

THE BLACKFOOT WATERSHED WOLF AND BEAR ACTIVITY REPORT 7/2/2014

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.

Blackfoot Valley ranchers have 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. 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.

If you have any questions about this program please call the Blackfoot Challenge 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

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 re-captured "Portman" - 1 of the 4 monitoring female grizzlies in the Blackfoot Valley for the ongoing trend study research.

BLACKFOOT VALLEY WOLF PACKS

ARRASTRA CREEK PACK

Pack Structure: 3-4 Adults and 6 Pups

Collared Wolf: No

Pack Report: We will continue to monitor this pack and hope to get a collar out this season.

BELMONT PACK

Pack Structure: ~3 Adults, \geq 2 pups.

Collared Wolf: Yes

Pack Report: 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 \geq 4 Pups

Collared Wolf: Yes (2)

Pack Report: The collared male was recently located via radio telemetry.

CONGER POINT PACK

Backcountry

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 made a trapping effort for this pack in late June but sign dried up and traps were pulled. Further trapping attempts will be made if the wolves are located.

MORRELL MOUNTAIN PACK

Pack Structure: 2-3 adults. ? pups.

Collared Wolf: No

Pack Report: FWP found fresh sign from this pack and is currently making a trapping attempt. Traps will be pulled before the 4th of July weekend and efforts resumed later if there is still sign in the area.

OVANDO MOUNTAIN PACK

Pack Structure: Unknown

Collared Wolf: No

Pack Report: A fresh wolf scat was found on the BCCA - we will continue to monitor the area.

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: Some scouting for this pack has been done but no sign has been found yet.

GRIZZLY BEAR ACTIVITY

Jamie Jonkel and his crew re-captured "Portman" and removed her old VHF collar. The collar had created a bit of a rub, so we placed an ear tag transmitter on her instead of a GPS collar. She was re-captured and released in the Monture Creek drainage.

There are 4 monitoring female grizzly bears in the valley this season for the ongoing trend study research. "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).

Blackfoot River floaters reported an unmarked grizzly bear with 2 cubs of the year feeding on an unmarked dead calf below River Junction. FWP river rangers removed the carcass on 6/18/14 and video can be seen on the Blackfoot Anglers website.

The Lincoln area has reported some breeding activity - a big male grizzly bear and a female with 2 sub-adults on the east side of town.

A report of a female grizzly bear with 2 sub-adults came in from the Nevada Lake area. Another report of a grizzly bear came in from the Lubrecht/Bearmouth area.

Some chickens were killed by a bear north of Seeley Lake and an article will be in the local newspaper.

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



This photo of a wolf was captured by a trail camera used by a Range Rider, Eric Graham.