

# Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management 2025 Annual Report



*This report to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission presents information on the status, distribution, and management of wolves in the State of Oregon from January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025.*



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The conservation and management of wolves in Oregon is guided by the Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan (Wolf Plan). The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (department) annually reviews the gray wolf population status, monitoring objectives and livestock damage management activities to inform its adaptive management under the Wolf Plan.

Wolves continue to be protected as a special status game mammal statewide. Wolves west of Highways 395/78/95 are listed under the federal endangered species act (ESA) making the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) responsible for management decisions regarding harassment and take in that area.

The department monitors the wolf population to determine the number of breeding pairs of wolves in each of two wolf management zones, and Wolf Plan implementation is then based on those data. Wolves in the West Wolf Management Zone (WMZ) reached the conservation objective of four breeding pairs and the minimum management objective of seven breeding pairs for the second consecutive year. If seven breeding pairs are documented after the end of 2026, the West WMZ will move directly into Phase III of the Wolf Plan. The wolf population in the East WMZ continued to exceed the Wolf Plan minimum management objective of seven breeding pairs, and these wolves continue to be managed under Phase III of the Wolf Plan.

Oregon's wolf population continues to grow and disperse. The minimum known count of wolves in Oregon at the end of 2025 was 230 wolves (204 in 2024). Thirty packs were documented and 23 met the criteria as breeding pairs (17 in 2024). In addition, 13 groups of two or three wolves were identified, but did not meet the definition of a pack. Wolves continued to expand westward in Oregon with three new packs in the West WMZ.

The department monitored 58 radio-collared wolves, including 29 that were captured and radio-collared during 2025. By year's end, 30 of these wolves were still being actively monitored, while contact with the rest of the collars was lost due to collar failure, wolf death, or dispersal to other states. Forty-two wolf mortalities were documented during the year, including 39 that were human-caused.

There were 106 confirmed events of livestock depredation in 2025 (69 in 2024). Consistent with the Wolf Plan, livestock producers implemented non-lethal measures to minimize depredation prior to any department approval of wolf lethal removal. Twenty wolves were lethally removed by the department in response to chronic depredation in the East WMZ in 2025. In addition, three wolves were lawfully removed by livestock producers when they were caught in the act of attacking their livestock.

Consistent with the ODFW Commissions guidance to focus on reducing wolf/livestock conflict in NE Oregon, ODFW has worked extensively with partners, such as Western Landowners Alliance, USDA Wildlife Services, and the Oregon Cattlemens Association in 2025 to ensure producers have resources to prepare for, avoid, or respond to conflict, as well as education public on living with wolves. This outreach has involved sustained work with hundreds of producers and over a thousand members of the public.

The Oregon Department of Agriculture's (ODA) compensation program awarded grants totaling \$729,318 to 14 counties in 2025. The majority of the funds (84%) were used for non-lethal preventative measures to reduce depredation, and all requests for compensation of confirmed and probable depredations were granted in full.

# OREGON WOLF PROGRAM OVERVIEW

## Regulatory Status

Federal Status: Wolves west of Highways 395/78/95 in Oregon remained listed under the federal ESA during 2025 (Figure 1). In that portion of Oregon, the USFWS made all management decisions regarding harassment and take of wolves and collaborated on monitoring and non-lethal response to depredation. In the same area, the department implemented the Wolf Plan within the sideboards of federal ESA regulations and under the guidance of the Federal/State Coordination Strategy.

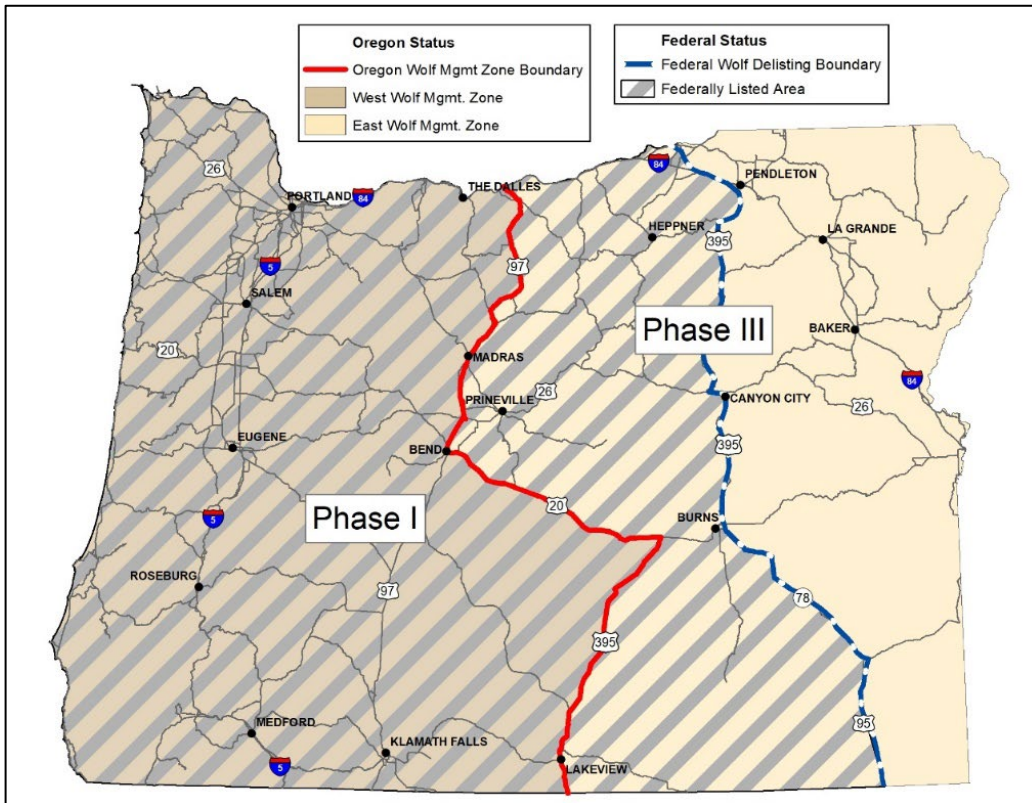


Figure 1. Wolf Management Zones in Oregon during 2025.

State Status: Wolves are protected statewide as a special status game mammal and are managed under the Wolf Plan guidelines and associated rules for each Wolf Management Zone Phase. Wolves in the West WMZ are managed under the more protective Phase I rules until their population reaches a minimum of four breeding pairs for three consecutive years. A **breeding pair** is defined as an adult male and adult female with at least two pups that survived to December 31 of the year of their birth. Eight packs counted as breeding pairs in the West WMZ in 2025. If at least seven breeding pairs are documented after the end of 2026, the Phase I conservation objective will be met; additionally, the Phase II management objective will also be met for the third consecutive year and the West WMZ will move into Phase III, skipping Phase II.

Since 2017, wolves in the East WMZ have exceeded the Wolf Plan management minimum population objective of seven breeding pairs for three consecutive years. As such, wolves in the East WMZ

continue to be managed under Phase III which focuses on the conservation of wolves while allowing more flexibility to address wolf conflict. This includes continuing to emphasize the use of non-lethal deterrents to reduce livestock depredation and the use of lethal removal in certain situations where federally delisted. The department continued to focus attention on addressing wolf-livestock conflict, reducing illegal take, and improving wolf population monitoring statewide.

## Population Status

While a population model is being developed and validated for Oregon, the department continues to provide a minimum known number of wolves present in Oregon at the end of each year. This time- and staff-intensive effort is a direct count of wolves, not an estimate. These counts are conducted in the winter and not all wolves are located, so the actual number of wolves in Oregon is likely higher than this minimum count.

The minimum known wolf count at the end of 2025 was 230, an increase of 13% from 2024 (Figure 2).

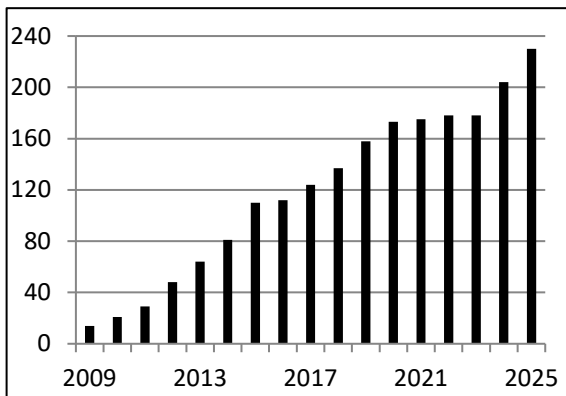


Figure 2. Minimum wolf count in Oregon (2009-2025).

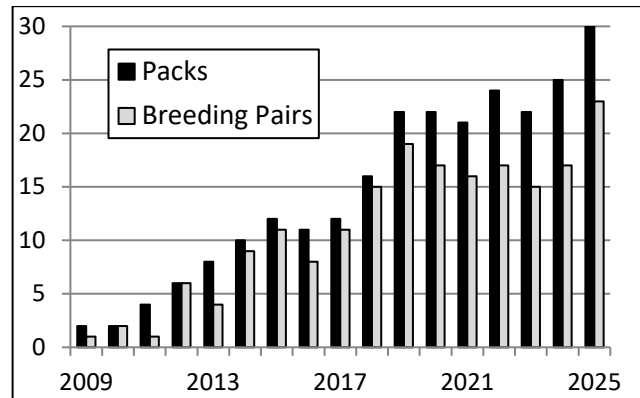


Figure 3. Number of packs and breeding pairs in Oregon (2009-2025).

For monitoring purposes, a **pack** is defined as four or more wolves traveling together in winter. Thirty packs were documented at the end of 2025 (Figure 3), with a mean pack size of six wolves (range 4 to 15). In addition, 13 groups of two or three wolves were identified. Throughout this report, **group** is used to denote two or more wolves traveling together. Reproduction was documented in 30 groups. At the end of 2025, 23 packs were documented as successful breeding pairs, an increase from 17 in 2024.

Distribution: Areas of Known Wolf Activity (AKWA) show where resident activity of an individual or group of wolves have been repeatedly documented (Figure 4). When multiple packs or individuals overlap, those areas of use are combined into a larger AKWA to delineate contiguous areas of wolf activity.



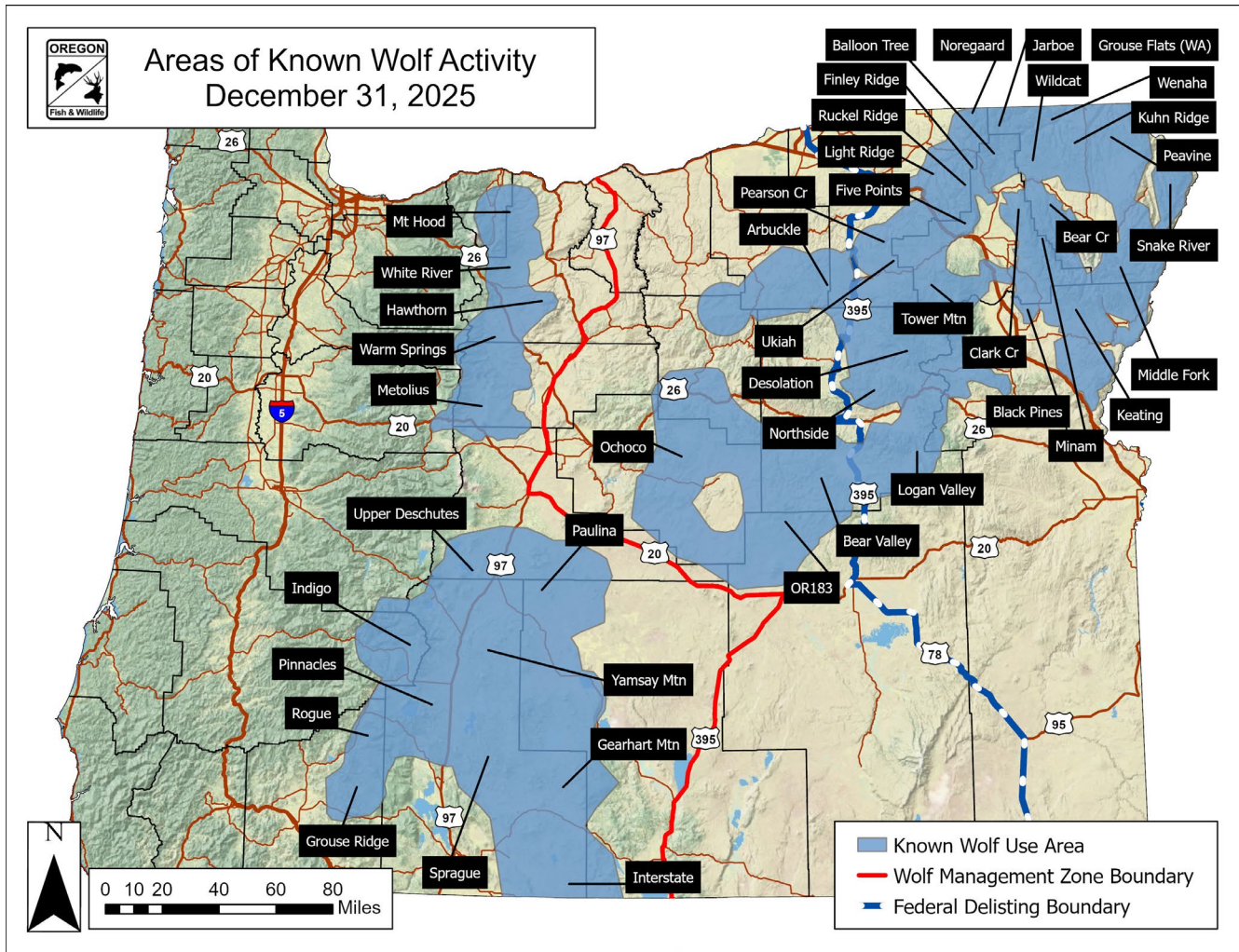


Figure 4. Distribution of known resident wolf use areas December 31, 2025.

**West Wolf Management Zone:** Thirty-eight percent of known Oregon wolves inhabited the West WMZ at the end of 2025, an increase from 24% in 2024 (Table 1). The wolf count in this zone increased from 49 to 88 and the breeding pairs increased from seven to eight. Wolves continued to expand in distribution with three new packs in the Cascades. Eight wolves were documented alone or in pairs in Deschutes, Klamath, Lake, and Wasco counties.

Table 1. Minimum wolf count in Oregon on Dec. 31, 2025 in the West Wolf Management Zone. Underlined packs were counted as breeding pairs.

Pack/Group	Total	Pack/Group	Total	Pack/Group	Total
<u>Gearhart Mtn Pack</u>	4	<u>Mt Hood Pack</u>	6	<u>Upper Deschutes Pack</u>	9
<u>Grouse Ridge Pack</u>	15	<u>Paulina Pack</u>	6	<u>Warm Springs Pack</u>	9
<u>Hawthorn Pack</u>	7	<u>Pinnacles Pack</u>	5	White River wolves	3
Indigo Pack	5	Rogue wolves	2	Yamsay Mtn wolves	2
Metolius wolves	3	Sprague Pack	4	other wolves/pairs	8

East Wolf Management Zone: Sixty-two percent of known Oregon wolves resided in the East WMZ at the end of 2025 (n=142, Table 2). There were 20 packs in the East WMZ, two more than 2024. Fifteen packs were documented as successful breeding pairs, an increase from 10 in 2024. Six wolves were documented alone or in pairs in Baker, Grant, and Umatilla counties.

Table 2. Minimum wolf count in Oregon on Dec. 31, 2025 in the East Wolf Management Zone. Underlined packs were counted as breeding pairs.

<b>Pack/Group</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Pack/Group</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Pack/Group</b>	<b>Total</b>
<u>Arbuckle Pack</u>	6	Keating wolves	2	Pearson Creek Pack	5
<u>Balloon Tree Pack</u>	6	<u>Kuhn Ridge Pack</u>	11	<u>Peavine Pack</u>	6
Bear Creek wolves	1	Light Ridge Pack	4	<u>Ruckel Ridge Pack</u>	6
<u>Black Pines Pack</u>	7	Logan Valley wolves	2	<u>Snake River Pack</u>	4
<u>Clark Creek Pack</u>	6	<u>Middle Fork Pack</u>	11	<u>Tower Mtn Pack</u>	7
Desolation Pack	4	Minam Pack	4	<u>Ukiah Pack</u>	6
Finley Ridge Pack	4	Noregaard wolves	2	<u>Wenaha Pack</u>	9
<u>Five Points Pack</u>	5	Northside wolves	3	<u>Wildcat Pack</u>	7
<u>Jarboe Pack</u>	6	Ochoco wolves	2	other wolves/pairs	6

## Monitoring

The department conducts extensive monitoring of wolves utilizing radio and GPS collars, camera traps, track and howling surveys, aerial surveys, and public reporting. In 2025, radio-collars were deployed on 29 wolves. Data were collected from 58 radio-collared wolves in 33 separate areas of wolf activity. After collar failure, wolf deaths, and dispersal, 30 wolves were still monitored at year's end (14% of the minimum wolf count). Nine radio-collared wolves dispersed in 2025 with seven dispersing within Oregon and two left the state. Two collared wolves dispersed into Oregon: one from California, one from Washington.

Wolves from the Grouse Flats Pack spent the majority of their time and denned in Washington so the 12 wolves are not included in Oregon's 2025 annual count. However, six Grouse Flats Pack depredations in Oregon are included in this report. One radio-collared member of California's Whaleback Pack visited Oregon briefly during 2025.

Mortalities: Forty-two wolf mortalities were documented in 2025 (26 in 2024) with seven occurring in the West WMZ and 35 in the East WMZ (Table 3). Two wolves died of natural causes, both killed by other wolves. The cause of death is unknown for the previous breeding male of the Finley Ridge Pack, although he was almost 10 years old. His decomposed carcass was discovered in 2026, but he died in 2025.

Thirty-nine wolf mortalities were human-caused. Three wolves were killed in motor vehicle collisions (I-84, Hwy 97, and a paved secondary road). Twenty wolves were lethally removed for chronic livestock depredation, and three were killed under caught-in-act take (see Livestock Depredation Management section below for details).

One dispersing wolf was lethally removed by the USFWS under 50 CFR17.21(c)(3)(iv) following increasing concerns about human safety. USFWS also directed the removal of six wolves in the

Madison Butte Pack in response to human safety concerns under 50CFR 17.21(c)(3)(iv). The department conducted the removals under this authorization.

Two wolf deaths are currently under investigation by Oregon State Police (OSP) in the federally delisted portion of Oregon. The breeding male of the Noregaard Pack was poisoned and the carcass of the breeding male of the Frazier Pack was not located but the radio-collar was found cut off.

In the federally listed portion of Oregon, OSP and the USFWS Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) investigated the illegal deaths of two wolves. Rewards are available for information about the deaths of the breeding males of the Metolius and Yamsay Mountain Packs. Additionally, OLE investigated the incidental (accidental) take of two wolves by USDA Wildlife Services (WS) while removing coyotes. The USFWS is working with Wildlife Services to reduce risk during future livestock protection activities.

**Information and Outreach**

Wolves continue to be a subject of high interest in Oregon. Extensive one-on-one communication occurs between staff and a wide range of individuals and audiences, and staff also conduct numerous media interviews and presentations to schools, universities, agencies, agricultural organizations, conservation groups and county compensation committees. For example, the central Oregon regional wolf biologist gave presentations to over 2,500 people at 19 events that included elementary and high schools, colleges, the High Desert Museum, nature education programs, non-profit groups, and other community events.

The department continues to partner with Western Landowners Alliance (WLA), Oregon Cattleman’s Association (OCA), Oregon State University (OSU) and others collaborate on outreach to livestock producers. Examples of this work include:

- WLA hosted six wildlife track and sign workshops, aimed at getting producers and biologists together for a day in the field to build relationships and learn together;
- WLA hosted a two-day range rider training and panel discussion;
- The department and WLA presented at the OCA Annual Convention and numerous county stockgrowers meetings;
- The department participated in a workshop hosted by OSU, WLA and OCA to collaboratively work with livestock producers to identify information and research needs;
- WLA, WS, and the department created an Oregon Producer’s Guide to Predator Attacks on Livestock and distributed 2,000+ copies to livestock producers at various meetings, events and field offices;
- WLA produced a document on Wolf Location Information Sharing: Finding Common Ground, making it available online, and sharing through the OCA magazine and Working Wild Challenge newsletter; and

Table 3. Documented wolf mortalities in 2025 by Wolf Management Zone.

Mortality Source	West WMZ	East WMZ
Natural or Unknown	0	3
Human Caused		
Vehicle Collision	2	1
Caught-In-Act Take	0	3
Depredation Removal	0	20
USFWS Determination	1	6
Deaths Investigated by Law Enforcement	2	2
WS Incidental Take	2	0
Total	7	35



- WLA presented to 180+ department staff providing perspective and discussion on how to effectively work with livestock producers.

Wolves were seen in recreational areas and rural neighborhoods in central Oregon more frequently in 2025. Informational signs were posted and outreach was increased in those areas. The department continues to maintain a wolf website ([odfw.com/wolves](http://odfw.com/wolves)) to serve as a public resource and an email list of nearly 14,000 subscribers to provide major wolf updates.

### Staffing and Funding

During 2025, the assistant wolf coordinator position was converted to a regional wolf biologist position stationed in John Day to provide additional field level support. Along with statewide wolf coordinator in La Grande, those positions were funded by a federal grant budget allocation for the 2025-2027 biennium of \$1,126,126. This grant includes 75% federal funds (Pittman-Robertson Grant Program) with 25% state match that comes from a combination of license dollars (6%) and Lottery Funds (19%). Three regional wolf biologists, stationed in Enterprise, Prineville and Central Point field offices, were funded by a permanent allocation of \$1,178,516 General Fund for the 2025-2027 biennium. In addition, district wildlife biologists and headquarters staff spent substantial time and resources on wolf issues.

## LIVESTOCK DEPREDACTION MANAGEMENT

Department and WS investigators confirmed 106 events of livestock depredation in 2025 (19 in West WMZ, 87 in East WMZ) (Figure 5). This number includes 6 depredations from the Grouse Flats pack that range primarily in Washington and therefore are not included in the Oregon wolf count. Confirmed depredation events increased from 69 in 2024 to 106 in 2025. Confirmed livestock deaths in 2025 were ten cows, 77 calves, eight sheep, one goat and one livestock working dog (Figure 6). Eleven cows, 27 calves, one goat, and two livestock working dogs were confirmed as injured by wolves. Sixteen cattle and 1 mule had probable determinations.

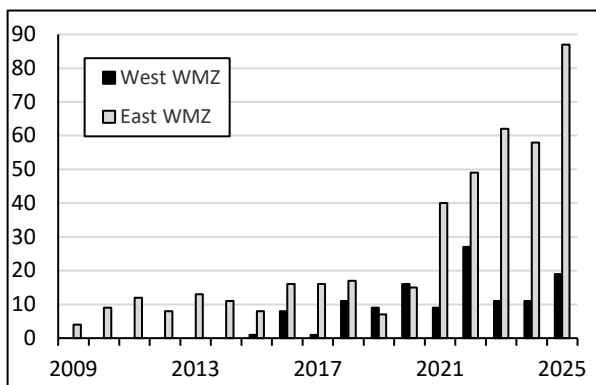


Figure 5. Number of confirmed depredations by Wolf Management Zone by year (2009-2025).

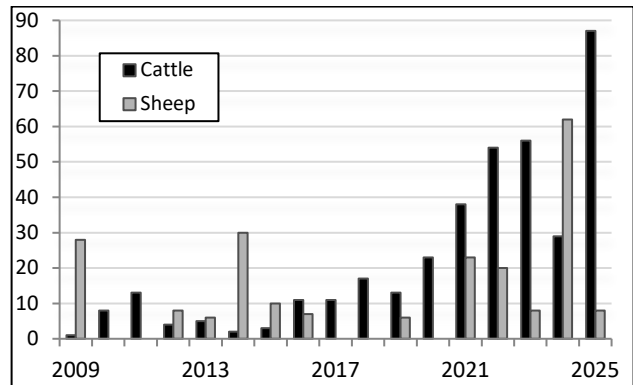


Figure 6. Number of confirmed cattle and sheep deaths from wolves in Oregon by year (2009-2025).

More depredation events occurred in the federally listed area (52%) than in the federally delisted area. In 2025, 77% of confirmed depredation events occurred on private land, 22% on public land and 1%

on tribal land. Confirmed depredations over time continue to occur at a lower trajectory than increases in the wolf count, despite the higher depredation numbers over the last five years (Figure 7).

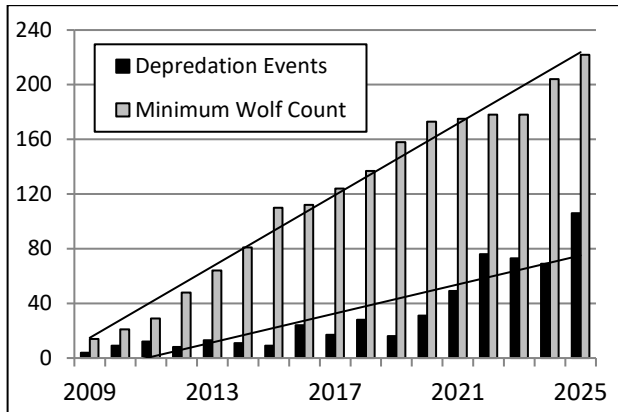


Figure 7. Number and trendline of confirmed depredation events and minimum wolf count in Oregon by year (2009-2025).

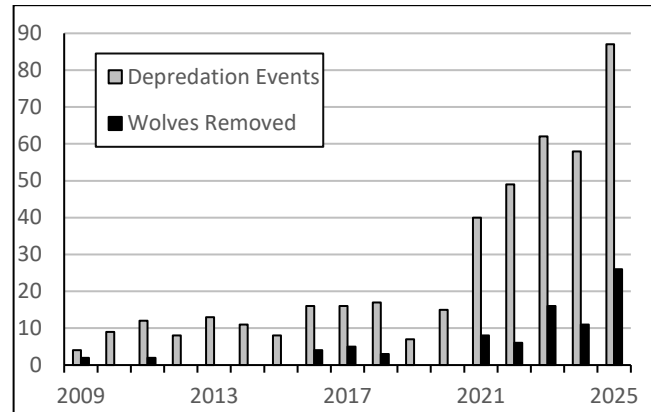


Figure 8. Number of depredation events and wolves removed for chronic depredation in the East WMZ by year (2009-2025).

Wildlife Services, USFWS, county compensation committees and the department worked collaboratively to provide technical advice, funding and field implementation of non-lethal measures to assist livestock producers as they coped with wolf-livestock conflict. Staff focused on reducing attractants in new areas of wolf activity and protecting livestock in areas with depredating wolves. WS added a full-time position during 2025 to assist landowners in central Oregon.

### West Wolf Management Zone

The department confirmed 19 depredation events in the West WMZ, an increase from 11 in 2024. Four individuals or groups depredated three or more times, one pack depredated twice, and two packs depredated once each. The majority of depredations occurred in Klamath (8), Jackson (5), and Lake (5) counties. All harassment and take were regulated by the USFWS. The one wolf lethally removed by the USFWS for human safety concerns under 50CFR 17.21(c)(3)(iv) was responsible for eight confirmed and four probable depredations despite numerous nonlethal deterrence actions (see mortalities section above).

### East Wolf Management Zone

The department and WS confirmed 87 depredation events in the East WMZ, 36 of which occurred in the federally protected area. In total, this is an increase from 2024 (58).

- Depredation on sheep decreased with two events attributed to two packs (eight packs in 2024).
- Confirmed cattle deaths increased 52 percent over the previous highest year (2023).
- Twenty-two groups and two individuals depredated in ten counties. Seventy-one percent of depredation events were in three counties: Morrow, Umatilla, and Wallowa.

Under Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) 635-110-0030 (Phase III), the department may lethally remove wolves or issue a limited duration permit for a livestock producer to remove wolves to

minimize further conflict under a chronic depredation situation if non-lethal measures appropriate for the situation have been employed. Chronic depredation in the East WMZ requires at least two depredations in a nine-month period.

In response to human-safety concerns, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) determined that the Madison Butte Pack should be removed under 50 CFR 17.21(c)(3)(iv). This pack was located within the federally protected portion of the East Wolf Management Zone. The department carried out this removal following more than a year of coordinated efforts by livestock producers, USDA Wildlife Services, and ODFW to alter wolf behavior and prevent livestock depredations. In 2025, the Madison Butte Pack was responsible for 17 confirmed and three probable depredation events, resulting in the death or injury of 25 cattle.

During 2025, 18 individuals or groups reached chronic depredation status in the federally delisted area where the department makes lethal removal decisions. Authorization was given for lethal removal in twelve groups. Twenty wolves were lethally removed from eight groups (Bear Creek-5, Bear Valley-1, Frazier-2, Kuhn Ridge-5, Light Ridge-1, Logan Valley-2, Pearson Creek-2, Wallupa-2) (Figure 8). Of those, seventeen wolves were removed through agency action by the department or WS acting on behalf of the department. Livestock producers with limited-duration permits killed three wolves. Three breeding adults were removed (Light Ridge-female, Logan Valley-both).

Livestock producers east of Highways 395/78/95 are able to lawfully shoot a wolf caught in the act of biting, wounding, killing or chasing livestock or working dogs in certain circumstances without a permit. During 2025, three wolves were killed by livestock producers while caught in the act of attacking their cattle (Five Points-2, Wallupa-1).

### **Compensation for Wolf-Caused Losses**

ODA's Wolf Depredation Compensation and Financial Assistance County Block Grant Program provides four types of financial assistance to counties to support livestock producers affected by wolves. It allows for direct compensation for confirmed and probable wolf depredations (deaths and injuries) and payment for livestock reported as missing as a result of wolf depredation. Grant money is also awarded to participating counties to assist with costs to purchase supplies and implement preventative measures. Also, the grant covers some county program implementation costs.

Following Oregon Legislative action in 2025, updates were made to clarify and refine program authorities and funding uses. Future years will include a compensation multiplier for some livestock animals and missing livestock are no longer eligible for compensation.

ODA awarded \$729,318 to 14 counties, a seven percent decrease from 2024 (Table 4). ODA fulfilled 100% of county requests for confirmed and probable depredation compensation; no missing livestock claims were paid.

The department's primary roles in ODA's compensation program are to delineate areas of known wolf activity and investigate dead or injured livestock to determine if wolf depredation has occurred. Some counties request the department provide input on wolf activity and appropriate preventative non-lethal measures.

Table 4. Funds awarded through the County Block Grant Program in 2025 (source ODA).

<b>County</b>	<b>Confirmed/Probable Death/Injury</b>	<b>Missing Livestock</b>	<b>Prevention</b>	<b>Admin</b>	<b>Total</b>
Baker	\$1,350	\$0	\$38,196	\$495	\$40,041
Crook	\$2,840	\$0	\$50,000	\$0	\$52,840
Deschutes	\$0	\$0	\$50,000	\$0	\$50,000
Douglas	\$0	\$0	\$4,000	\$0	\$4,000
Grant	\$20,000	\$0	\$53,196	\$900	\$74,096
Harney	\$0	\$0	\$50,000	\$2,000	\$52,000
Jackson	\$9,300	\$0	\$50,000	\$0	\$59,300
Klamath	\$0	\$0	\$50,000	\$2,000	\$52,000
Lake	\$3,232	\$0	\$35,854	\$0	\$39,086
Morrow	\$4,556	\$0	\$50,000	\$2,000	\$56,556
Umatilla	\$2,250	\$0	\$53,196	\$1,000	\$56,446
Union	\$15,980	\$0	\$53,196	\$0	\$69,176
Wallowa	\$44,970	\$0	\$48,196	\$1,000	\$94,166
Wheeler	\$350	\$0	\$29,260	\$0	\$29,610
<b>Award Amount</b>	<b>\$104,828 (14%)</b>	<b>\$0 (0%)</b>	<b>\$615,095 (84%)</b>	<b>\$9,395 (1%)</b>	<b>\$729,318</b>