

THE BLACKFOOT WATERSHED WOLF AND BEAR ACTIVITY REPORT FOR the WEEK OF 6/16/2014

Hello: This is **Eric Graham** and this is my second season as the full-time Range Rider for the Blackfoot Challenge. As you may remember, my job is to monitor livestock and wolf activity throughout the watershed in order to reduce the risk of livestock losses for Blackfoot area ranchers. We also produce this wolf and bear activity report roughly every two weeks so that you have updated information on carnivore activity in the watershed.

Some Blackfoot Valley ranchers have recently turned their cattle out for the grazing season and we are working with Liz Bradley (FWP Wolf Management) and Jamie Jonkel (FWP Bear Management) to monitor wolf and bear activity in and around those grazing allotments. Please give me a call at any time if you have questions or comments regarding wolf or bear activity and the Range Rider program.

We are glad to have both **Molly Brown** and **Ty Pocha** working again this season. Molly Brown will be working from July 1st to October 31st as the part-time Range Rider and Ty Pocha has already started his work as the Range Rider assistant. We have started to scout some of the known wolf pack locations and would appreciate any information you may have to help us focus our efforts. Liz Bradley and her MT FWP trapping crew have been trying to get more collars out in the valley and we appreciate their work.

Thanks to all of you that helped me out with my first season as the full-time Range Rider for the Blackfoot Challenge! **If you have any questions about this program please call the Blackfoot Challenges Wildlife Committee Coordinator, Seth Wilson (406) 274-0507.**

Contact Info for reporting wolf or bear activity:

Eric Graham – Blackfoot Challenge Range Rider (406) 240-3132

Liz Bradley – FWP Wolf Management Specialist (406) 865-0017

Jamie Jonkel – FWP Bear Management Specialist (406) 544-1447

IMPORTANT UPDATES

FWP received many useful wolf and grizzly bear reports from hunters last season and we encourage and appreciate those reports.

Liz Bradley and her crew recently got a collar out in the Belmont pack and have been trying to get a collar out in the Arrastra Creek pack. There are 13 wolf packs believed to be in the valley this season. Some pack status' are unknown due to turnover during the harvest season.

Jamie Jonkel and his crew have been trying to re-locate 1 of the 4 collared research grizzlies in the valley. We would like to re-capture her to remove the VHF collar that is not working properly and replace it with a GPS collar.

BLACKFOOT VALLEY WOLF PACKS

ARRASTRA CREEK PACK

Pack Structure: 3-4 Adults and 6 Pups

Collared Wolf: No

Pack Report: Liz Bradley and her crew have been trying to get a collar out in this pack.

BELMONT PACK

Pack Structure: ~3 Adults, presence of or number of pups is unknown at this time.

Collared Wolf: Yes

Pack Report: Liz Bradley and her crew recently caught a breeding female from this pack and she is now wearing a collar. This pack is thought to spend time on the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribal reservation.

BUGLE MOUNTAIN PACK

Backcountry

CHAMBERLAIN PACK

Pack Structure: 3 Adults and ≥ 4 Pups

Collared Wolf: Yes (2)

Pack Report: 4 pups were observed in this pack earlier in the season.

CONGER POINT PACK

Backcountry

This is a new pack confirmed last winter.

DALTON MOUNTAIN PACK

Pack Structure: Unknown

Collared Wolf: No

Pack Report: FWP has been scouting for this pack but no sign has been found yet.

HUMBUG PACK

Pack Structure: Unknown

Collared Wolf: No

Pack Report: FWP has been scouting for this pack but no sign has been found yet.

INEZ PACK

Pack Structure: 3 Adults, ? pups

Collared Wolf: Yes

Pack Report: FWP has been monitoring this pack north of the BCWMA.

LANDERS FORK PACK

Pack Structure: 6 Adults

Collared Wolf: No

Pack Report: FWP has been scouting for this pack but no sign has been found yet.

MORRELL MOUNTAIN PACK

Pack Structure: Unknown

Collared Wolf: No

Pack Report: No sign of this pack has been found. Female was illegally killed last fall.

OVANDO MOUNTAIN PACK

Pack Structure: Unknown

Collared Wolf: No

Pack Report: Very little reported in this area lately.

PIERCE PACK

Pack Structure: Unknown; 6 adults in December

Collared Wolf: No

Pack Report: This pack is a border pack between FWP Regions 1 and 2 around the Clearwater Divide and so monitoring efforts are split between the Regions.

UNION PEAK PACK

Pack Structure: 3 Adults

Collared Wolf: No

Pack Report: Nothing new to report.

GRIZZLY BEAR ACTIVITY

The Blackfoot Challenge and landowners will continue to discuss ways to address the issue of grizzly bear foraging in crop fields and will explore ways to protect human safety especially near and adjacent to home sites in high crop use areas.

There are 4 collared female research grizzly bears in the valley this season. "Smurdell" has 2 cubs of the year and has been located around Marcum Mountain, in the river bottom near the Hwy 200/Hwy 141 Junction and in Lincoln canyon. "Fenn" has 2 yearlings and has been located between Monture Creek and Morrell Mountain and has been sighted on the Blackfoot Clearwater game range and near Upsata Lake. "Icel" is a sub-adult that has been hanging around the Blackfoot Clearwater game range, Shanley Creek and Monture Creek. "Portman" is another sub-adult that has been located near Shanley Creek, Monture Creek and on the Blackfoot Community Conservation Area (BCCA).

There have been several reports of unmarked grizzly bears in the Blackfoot valley. 2 sub-adults were hazed by landowners earlier this season. There was also a female with cubs of the year and a lone male on the west side of the valley in close proximity to homes.

Please contain your bear attractants by making them unavailable to bears. Take down your birdfeeders and make sure your pet food, livestock feed and garbage is in a secure structure. Contact Jamie Jonkel if you would like to talk about cost share programs to install electric fence around chicken coops and other bear attractants. Thanks for your efforts to help to reduce human bear conflicts.

LIVESTOCK CARCASS PICK-UP PROGRAM

If you have a carcass, please call Jamie Jonkel (544-1447) and/or Eric Graham (240-3132). The Blackfoot Challenge's Livestock Carcass Pick Up and Removal Program will run from mid-February through mid-May in 2015.

If you would like information about black bears and mountain lions elsewhere in MT FWP R2 you can look at www.missoulabears.org

Recent photos (G. Neudecker): female grizzly with cubs

