

THE BLACKFOOT WATERSHED WOLF AND BEAR ACTIVITY REPORT 7/18/2014

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 been scouting 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.

BLACKFOOT VALLEY WOLF PACKS

ARRASTRA CREEK PACK

Pack Structure: 3-4 Adults and 6 Pups

Collared Wolf: No

Pack Report: We 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 ≥ 4 Pups

Collared Wolf: Yes (2)

Pack Report:

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: Yes

Pack Report: FWP collared a yearling male on 7/16.

OVANDO MOUNTAIN PACK

Pack Structure: Unknown

Collared Wolf: No

Pack Report: We continue to scout for this pack no sign has been found since the scat earlier this season.

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: We continue scouting for this pack but no sign has been found yet.

GRIZZLY BEAR ACTIVITY

The serviceberry and huckleberry has begun to ripen and we are seeing some of the grizzly bear activity shift to take advantage of these food sources.

There have been reports of 4 or 5 breeding grizzly bears in the river bottom in and around Lincoln. There have been no problems but FWP encourages people to take down their birdfeeders and contain bear attractants to keep problems from arising. FWP has been working with the Lincoln dump board to keep garbage unavailable to bears and bear-resistant garbage containers are now available through MT Waste Systems 761-2545.

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).

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



The wolf pup tracks are growing, these measured 3" wide by 3 1/2" long. Photo by Eric Graham.