relevant publications; and 5) Tables and Figures of wolf population statistics and wolf depredations.

Information about Oregon wolves can be viewed at:
www.dfw.state.or.us/wolves

Information about Washington wolves can be viewed at:
http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/gray_wolf/

MONITORING

Wyoming (including YNP): Official year-end population estimates for Wyoming will be published in our 2010 Annual Report. Our preliminary estimate includes ≥ 348 wolves in ≥ 45 packs (including 27 BP) (Figure 1). This represents an increase in the total number of wolves in Wyoming of approximately 9%. The wolf population was distributed in 2010 as follows:

Wyoming (outside YNP): ≥ 247 wolves in ≥ 34 packs (including ≥ 19 BP).

YNP: ≥ 101 wolves in 11 packs (including 8 BP).

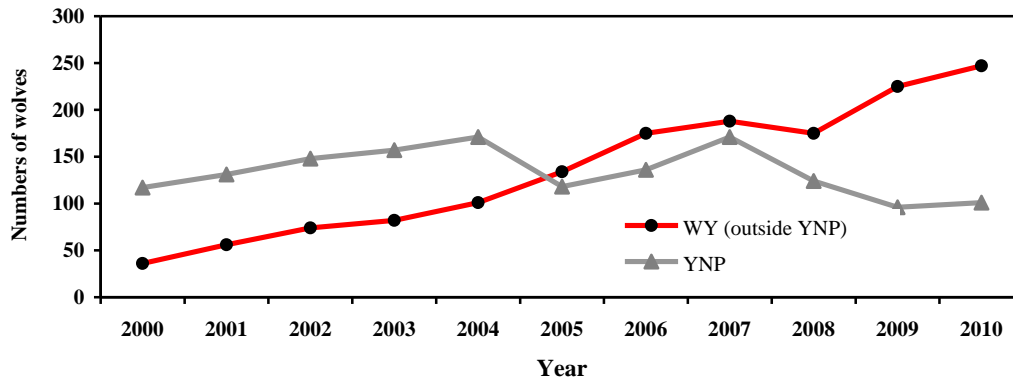


Figure 1. Wolf population growth in WY (outside YNP) and in YNP from 2000-2010.

In Wyoming (outside YNP), we documented 58 wolf mortalities (19% of the Wyoming wolf population outside YNP) in 2010. Causes of mortality included: control=40 (69% of the total mortality); natural=2 (3%); illegal or under investigation=9 (16%); unknown=3 (5%); and other=4 (7%) (Table 1).

Cause of Mortality	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Depredation Control	18	29	41	44	63	46	31	40
Natural	3	0	3	1	2	3	2	2
Illegal/Under Invest.	5	1	5	8	5	8	4	9
Unknown	1	0	0	1	2	8	3	3
Other	0	7	2	5	3	14	0	4
Total	27	37	51	59	75	79	40	58

Table 1. Total wolf mortality in Wyoming (outside YNP) from 2003 - 2010.

Yellowstone National Park: Wolf project staff has begun their annual helicopter darting and radio collaring efforts. On Monday, January 3rd, 4 wolves from 2 packs (Agate and Lamar Canyon) were collared with 2 GPS collars and 2 VHF. Capture efforts will continue during the next few weeks as weather permits.

CONTROL

Wyoming: In 2010, we continued to manage wolf population growth and wolf distribution to minimize chronic loss of livestock from wolves and promote wolf conservation by maintaining the Wyoming wolf population well above recovery objectives. The total number of confirmed depredation losses in 2010 were the lowest recorded since 2003 (Figures 2-3 and Tables 2-3).

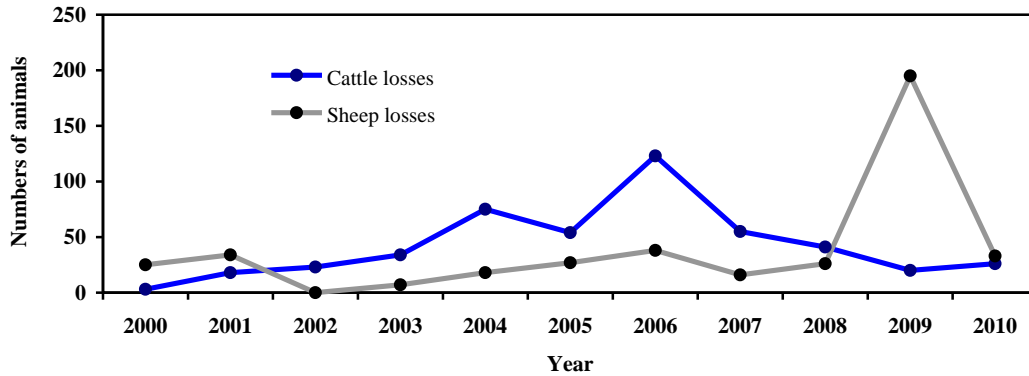


Figure 2. Annual number of cattle and sheep losses per year in WY (outside YNP) from 2000-2010.

Table 2. Confirmed cattle and sheep depredations by county from 2006 through 2010.

Cattle						Sheep					
County	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	County	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Fremont	8	12	3	3	3	Johnson	20	4	2	54	0
Park	39	27	23	5	11	Lincoln	0	12	12	45	8
Sublette	71	14	15	10	12	Sublette	6	0	14	37	1
Sweetwater	0	0	0	1	0	Big Horn	0	0	0	0	24
Converse	0	0	0	1	0	Washakie	0	0	0	59	0
Lincoln	1	2	0	0	0	Fremont	12	0	0	0	0
Hot Springs	1	0	0	0	0	Total:	38	16	28	195	33
Teton	1	0	0	0	0						
Washakie	2	0	0	0	0						
Total:	123	55	41	20	26						

Table 3. Confirmed livestock depredations and control actions in WY from 2003-2010.

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Cattle	34	75	54	123	55	41	20	26**
Sheep	7	18	27	38	16	28	195	33
Dogs	0	2	1	1	2	0	7	0
Goats	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
Horses	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	1*
Total depredations	43	105	83	162	74	69	222	64
Wolves Controlled	18	29	41	44	63	46	31	40

*One foal was killed by wolves (recorded as confirmed), 2 horses were chased by wolves and injured when they were run through a fence (recorded as 1 confirmed and 1 probable), and 1 horse was chased by wolves and broke its leg when it was run over a cattle guard (recorded as probable). All 3 injured horses had to be euthanized.

** In addition to 26 confirmed cattle depredations (losses), 1 dead calf was recorded as a probable wolf-kill, and 11 calves & 1 steer were also injured by wolves.

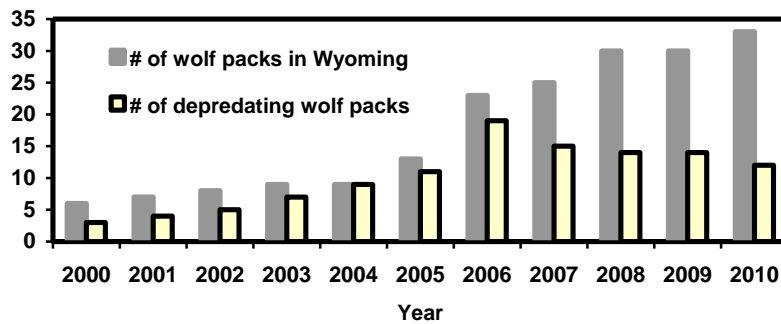


Figure 3. Annual number of wolf packs in Wyoming (outside YNP) and the number of wolf packs that are involved in at least 1 livestock depredation per given year.

RESEARCH

Yellowstone National Park: The Yellowstone Wolf Project's Early Winter Study ran from November 15 to December 14, and was one of the more challenging study sessions of the last 15 years. This was due primarily to extreme early winter weather that brought considerable snowfall to the region, accompanied by cold temperatures, high winds, and poor visibility, making both ground and air monitoring difficult. In fact, project staff was only able to fly 4 days during the 30 consecutive day study (with the objective of flying all 30), with very little data collected on interior wolf packs. Additionally, all park staff were required to stay out of the field at the park superintendents request on 3 separate days due to safety concerns associated with blizzard conditions. That said, ground crews got good data on kill rates, intraspecific interactions, and movements from several wolf packs including Lamar Canyon, Blacktail Plateau, and Agate Creek.

Grand Teton National Park/USFWS in Jackson: On 1/3/11, Grand Teton National Park (GTNP) and the USFWS began their second field season of a collaborative effort to determine prey selection of wolves during winter in GTNP and the Buffalo Valley. Our winter study period runs from January 3 through mid April. One 3-member crew from GTNP monitors wolves within GTNP and a second 3-member crew from the USFWS follows wolves in the Buffalo Valley area.

LAW ENFORCEMENT AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

Nothing to report at this time.

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

On 12/9/01, Jimenez spoke with the National Elk refuge biologists, visitor center staff, and sleigh ride interpreters in Jackson.

On 1/5/11, Bangs spoke to the government affairs committee of the Archery Trade Association meeting in Indianapolis, IN.

FURTHER INFORMATION

To request an investigation of livestock injured or killed by wolves, please contact the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Wildlife Services at (307)261-5336.

For additional information, please contact:

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