



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

NEWS RELEASE

SNAKE RIVER BASIN OFFICE

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POISONING CONFIRMED AS CAUSE OF WOLF DEATHS

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service law enforcement agents have confirmed poisoning as the cause of death of at least two gray wolves in Idaho, B-37 and B-96. The Service's National Forensics Laboratory in Ashland, Oregon, performed necropsies on the wolves and determined that the animals were killed by Compound 1080 (sodium fluoroacetate), a highly toxic poison.

Service law enforcement agents recovered the body of B-37 in the Salmon-Challis National Forest near Pepper Creek in August of 2000. B-96, a male member of the Smoky Mountain pack, was found dead near Lick Creek about 20 miles north of Fairfield, Idaho, in November, 2000. Although B-96 had also been shot in the lower right hip, he died as a result of Compound 1080 poisoning. Lab reports indicate that two other gray wolves, B-92 and B-89 of the Moyer Basin pack, may possibly have met a similar fate but the carcasses were too badly decomposed to confirm the suspicion. The Moyer Basin wolves were found dead at the same time and within five miles of B-37.

Compound 1080 is a highly toxic substance that is illegal to possess. It will kill any animals, including birds, that ingest baited meat or the carcasses of dead animals that have already been poisoned. Canines are most susceptible to poisoning due to ingestion of baited meat, but the toxins can also enter animal or human bloodstreams through contact with abraded skin or wounds, or through the respiratory system if poisoned dust particles are inhaled. Poisoning symptoms include convulsions, seizures, vomiting, abdominal pain, diarrhea, blistering of tissues, throat irritation, and coughing.

Special Agent Paul Weyland cautioned livestock owners, recreationists, hunters and other persons in outdoor areas, "If you see a pile of meat, a carcass, or dead birds near a carcass, please contact our offices immediately. We are very concerned for the safety of dogs and children, as well as wildlife that may be harmed by this illegal practice."

The killing of an endangered species is punishable by law, with a penalty of up to one year in jail and a maximum fine of \$100,000. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Defenders of Wildlife and the Wolf Education and Research Center are offering a reward of \$10,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of any person or persons responsible for killing these animals.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 94-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System which encompasses more than 530 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 70 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices and 78 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

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