

WDFW: Report Wolf Activity Online

Local News

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OLYMPIA, Wash. - The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) now has an online reporting system for receiving information from the public about the state's growing wolf population. Anyone who believes they have seen a wolf, heard one howl, or found other evidence of wolves anywhere in the state is encouraged to file a report on WDFW's website at http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/gray_wolf/reporting/. Donny Martorello, WDFW carnivore section manager, said the information provided in the reports will help wildlife managers document wolf activity and build a database on wolves in Washington. Our state's wolf-management efforts depend on knowing how many wolves are here, where they are, and where they're going, by filing reports on wolf activities, the public can help us direct our monitoring efforts. - Donny Martorello

Virtually absent from the state for more than 70 years, gray wolves are now dispersing into eastern Washington and the North Cascades from adjacent populations in Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and British Columbia.

During spring and summer, state wildlife managers will use citizen reports to help locate new wolf packs and pups, Martorello said. As part of that effort, they will capture and fit wolves with radio collars to monitor their movements. Those who file a wolf-activity report using the new online system are asked to provide their name and other identifying information, along with an account of their observations. An interactive map on that site allows users to determine and log the latitude and longitude of the activities they have observed. "The online system has some real advantages when it comes to gathering and correlating information from throughout the state," said Martorello, noting that it also holds promise as an educational tool. By early summer, the site will include a map displaying areas of the state where wolf activity has been reported, he said. The online system does not replace the phone line livestock owners can call to reach WDFW's enforcement office if they suspect that wolves are preying on their livestock. In those cases, livestock owners can call 1-877-933-9847 or reach local WDFW police officers through the Washington State Patrol. In a field survey conducted last summer, WDFW confirmed the presence of five wolf packs in Washington, and observed at least 27 members of those packs, including three successful breeding pairs. There is also growing evidence of unconfirmed packs near Kettle Falls in northeastern Washington, in the Blue Mountains of southeastern Washington and in the North Cascades, as well as transient single wolves. Gray wolves are currently listed as endangered under state law throughout Washington, and under federal law in the western two-thirds of the state. Under the state's wolf conservation and management plan, adopted late last year, wolves will be removed from the state's endangered species list once 15 successful breeding pairs are documented for three consecutive years among three wolf-recovery regions (four pairs in Eastern Washington, four pairs in North Cascades, four pairs in South Cascades/Northwest Coast, and three pairs in any recovery region). The plan also gives WDFW the option to initiate action to delist gray wolves if 18 breeding pairs are documented in a single year. Under that option, at least four pairs must be in Eastern Washington, four pairs in North Cascades, four pairs in South Cascades/Northwest Coast, and six additional pairs in any recovery region. More information on wolves is available at: http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/gray_wolf/.