Mexican Wolf Recovery

Collateral Damage Identification

Catron County, New Mexico

CASE # AP-226

Wolves fed upon cow while alive, 20 + pounds of muscle tissue eaten out around back end and pelvis. Wolves leave; cow stressed and tries to birth calf. Calf found half way out dead not fed upon by wolves; cow could not stand and was put down. This is a typical confirmed wolf depredation.

Foreword

When I looked for a title for the following factual wolf information, I had to look at the folks most impacted by Mexican Wolf Recovery. Many rural family ranchers have lost their peace of mind, lost their dreams, lost their pursuit of happiness, lost their livestock and lost their ranches. Collateral Damage Identification seemed appropriate. All damage was due to non-compensated wolf caused livestock losses, a "taking" by Federal wolves administered by Federal agencies and our own New Mexico Department of Game and Fish. These agencies will and have push Mexican Wolf Recovery forward knowing that their wolves are destroying family rancher's ability to survive, in the end selling off their ranches. In fact, lost family ranchers are collateral damage to achieve Mexican Wolf Recovery.

The purpose of the contained information is for you to be able to identify wolf presence in your area. People that do not have wolves on them yet and people who live outside the Mexican Wolf Recovery Area (BRWRA) are unaware of what to look for to identify wolf activity. Wolves travel a long distance and could be in your area. Unidentified depredations on livestock, killed pets and farm animals could be wolf interactions attributed to other causes.

Un-collared wolves have dispersed from the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area (BRWRA) to other counties and parts of the State of New Mexico and Arizona. Look at the wolves put into the Yellowstone National Park, within a few years wolves dispersed from Yellowstone into Wyoming, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Colorado.

Un-collared Mexican wolves have had 12 years to disperse into other parts of the state of New Mexico. Breeding and having offspring with other un-collared wolves, they in turn repeat the process. This is part of the hidden strategy of Mexican Wolf Recovery they do not talk or tell you about. This is also why the USFWS do not collar all wolves. The US Fish and Wildlife Service and the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (the lead wolf recovery agency in New Mexico) are depending on un-collared wolf dispersals to saturate New Mexico and Arizona with wolves. The information in this document should help you identify wolf activity and who to call for an investigation to document wolf activity.

It is clear that wolf recovery agencies are managing family ranchers and not wolves. Now, the US Forest Service has entered Mexican Wolf Recovery big time and will be putting all types of wolf directives on the permitted grazing allotments.

Wolf agencies will tell you they have a solution for depredating livestock killing wolves or habituated wolves who seek our humans and human use areas. Habituated wolves lack an avoidance response to humans and are bold, and fearless. Habituated wolves come to your home and in your front yard where your children play.

Non-positive wolf agency solutions for problem wolves are; hazing wolves away, supplemental feeding (to stop wolves from killing livestock), flaggery (flags on a shocking wire), and bang/rag boxes (to scare wolves). Some non-lethal schemes may work short term, but do not solve the problem of wolves killing livestock or cure flawed habituated wolves. What these non-lethal schemes do accomplish is give the wolf agencies something to write down in their reports to show their upper bosses that they have attempted to fix the problem knowing full well they will fail and prolong the problem.

There is only one positive cure for problem wolves and that is to remove them….period

How Much Do Family Ranchers Loose to Mexican Wolves?

Comparability Study Synopsis

This study consist of five ranches A, B, C, D, E, located within the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area in Catron County, New Mexico. These ranches were identified as having wolves denning in and or near calf/yearling core areas. Prior to this study the relationship between high calf loss rate and proximity of denning wolves was not understood. It was also not realized that coyotes swarm to areas where wolves are continually killing livestock, contributing to the removal and destruction of evidence of the remains. Of the five ranches; four are cow/calf operations and one a yearling operation. All five ranches share a constant factor: Mexican wolf packs denning in and or near calf/yearling core areas.

Confirmed and probable findings do not reflect the true number of livestock losses. The information provided in this document indicates the true livestock loss and effects on family ranchers for sustainable economic viability. The final analyses indicate that annual post-wolf introduction losses are higher than the average annual pre-wolf losses for the five study ranches:

- **Total combined livestock losses = 651.0 head,**
- **Total combined dollar value losses = $ 382,198.50**

In this comparability study, two of the five ranches went out of business; one selling the ranch and the second is on the market now. A third ranch sold off their livestock in the fall of 2009 and did not re-stock cattle in 2010.

Wolf-caused stress disrupts a cow's breeding cycle; the resulting calf loss must be measured in monetary value as if the wolf depredated a calf. To alleviate the taking of private property without compensation by the Federal Government, confirmation standards and the compensation scheme as a whole must be reevaluated. In-depth studies must be conducted to evaluate the negative impacts of wolves' denning in calf/yearling core areas and the effects of wolf-related stress on livestock. Evaluation of data must include the wide spectrum of negative impacts to livestock and livestock producers, rather than the current focus solely on benefits to wolves. Recommended areas of study include:

1. **Pre-wolf introduction historic annual losses;**
2. **Post-wolf introduction annual livestock losses;**
3. **Wolves denning in calf/yearling core areas;**
4. **Wolves denning near calf/yearling core areas;**
5. **Wolf rendezvous sites located in calf/yearling core areas;**
6. **Wolf-claimed territory overlapping livestock core areas; and**
7. **Wolf-caused chronic stress and effects on livestock and producers.**

Negative effects beyond wolf-caused mortality

The negative effects to livestock producers caused by Mexican Wolves are a wide spectrum not addressed and/or ignored by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Prior negative data and documentation of wolf recovery from other states were not utilized to mitigate the same negative effects of Mexican wolf recovery in New Mexico and Arizona.

Wolves continually killing, prey testing in a herd produces chronic wolf stress in cattle. Chronic wolf-caused stress in cattle leads to loss of body condition, cows birthing weak calves, pre-mature birth of calves, abortion of calves, immune suppression, decreased pregnancy rates-open cows, increased susceptibly to disease, weight loss, and wolf attacks alter the demeanor of cows from docile to aggressive.

1. **True livestock losses are not reflected in confirmed and probable investigative findings;**
2. **Few livestock depredations are actually compensated;**
3. **Cumulative effects of wolf predation makes livestock production untenable;**
4. **Impact on individual family ranchers is devastating, even though the impact to the entire livestock industry of the state may be small;**
5. **Wolf depredation disrupts grazing management plans;**
6. **Increased uncompensated hours tending injured calves;**
7. **Increased uncompensated hours checking livestock;**
8. **Increased uncompensated hours mending fences when wolves attack/run livestock through them;**
9. **Increased uncompensated hours gathering livestock and returning to proper pasture;**
10. **Loss of market value for maimed and disfigured calves;**
11. **Loss of replacement heifers/production;**
12. **Loss of revenue while new herd takes several years to acclimate;**
13. **Loss of revenue while replacement heifers take three years to acclimate into an existing herd.**

Wolves Denning in Calf/yearling Core Areas Result In:

1. **Wolves subsistence on small calves;**
2. **High incidence of wolf depredation during the period when wolves were most active, i.e. providing sustenance to denning female and offspring;**
3. **Intensive localized wolf depredation of small calves;**
4. **After initial wolf gorging off calf and returning to the den, calf carcasses are scavenged and consumed by coyotes, requiring wolves to advance their frequent kill sequence;**
5. **Wolves' utilize 20 pounds per calf depredation, coyotes and scavenging birds utilize remainder of carcass;**
6. **Wolf killing steadily in an area invariably causes a coyote swarm to that area;**
7. **Few calf carcasses (as compared to adult cattle carcasses) are found for investigation;**
8. **Carcass remains are mostly consumed, scavenged, destroying evidence of depredation;**
9. **Handicapped wolves with missing limbs/feet target (prefer) livestock, as wild game is difficult to capture;**
10. **When wolves den on a ranch the USFWS blame ranchers for not preventing livestock depredations;**

11. **USFWS demands that ranchers change their entire husbandry scheme to accommodate the presence of wolves; if the rancher refuses, no compensation is paid on Wildlife Services findings on confirmed or probable livestock depredations by Defenders of Wildlife;**
12. **Ranchers cooperating with the USFWS wolf recovery agencies nevertheless continue to have livestock losses.**

The following information will educate the resource owner and the public on the negative aspects of Mexican Wolf Recovery, indentify wolf presence and recognize wolf depredations on livestock, pets, and farm animals so they can be investigated.

What do Mexican wolves look like?

Mexican wolves come in a variety of colors, sizes and display different behaviors. Most wolves are large in size, bigger than a German Shepard and weigh 70 to 90 pounds; some are smaller in size and weigh 45 to 50 pounds. The head of the wolf is blockier than a coyote and they have a broader nose than a coyote; also the ears are more rounded. The front feet are larger than the rear feet. Color ranges from a grizzled gray, reddish-brown, whitish mixture to reddish-brown. Look at photograph #1, these three wolves represents the typical coloration of Mexican wolves. The two outside wolves are gray in color; the one in the middle is very reddish-brown. This is why many people mistake Mexican wolves for coyote's when seen further than a 100 yards. Most wolves will stand and look at you, then move away slowly. Some habituated wolves will stand and look at you even after you fire a firearm into the air.

1. 3 of 5 wolves in calf core area; 3 confirmed calf depredations, 1 probable (photo Jeannie Jones)

2. Luna Pack **(photo Jeannie Jones)**

3. Luna Pack **(photo Jeannie Jones)**

Wolf attacks on cattle

Wolves primarily attacked cattle on the hindquarters including tail, vulva, lower thigh, hock, hamstring, and occasionally on the neck, face, and jaw, behind the front legs, in front of the rear legs, and on the belly. Wolf attack sites on cattle very, wolves continue to attack the way they have learned to capture cattle and all wolves do not attack at the same sites on the prey animal.

Wolves will run cows, calves, and yearlings stressing the animal until it cannot stand, normally there will be capture bite and rake marks on the skin with corresponding hemorrhage.

Livestock killed by predators usually can be distinguished from those dying from other causes by the presence of external hemorrhaging; subcutaneous hemorrhaging and tooth punctures; damage to the skin, other soft tissues, and skull; blood on the soil and vegetation; and carnivore tracks, scats, or territorial marks near dead animals. Urgent calling and alert, defensive, and frightened behavior of livestock also suggest that predators may have killed livestock.

Newborn livestock killed by predators and partially consumed can be distinguished from stillborn livestock by characteristics not found in stillborn animals: a blood clot present at the closed end of the navel, pink lungs that float in water, fat around the heart and kidneys, milk in the stomach and intestines, milk fat and lymph in the lymphatic vessels that drain the intestinal tract, a worn soft membrane on the bottom of the hooves, and possibly soil on the bottom of the hooves.

Normally, when wolves kill new calves there is little left of the carcass, possibly a few small bones or a piece of the skull but usually there is just a bloody place on the ground is all that remains. The calf is totally consumed including hooves. If a larger calf and there are remains left a lot of the time there are no capture bite sites. The reason is the calf is bedded and the wolf pins the calf down and the feeding begins, the wolf does not have to bite the calf to capture it.

Remains of calf – part of skull – wolves present

Remains of a calf – Wolf presence nearby– Cause of death, 'Unknown'

Wolves kill by consumption, they eat their victims alive and they die from stress, tissue and blood loss. In 233 wolf depredation investigations I have never documented a lethal bite site on cattle carcasses.

Confirmed Wolf Depredations on Livestock

In the following photographs you can see the results of wolf attacks on calves, yearlings, horse and cow's. This will give you an idea of what to look for.

View the carcass attack sites, feeding sites, bite sites and rake marks with corresponding hemorrhage. Some cattle are stressed down and the wolves eat 20 pounds from the victim and the injured cow, calf, or yearling is not dead and walks around with its rear end eaten out.

Your observations and action is key to indentify wolf presence and depredating wolves. Also, notification for an investigation will indentify un-collared wolves.

Calf still alive with massive tissue loss – San Mateo Pack denning between 2 pastures

Bull calf (350 pounds) attacked by 4 wolves, bite sites with massive hemorrhage

Skin off bull calf (above) held up to the sun, massive bite sites and rake marks on skin

Remains of calf – Middle fork Pack

One of five yearlings found walking around with massive tissue loss; Middle Fork Pack

Most cattle die at the feeding site, some survive after the wolves have eaten their fill. Still, the victim with massive tissue loss has to be put down by the resource owner. All wolf depredated livestock go through this "death by consumption".

Yearling walking around with massive tissue loss for six days, maggot infested wounds Middle fork pack

Remains of horse in corral – seven wolves stripped all tissue from carcass

Wolves kill cattle by consumption producing blood loss, tissue loss and stress. In 12 confirmed wolf killed yearlings on one ranch, 5 did not die at the attack and feeding site. They traveled for some distance after being fed upon by wolves. Four yearlings were found alive and walking around with massive tissue loss. One yearling was found dead and the scene lacked evidence of an attack and feeding site. Dried blood found on the legs indicated the yearling was bleeding while standing upright and walking.

Lack of evidence at the carcass/found alive site; importance

There have been past cases where cattle were found with canine spreads and rake marks consistent with wolves and the scene lacked attack/feeding site, wolf tracks, wolf scats, blood trails, drag marks, ground/vegetation disturbance or ground telemetry. Some of these investigation findings were probable, possible or something other than wolf. In the 12 confirmed killed livestock by the Middle fork Pack in 2009, evidence indicates that these 5 yearlings were attacked and fed upon by wolves in one location and lived to travel for some distance before being found alive and or dead in another location.

Carcasses that lack wolf evidence at the scene should be investigated to determine that the victim did or did not travel from a wolf attack/feeding site. To determine the cause of death based on the best available evidence, canine spreads, rake marks with corresponding hemorrhage consistent with a wolf and evidence the victim traveled away from the attack/feeding site is vital.

Wolf Attacks on Pets

Dog scalped by wolves at home, chunks bitten out of back end, lucky to be alive


Dog killed in yard by wolves – leg bone crushed – massive hemorrhage

Jaw crushed by wolf attack in back yard

Wolf bites head off kitten in front of children

At the scene

Protecting fragile evidence

Canine tracks can be destroyed by people walking within the scene. Other livestock, scavenging birds can also destroy tracks etc. You yourself can destroy tracks if you do not take the precaution to look where you step. The best procedure when entering the scene to check a carcass is to protect the evidence such as canine tracks as you find them; cover these tracks to prevent other livestock/people from trampling them. Cover the carcass with a tarp rocked around the edges to prevent scavenging canines and birds from feeding on it. Cover blood trails or droplets of blood leading to the carcass if rain is eminent. Timely carcass detection and notification is key to depredation investigations to determine the cause of death. Lost or destroyed evidence can result in a non-confirmation. Calf carcasses left uncovered in the field will disappear during the night. If you do not have a tarp, hang the calf high up in tree, if no tree mark the area and bring the calf in and store it so dogs cannot get to it.

Procedure: Investigating a Livestock Carcass

I want to discus the procedure of investigating livestock carcasses. Notification is given by the resource owner, or others that may have found a livestock carcass suspected of predator depredation. In Catron County, USDA Wildlife Services and I respond to the scene to perform an investigation to determine the cause of death of the animal.

Dirt roads are checked for predator tracks, scats and any sign of predators as you near the area of the carcass. If tracks are located on the roadway they are marked and protected so no one drives over them.

Other cattle in the pasture are observed for unusual behavior; calling and alert, defensive, and frightened behavior, injury bite sites, and impact wounds like running into barriers or barbwire fences.

The area is checked for a wolf collar signals using a ground telemetry receiver. If a signal or signals are picked up the corresponding wolf number is noted.

The scene around the carcass is searched to identify the attack site, feeding site, drag marks, tracks, scats, blood trails, trampled/uprooted vegetation, torn up ground, broken fences. The scene could be less than fifty to several hundred yards in size.

All scene evidence is photographed. Measurements are taken to document predator tracks and scats. A diagram is drawn to reflect attack and feeding site, drag marks, carcass site, blood trails, predator/victim track location and direction of travel. Check barbwire fence wire; bottom and second strands are checked for hair caught in the barbs when predators pass under or through them. A predator's identification can be made with this transfer evidence (hair).

The carcass is photographed; head, back, rear, and belly. Injuries; attack sites on the carcass, bite sites, feeding sites, impact injuries. Scavenging canines and birds are noted.

Once everything is documented the investigation focuses on the carcass and a necropsy is performed. The percentage of carcass remains is noted, as well as disarticulation of limbs and bones. Some carcass remains are just dried skin and bones; these have to be soaked in water 3 to 5 days to soften the skin, yet compression bite sites on the skin still remain. A compression bite site can only be made if the victim was bit while alive.

First the hair is clipped from the skin of the carcass to detect bite sites and rake marks. Without clipping the hair you cannot see the bite and rake marks. Photographed measurements of all canine spreads are documented. The skin is removed to document bite site corresponding hemorrhage, and deep hemorrhage in the mussel tissue and injuries. Most times there are no internal organs left inside the carcass for assessment. The skin is held up to the sun and photographed to document bites sites and rake marks with hemorrhage in the skin.

Example of a wolf confirmation:

Canine spreads are documented at; 42.50mm, 40.20mm, 39.60mm, 41.80mm with corresponding hemorrhage consistent with a Mexican wolf. Documented deep hemorrhage in mussel tissue, large femur bones are bitten into, wolf tracks at carcass site, wolf tracks in blood trail and drag marks. Wolf scat is documented 40 yards from carcass site. A 55 inch territorial wolf scrap is documented at a nearby tree. Ground telemetry signal received on wolf AF924 and wolf AM001. Based on the best available evidence the cause of death is a confirmed wolf depredation.

Running wolf tracks along side running cow and calf tracks

Results - wolves ran down calf leaving blood trail, feeding site, and drag marks Luna Pack

1st calf, Attack site in snow, blood and wolf tracks, carcass drug 45 yards to carcass site

1st calf, At the end of the drag marks is the carcass site - 4 wolves- Luna Pack

2nd Calf, 50 yards from 1st calf, remains with wolf tracks- 4 wolves- Luna Pack

Wolf Scat Identification

Wolf scat is large, usually 1 1/8” or larger in diameter and measures 9” to 12” inches in length and black in color from eating meat and will contain hair and bone chips of its prey.

Wolf scat

Wolf Scat – toilet station

Wolf scat

Wolf scat at front door of residence

Wolf Tracks

Wolf tracks in snow 50 yards from a residence on private property

Wolf tracks with typical overstep – smaller rear foot overstep larger front foot

Wolf tracks – traveling gate – tracks in straight line

Domestic dog track and the dog – compare to wolf tracks

Example; M1039.

This male wolf was released into the Gila; it took off and was located in the San Mateo mountains, then crossed highway US 60 and went to Acoma, then to El Malapai then to Zuni where he was captured.

Ariel flight telemetry located M1039; 5 miles inside Arizona on a Monday, within 24 hours he traveled 76 air miles back to Mount Sedgwick in Grants New Mexico where he was again captured.

Dispersing wolves from the recovery area in Catron County, New Mexico and Arizona could have travel hundreds of miles throughout the state of New Mexico.

Contact Information

If you find any evidence of wolf presence in your area follow the above information and contact the following agency.

Cibola, McKinley Counties

USDA/Aphis Wildlife Services
Northern Supervisor, Ken Podborny – 505-346-2640
Jon Grant – 505-287-7838, 505-290-0518 cell

Sierra, Grant, Hidalgo, Luna, Counties

USDA/Aphis Wildlife Services
Southern Supervisor, Keel Price – 575-527-6980

Catron County

Jess Carey
County Wolf Interaction Investigator
575-533-6668
Sheriff Department – radio contact
575-533-6222
If you have any questions call or email me at; 3trees@gilanet.com

Jess Carey
County Wolf Interaction Investigator
HC 62 Box 1-8
Reserve, New Mexico 87830
575-533-6668

Catron County Commission
Hugh B. McKeen, Chairman
P.O. Box 507
Reserve, New Mexico 87830
575-533-6423