

Connecting the Wolf Depredation Compensation Fund with Wolf Conservation



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The Compensation Fund: When, Why, How

- ▶ Set up in 2011 after negotiations among stakeholders
- ▶ Set at a time when wolves were state listed and federally listed
- ▶ Compensation a means to offset the cost on affected ranchers who didn't have the ability to kill wolves in response to predation because of their listed status
- ▶ Housed under Dept of Agriculture not Dept of Fish and Wildlife – decoupled the program from the Wolf Plan

76th OREGON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY--2011 Regular Session

Enrolled House Bill 3560

Sponsored by Representative G SMITH; Representatives BENTZ, ESQUIVEL, GARRARD, JENSON, JOHNSON, KRIEGER, SCHAUFLE, WHISNANT, Senators BOQUIST, FERRIOLI, GEORGE, GIROD, KRUSE, NELSON, TELFER, THOMSEN, WHITSETT (at the request of Oregon Cattlemen's Association)

CHAPTER

AN ACT

Relating to wolves; appropriating money; and declaring an emergency.

Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:

SECTION 1. (1) As used in this section:

(a) "Livestock" means ratites, psittacines, horses, mules, jackasses, cattle, llamas, alpacas, sheep, goats, swine, bison, domesticated fowl and any fur-bearing animal bred and maintained commercially, or otherwise, within pens, cages or hutches.

(b) "Working dog" means any animal of the species *Canis familiaris* used to aid in the herding or guarding of livestock.

(2) The State Department of Agriculture shall establish and implement a wolf depredation compensation and financial assistance grant program, using moneys in the Wolf Management Compensation and Proactive Trust Fund established under section 2 of this 2011 Act, to provide grants to assist counties to implement county programs under which:

(a) Compensation is paid to persons who suffer loss or injury to livestock or working dogs due to wolf depredation; and

(b) Financial assistance is provided to persons who implement livestock management techniques or nonlethal wolf deterrence techniques designed to discourage wolf depredation of livestock.

(3) Subject to available funding in the Wolf Management Compensation and Proactive Trust Fund established under section 2 of this 2011 Act, a county qualifies for a grant under the wolf depredation compensation and financial assistance grant program if the county:

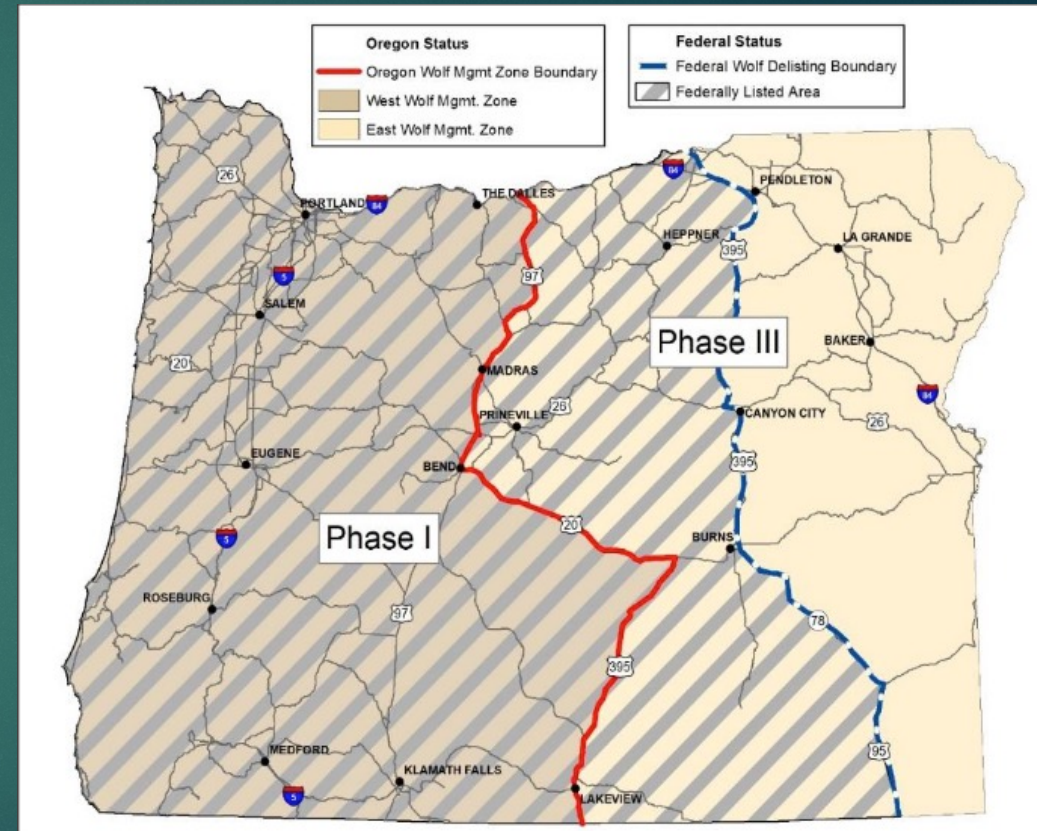
(a) Establishes a county program to:

(A) Compensate persons who suffer loss or injury to livestock or working dogs due to wolf depredation; and

(B) Provide financial assistance to persons who implement livestock management techniques or nonlethal wolf deterrence techniques designed to discourage wolf depredation of livestock.

Between 2011 and Now

- ▶ Eastern 1/3rd population federally delisted in 2011 by Congress
- ▶ Wolves delisted across the entire state under state ESA in 2015
- ▶ Wolf Plan the only state policy on conservation and management, with lethal provisions:
 - ▶ Under “chronic depredation” status
 - ▶ “Caught in the act”
 - ▶ Self defense
- ▶ Chronic depredation status
 - ▶ Phase I: 4 incidents in 6 months
 - ▶ Phase II and III: **2 incidents in 9 months**
- ▶ Who can kill wolves under chronic depredation?
 - ▶ Affected landowners and their agents
 - ▶ ODFW and (now) USDA Wildlife Services



Steps Taken for Social Tolerance

▶ Decreased protections through delisting and allowing for killing wolves in response to conflict

▶ 16 wolves (9% out of our known 178) killed by ODFW in 2023 alone

▶ Increase in poaching instance coincides with increase in lethal actions

▶ 100% compensation for loss of livestock

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Paying for Tolerance: Rural Citizens' Attitudes toward Wolf Depredation and Compensation

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Abstract: As wolf (*Canis lupus*) populations recover in Wisconsin (U.S.A.), their depredations on livestock, pets, and hunting dogs have increased. We used a mail-back survey to assess the tolerance of 535 rural citizens of wolves and their preferences regarding the management of "problem" wolves. Specifically, we tested whether people who had lost domestic animals to wolves or other predators were less tolerant of wolves than neighboring residents who had not and whether compensation payments improved tolerance of wolves. We assessed tolerance via proxy measures related to an individual's preferred wolf population size for Wisconsin and the likelihood she or he would shoot a wolf. We also measured individuals' approval of lethal control and other wolf-management tactics under five conflict scenarios. Multivariate analysis revealed that the strongest predictor of tolerance was social group. Bear (*Ursus americanus*) hunters were concerned about losing valuable bounds to wolves and were more likely to approve of lethal control and reducing the wolf population than were livestock producers, who were more concerned than general residents. To a lesser degree, education level, experience of loss, and gender were also significant. Livestock producers and bear hunters who had been compensated for their losses to wolves were not more tolerant than their counterparts who alleged a loss but received no compensation. Yet all respondents approved of compensation payments as a management strategy. Our results indicate that deep-rooted social identity and occupation are more powerful predictors of tolerance of wolves than individual encounters with these large carnivores.

El Impacto de la Depredación y de los Pagos Compensatorios en las Actitudes de Ciudadanos hacia Lobos

Resumen: A medida que las poblaciones de lobo (*Canis lupus*) se recuperan en Wisconsin (E. U. A.), ha aumentado su depredación sobre ganado, mascotas y perros de caza. Utilizamos una encuesta por correo para evaluar la tolerancia de 535 ciudadanos hacia los lobos y sus preferencias en relación a la gestión de "lobos problema." Específicamente, probamos si la gente que había perdido animales domésticos a raíz de lobos u otros depredadores era menos tolerante a los lobos que los residentes que no habían perdido animales domésticos y si los pagos compensatorios mejoraron la tolerancia hacia los lobos. Evaluamos la tolerancia usando medidas relacionadas con el tamaño poblacional de lobos preferida para Wisconsin y la probabilidad de que un individuo disparase contra un lobo. También medimos la aprobación de individuos del uso de control letal y otras tácticas de manejo de lobos bajo cinco escenarios de conflicto. El análisis multivariado reveló que el predictor más robusto de tolerancia fue el grupo social. Los cazadores de osos (*Ursus americanus*) estuvieron más preocupados por la pérdida de perros valiosos por lobos y tendieron a aprobar el control letal y la reducción de la población de lobos en mayor proporción que los productores de ganado, que mostraron más preocupación que los residentes en general. En menor grado, el nivel de educación, la experiencia de pérdida y el género también fueron significativos. Los productores de ganado y cazadores de osos que habían sido compensados por sus pérdidas no fueron más tolerantes que sus contrapartes que adujeron pérdidas pero no recibieron compensación. No obstante, todos los respondientes aprobaron los pagos compensatorios

Blood does not buy goodwill: allowing culling increases poaching of a large carnivore

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Quantifying environmental crime and the effectiveness of policy interventions is difficult because perpetrators typically conceal evidence. To prevent illegal uses of natural resources, such as poaching endangered species, governments have advocated granting policy flexibility to local authorities by liberalizing culling or hunting of large carnivores. We present the first quantitative evaluation of the hypothesis that liberalizing culling will reduce poaching and improve population status of an endangered carnivore. We show that allowing wolf (*Canis lupus*) culling was substantially more likely to increase poaching than reduce it. Replicated, quasi-experimental changes in wolf policies in Wisconsin and Michigan, USA, revealed that a repeated policy signal to allow state culling triggered repeated slowdowns in wolf population growth, irrespective of the policy implementation measured as the number of wolves killed. The most likely explanation for these slowdowns was poaching and alternative explanations found no support. When the government kills a protected species, the perceived value of each individual of that species may decline; so liberalizing wolf culling may have sent a negative message about

"Livestock producers and bear hunters who had been compensated for their losses to wolves were not more tolerant than their counterparts who alleged a loss but received no compensation.

Our results indicate that deep-rooted social identity and occupation are more powerful predictors of tolerance of wolves than individual encounters with these large carnivores"

Statewide Data on Wolf-Livestock Conflicts

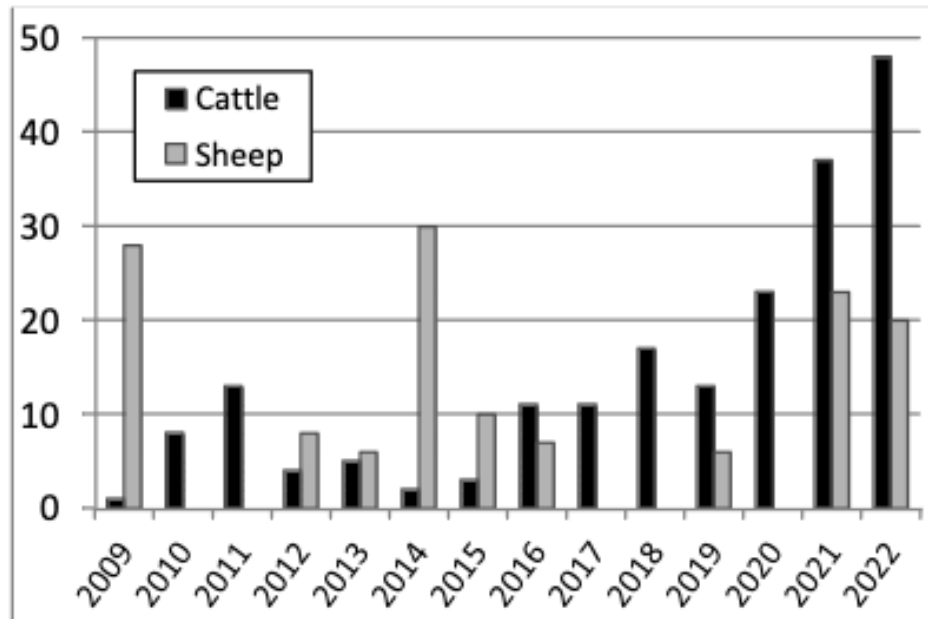


Figure 7. Number of confirmed cattle and sheep deaths from wolves in Oregon by year (2009-2022).

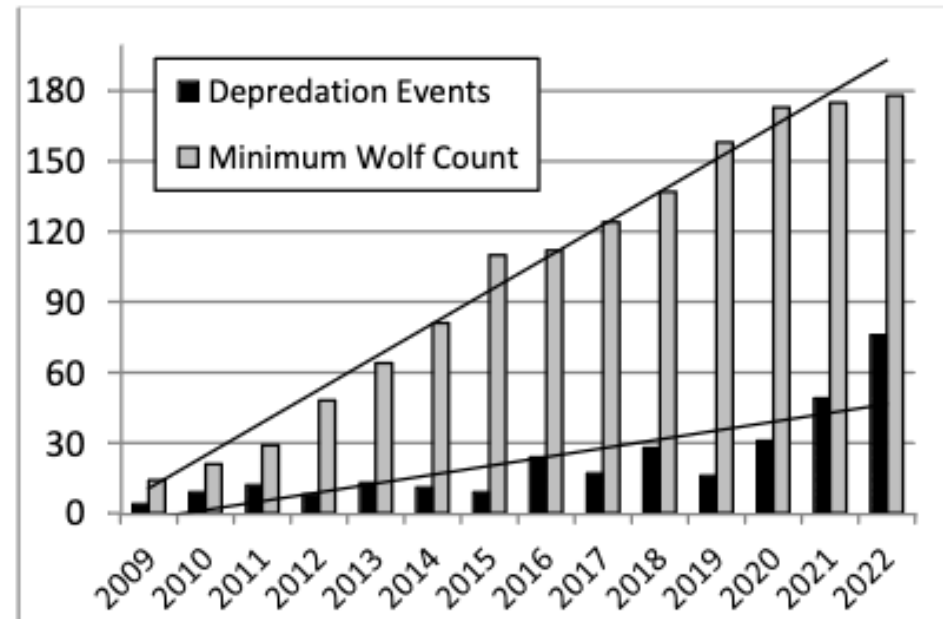
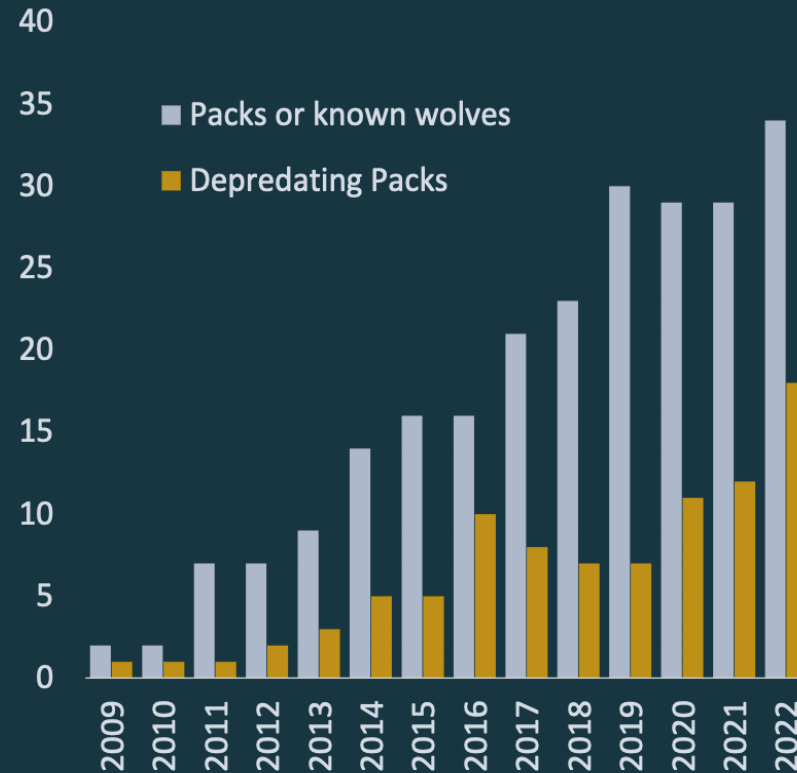


Figure 8. Number and trendline of confirmed depredation events and minimum wolf count by year (2009-2022).

Statewide Data on Wolf-Livestock Conflicts

62% of wolf packs aren't known to depredate

Not all wolves are involved in depredation



- ODFW in their Dec 2023 wolf workshop stated that *65% of ranchers who faced wolf-livestock conflict in a given year faced it only once that year.*
- *10 individual producers made up for 35% of all conflicts in the last 13 years combined.*

Conclusion

- ▶ Compensation and lethal actions are both tools in the tool box but right now, both are being used simultaneously for the same event– compensation is for the predation incident for which the wolf/wolves can also be killed
- ▶ A decade-old program that needs reform and discussion among stakeholders to find common ground
- ▶ Compensation can promote coexistence and conservation if it is tied to how wolves are managed in Oregon:
 - ▶ Better standard for when wolves are killed
 - ▶ Sideboards on no. of wolves killed per permit
 - ▶ Length of the permits