



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **REMAINING WHITEHAWK PACK MEMBERS LETHALLY CONTROLLED**

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lethally controlled the remaining five members of the Whitehawk Pack following the depredation of a domestic calf on Friday, April 5. The depredation incident occurred on private land in the East Fork of the Salmon River near Clayton, Idaho; it was the third livestock kill by members of the Whitehawk Pack in one week in that area.

The gray wolves, three yearlings and the alpha pair, were killed after the livestock death was confirmed as a wolf kill by USDA Wildlife Services. The Whitehawk Pack has been involved in chronic livestock depredations in the East Fork. Gray wolf recovery managers from the Service and the Nez Perce Tribe do not believe any members of the pack remain in the East Fork.

The lethal control action was issued after non-lethal means of controlling the wolves failed. Carter Niemeyer, Idaho Wolf Recovery Coordinator said, "We attempted to use many preventive measures with the Whitehawk Pack, including radio-activated guard units ("RAG boxes"), helicopter hazing, electric fencing, ground pursuit and harassment. These non-lethal means of control did not deter the wolves' persistent livestock depredation. We will continue to use various non-lethal measures to control problem wolves, but the reality is that chronic depredation incidents may result in the lethal control of some gray wolves in Idaho."

The annual gray wolf count conducted in December of 2001 revealed 261 wolves in 17 known wolf packs in Idaho. Sixteen wolf packs produced pups in 2001, and fourteen of those packs met the recovery requirement for a breeding pair (an adult male and female wolf that have successfully raised at least 2 pups to December 31 of their birth). The Service believes that 30 breeding pairs of wolves for three successive years throughout the three-state Northern Rocky Mountain area (Idaho, Montana and Wyoming) will constitute a viable and recovered wolf population. If current trends continue, recovery goals will be met by the end of 2002.

FWS

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 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System which encompasses more than 535 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.