

# DEALING WITH WOLF PREDATION ON THE RANCH



Documented Wolf Predation. Photo Courtesy of Carter Niemeyer, USDA/APHIS/Wildlife Services

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WY Game & Fish Dept.  
WY Farm Bureau Fed.  
USDA/APHIS/WS  
USFWS

## WHAT TO DO

### If You Suspect

### A Wolf Has Killed

### Your Livestock...

(Cattle, Sheep, Horses, Mules)

## PROTECT THE EVIDENCE

If you suspect a wolf has killed your livestock you will need proof, so carefully preserve the evidence.

\* **Look for tracks or scat** (droppings) that will prove a wolf's presence. Preserve this evidence by covering with plywood or weighted cans.

\* **Cover the livestock carcass or remains** with a tarp and weight securely. This will keep other predators from destroying the wolf's teeth marks or disturbing any telltale signs of hemorrhaging common in wolf attacks.

\* **Take photographs or video tape.** High quality photographs or video tape of any evidence is helpful. It is a good idea to place a common object (ex. coin, keys, or pocket knife) next to the evidence as you photograph it to document the size.

\* **Keep bystanders away from the scene.** All too often critical evidence can be obliterated by people walking around or moving the carcass(es).

\* **Call your local federal Animal Damage Control trapper or the state office of the USDA/APHIS/ADC at 307-261-5336.** ADC is the only authority recognized by USFWS to confirm and control wolf depredation. If ADC and USFWS officials are able to verify by the evidence you preserve on the scene that a wolf has killed your livestock, they may be able to help you get the offending wolf moved and/or help you get compensation for your loss.

\* **Videotape the official examination.** For your own peace of mind, future protection from the law and for use as potential evidence, you may wish to videotape the official examination of the carcass(es).

### **WHAT TO DO If You See a Wolf on Your Property... PROTECT YOUR INTERESTS**

Even if the wolf is not harming livestock, report its presence to the USFWS in Casper at 307-261-6365, Cody at 307-527-7604 or Lander at 307-332-7607 and ADC at 307-261-5336. If livestock are killed or wounded, or if you kill a wolf depredating on your livestock, there will be a record that you reported a wolf on or near your property.

Wolves in Wyoming may be harassed\* by landowners or livestock producers in a non-injurious and opportunistic\* manner (\*see definitions). If you harass a wolf you must report it to the USFWS within 7 days. You may injure or kill a wolf on your private land or lands leased from the state if the wolf is in the act of killing, wounding, or biting\* your livestock (\*see definitions). If you kill or wound a wolf, it must be reported to the USFWS within 24 hours.

Without a permit issued by the USFWS, you cannot kill or wound wolves on federal leased land even if they are depredating. If you experience depredation on lands leased from the federal government, contact ADC and the USFWS. They can move or kill the wolf. After confirmed depredation by wolves on federal leased lands, the USFWS can issue a permit to a livestock producer to kill or injure wolves found in the act of depredating. These permits can be issued now that there are six or more documented breeding pairs of wolves in the experimental population area. It is advisable that if wolf predation has occurred on federal leased lands that the livestock producer takes the steps necessary to apply for a permit from the USFWS.

Should you see a wolf feeding on dead livestock, think twice before shooting. There must be indisputable proof that the wolf killed the livestock. If it's proven that your livestock died for reasons other than wolves, you may be liable for fines and imprisonment. Be sure to protect the evidence and call ADC and the USFWS.

Always contact the USFWS if you suspect wolf pups are on your property to determine what actions you may legally take.

### **WHAT TO DO If You Kill a Wolf... PROTECT YOURSELF**

It is not advisable to wound or kill a wolf except for human safety. The USFWS considers a wolf kill a criminal scene, placing you at risk for fines up to \$100,000 and imprisonment.

If you do kill a wolf, authorities will want proof that the wolf was causing actual harm to livestock before they will agree that you acted within the law, so the preservation of evidence is crucial. Do not move the wolf or the dead and/or wounded livestock. Report wolf kills to ADC and the USFWS within 24 hours.

\* \* \*

**Definitions** (Taken from 50 Code of Federal Regulations, Section 17.84):

Harass in a non-injurious and opportunistic manner - According to the Endangered Species Act Regulations, harass is defined as "intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to the 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). Under 50 CFR, Section 17.84, landowners on their private land and livestock producers (i.e. producers of cattle, sheep, horses and mules) that are legally using public land may harass any wolf in an opportunistic (the wolf cannot be purposely attracted, tracked, waited for, searched out and then harassed) non-injurious (no temporary or permanent physical damage may result) manner any time, *Provided* that such harassment is non-lethal or is not physically injurious to the gray wolf and is reported to the Service within 7 days.

**WDA comment: Airborne Hunting Regulations prevent the use of aircraft to harass gray wolves (50 CFR, Part 19).**

Killing, wounding or biting - Any livestock producers on their private land may take (including to kill or injure) a wolf in the act of killing, wounding or biting livestock (cattle, sheep, horses and mules), *Provided* that such incidents are to be immediately reported within 24 hours to the Service, and livestock freshly (less than 24 hours) wounded (torn flesh and bleeding) or killed by wolves must be evident. Service or other Service authorized agencies will confirm if livestock were wounded or killed by wolves. The taking of any wolf without such evidence may be referred to the appropriate authorities for prosecution.

**The material contained herein is for informational purposes only and is subject to change. If you have further questions concerning the regulations governing the gray wolf in Wyoming, please contact the United States Fish and Wildlife Service Office in Casper, Lander or Cody.**

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*Additional copies of this brochure may be obtained by writing or calling the:*

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