

Guard with dogs and/or people

Consider using livestock guarding dogs with a herder or shepherd for sheep and goat protection, or near confined livestock of any kind. Specific breeds such as Anatolian shepherds, mastiffs, and Great Pyrenees can be effective particularly when paired with people. Note that it is important to keep guarding dogs away from active wolf den sites to avoid conflicts with wolves protecting pups.

Another option is to increase the routine presence of humans in and around your livestock. Increasing the frequency of herders or range riders monitoring livestock on open range can add protection from wolves. Wolves tend to stay away from areas where there is regular or frequent human presence.

Use Scare Devices

Light and noise “scare” devices can be used to frighten wolves away from confined livestock and alert herders to the presence of wolves. One of the strategies used by WDFW to monitor wolves while the population is in the recovery phase is to capture and place electronic transmitters on them. Some light systems and Radio-Activated Guard (RAG) systems emit flashing lights and loud sounds at the approach of a radio-collared wolf.

Using non-lethal munitions – including propane cannons, cracker shells, rubber bullets, paintballs and beanbags – to haze wolves near livestock can also be effective. The use of these tools must be done in coordination with WDFW and federal authorities.

You may qualify for financial assistance from WDFW to help purchase fence materials, scare devices, or guard animals; we may be able to help address sanitation and disposal of livestock carcasses; or assist with other strategies to facilitate operational changes. If you would like more information:

Spokane – 509-892-1001
Ephrata – 509-754-4624
Yakima – 509-575-2740
Mill Creek – 425-775-1311
Vancouver – 360-696-6211
Montesano – 360-249-4628

What should I do if I suspect a wolf kill?

Upon discovering injured or dead livestock that you believe has been attacked by a wolf, immediately report the situation using WDFW’s toll-free Reporting Hotline at 1-877-933-9847. WDFW or federal investigating authorities will respond as soon as possible.

The actions that you take after locating an injured or dead livestock can have a tremendous impact on the results of the investigation that will follow. Your cooperation is needed at the site to secure it from disturbance. Treat the area as though it were a crime scene. This includes taking the following steps:

- Avoid walking in or around the area.
- Do not touch anything.
- Keep all people and animals from the area to protect evidence.
- Place a tarp over the carcass.
- Take photos of the scene if a camera is available.

More detailed information about depredation investigations, including the “signatures” of various predator species, is available at http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/gray_wolf/livestock/depredation.html.

If WDFW or federal investigating authorities determine that livestock was injured or killed by a wolf, compensation for the loss may be available. Compensation may also be available for commercially produced horses, cattle or sheep killed by cougars or bears. More information on compensation is available at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/rules>.

In areas where wolf depredations or conflicts have been chronic, WDFW may take lethal measures to control wolves or issue a permit to livestock owners authorizing them to do so.



A Washington Guide to Addressing Wolf-Livestock Conflicts

Ranching and farming are a vital part of the state’s economy, and the lands that foster this industry also provide critical habitat for a wide variety of wildlife. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is responsible for protecting and managing wildlife, and is committed to working with livestock producers to reduce conflicts with wildlife, including wolves.

This guide includes strategies livestock producers can use to minimize problems with wolves. In many cases, WDFW will assist producers in protecting their livestock and provide compensation to those who lose livestock to wolf predation.

Communication between livestock owners and WDFW is key. A toll-free line for reporting problems is available year-round, 24-7 at **1-877-933-9847**. Other WDFW contact numbers are included in this guide.

1-877-933-9847
Wolf Reporting Hotline—Toll-free-24-7



Legal Protections

Under state law, wolves are listed as endangered throughout Washington. They are also listed as endangered under federal law in the western two-thirds of the state (west of Highway 97 near the Canada border near Oroville, Highway 17 south to Highway 395 through the Tri-Cities to Oregon).

Those laws provide different degrees of protection for wolves. Currently, under state law, it is illegal to kill a wolf to protect livestock without a permit issued by WDFW. By law, these permits can only be issued when other options have failed. No such permits are currently available in the western two-thirds of the state, where federal law prevails.

In all cases, WDFW encourages the use of non-lethal preventative measures as a livestock producer's first line of defense against predation by wolves.

Wolves in Washington

The gray wolf (*Canis lupus*) was once common throughout most of Washington. The population declined rapidly between 1850 and 1900, primarily because settlers killed wolves and other predators as ranching and farming expanded.

Wolves are currently returning to Washington from populations in adjacent states and provinces and are now forming resident packs. Some of these packs are breeding and producing pups, which are also resulting in the formation of new packs.

The Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission adopted a wolf conservation and management plan in December 2011. The plan includes criteria for de-listing wolves and management options for both WDFW and livestock owners to use to protect livestock.

Information on wolves in Washington, including the location of known wolf packs and areas of wolf activity can be found at http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/gray_wolf/.

How Can I Protect My Livestock from Wolves?

Wolves are predators whose diet is dominated by moose, elk and deer. However, while it is a fact that wolves will kill and eat livestock that doesn't mean that livestock producers are powerless to protect their animals. A number of non-lethal strategies have been developed to protect livestock from wolf predation and help is available for individual producers to adapt these strategies to their own situation.

WDFW currently provides this kind of assistance, with support from U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, U.S.D.A. Wildlife Services, U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service, U.S. Forest Service and other state and federal agencies and grazing land managers.

Assess Your Situation

The livestock you manage and where they reside are important factors when trying to understand your likelihood of having wolf-livestock conflicts and for determining how you can reduce the potential for wolf problems. Key considerations include:

- The type, age and number of livestock you own or manage
- The location, size and accessibility of your calving/lambing areas, feedlots, grazing sites and pastures
- The frequency and intensity of livestock supervision that is provided
- The way carcasses are managed

Sheep, goats and calves are the livestock most commonly attacked by wolves; adult bulls, cows, and horses are less at risk. Wolves tend to avoid humans. Livestock ranges that are remote or in rugged terrain make it harder for stock owners and managers to observe animals and detect wolf-livestock conflict situations.

Changing grazing sites temporarily may be necessary to avoid conflicts with wolves while they are at dens or rendezvous sites.

Reduce attractants

Wolves don't just hunt live animals; they also feed on dead animals. To minimize this attraction to wolves and other scavengers, whenever possible, dispose of all dead animals by rendering, burying, or burning in an appropriate and safe manner. Maintain a carcass pit at least eight feet deep with fencing that discourages scavengers. While tending to sick and injured livestock, consider temporarily removing them from the rest of your herd. These animals can be particularly vulnerable to wolves.

Use pens, fencing, and fladry

Confine cows and ewes to fenced or barnyard areas during calving and lambing season. Keep calves and lambs in secure pens until they grow larger. Delay the turnout of cattle from fenced areas to open, remote grazing areas until calving is complete, or until deer fawns and elk calves are born, usually in early June.

Use permanent or portable fencing, especially for night protection of flocks or herds. Electric fencing has been effective against wolves. Even more effective is the use of "fladry," a series of bright (usually red or orange) cloth flags hung at 18-inch intervals along a rope or fence line. Wolves are reluctant to cross the barrier. Combining electricity with fladry – "turbo-fladry" – is best, teaching wolves that bite at the flags to stay away.

"Bio-fencing," using wolf scat and urine to mark a protective "territory" around livestock, is another alternative currently being tested for effectiveness.

