

## 2012 wolf management, by the numbers

By Larry Hyslop



Location of wolf packs in the Northern Rockies

During 2012, at least 1,674 gray wolves, in 321 packs, lived in the states of Washington, Oregon, Montana, Idaho and Wyoming. Going by states, Montana had 625 wolves in 147 packs, Idaho had 683 wolves in 117 packs, Wyoming had 277 in 43 packs, Washington had 43 in 7 packs, and Oregon had 46 in 7 packs. No packs are known in Utah or Nevada. This population for the Northern Rockies has fallen approximately 7% from the 2011 population. "... the wolf population may be stabilizing at some yet undetermined lower equilibrium based on natural carrying capacity in suitable habitat and human social tolerance." states the report.

Total confirmed livestock depredations by wolves during 2012 were 194 cattle, 470 sheep, 6 dogs, 3 horses and 1 llama. From 2007 through 2011, an average of 191 cattle depredations occurred each year, while an average of 339 sheep have been killed. These depredations were committed by 99 wolf packs. In livestock control actions, 231 wolves were killed, which is about 9% of the minimum number of wolves.

During 2012, Montana hunters and trappers removed 175 wolves, Idaho took 329 and Wyoming took 66 wolves. Idaho's take amounted to about 30% of their wolf population. In total, 861 wolves were killed in human-caused mortality in the Northern Rockies, about 34% of the total minimum number of known wolves.

The minimum delisting goal has been to maintain 300 wolves, including 30 breeding pairs in Montana, Idaho and Wyoming, for 3 consecutive years. This has been exceeded in the Northern Rockies since 2002.

During 2012, federal funding amounted to \$3,345,618 for wolf monitoring, management, control and research. State and private compensation programs spent \$564,558 to compensate livestock producers for depredations.

This data comes from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's document "Rocky Mountain Wolf Recovery 2012 Interagency Annual Report" and is the most recent summary available.

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