

**Blue Range Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Project
Adaptive Management Oversight Committee
Standard Operating Procedure 11.0 - Clarification Memo**

Title: Depredation on Domestic Livestock and Pets

Number: 11.0

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Purpose: The purpose of this memo is to clarify how SOP 11.0 shall be implemented henceforth, in an ongoing adaptive management approach that gives due consideration to providing intended wolf management flexibility while adequately and appropriately resolving conflicts with other interests. These clarifications are based on experience to date in the Project and have been discussed and agreed to by AMOC and the Lead Agency Directors.

Clarifications consist of the following:

- 1) The Project Cooperators' overall objectives in implementing SOP 11.0 are to ensure that:
 - a. on-site investigations of reported wolf depredations warranting investigation begin the same day or at least within 24 hours of initial notification that a depredation might have occurred; and
 - b. investigations are completed and reported in thorough, accurate, and timely fashion to better inform management decisions.
- 2) When an IFT member, regardless of duty station or agency of employment, is notified of possible Mexican wolf depredation requiring on-site investigation, they shall immediately:
 - a. notify the Jurisdictional IFTL and USFWS Field Projects Coordinator (FPC) or their respective designees;
 - b. ensure that an IFT Incident Investigator (typically a WS employee) is dispatched; and
 - c. affirm whether the FPC/designee will dispatch a USFWS employee to co-investigate the alleged incident with the assigned IFT Incident Investigator, and then apprise the Jurisdictional IFTL/designee of the decision.
- 3) If co-investigation is directed by USFWS, the IFT Incident Investigator and the USFWS Co-investigator shall be jointly responsible for cooperating to initiate and conduct their parallel investigations, with every effort made to arrive on-site together. Unavailability of a USFWS Co-investigator shall not be cause for delaying the Incident Investigator's work.
- 4) If a livestock owner/operator denies access to private lands for incident investigation or co-investigation, the IFT Incident Investigator and the USFWS Co-investigator shall note that in their incident reports. Note: a livestock owner/operator has no legal authority to deny agency access to sites on public lands, but, under State Law in AZ and NM, livestock, whether live or dead, remain the property of the owner and the owner may deny agency access to the live animal or carcass itself (e.g. for handling, sampling). However, on private lands the landowner does have the legal right to deny access to agencies (except in a properly authorized law enforcement investigation).

- 5) At the scene of the reported depredation:
 - a. The IFT Incident Investigator shall conduct the SOP 11.0 investigation and shall determine, based on the evidence and consultation with other IFT members and any other appropriate agency resources, whether the depredation was caused by a Mexican wolf or wolves or by some other species or some other cause unrelated to wildlife depredation (lightning, fall, etc.).
 - b. The USFWS Co-investigator shall evaluate biological circumstances and any other possibly contributory factors surrounding the reported depredation.
- 6) The IFT Incident Investigator shall:
 - a. verbally notify the Jurisdictional IFTL/designee and the FPC/designee of their final determination of a “confirmed” or “probable” Mexican wolf depredation within 48 hours of the original notification of the possible incident; and
 - b. submit (per SOP 11.0, 7.a) a final written Depredation Incident Report Form (see Attachment A) to the IFT’s Alpine office within 14 calendar days of the initial notification.
- 7) The USFWS Co-investigator shall:
 - a. verbally inform the USFWS FPC/designee of their determination regarding factors contributing to causing a “confirmed” or “probable” Mexican wolf depredation within 48 hours of initial notification of the possible incident; and
 - b. submit a written report on their final determination to the FPC/designee and the Recovery Coordinator/designee within 72 hours of the initial notification.
- 8) While receiving the IFT Incident Investigator’s 48-hour verbal report, the Jurisdictional IFTL/designee shall initiate a Jurisdictional IFTL Checklist for Assigning Depredation Incidents (Attachment B). The Jurisdictional IFTL shall be responsible for contacting IFT members and other sources of relevant information as necessary to complete the form (Note: if differences of viewpoint among the IFT on assigning the depredation to a specific wolf or wolves are sufficient to warrant discussion or decision at a higher level, the FPC will ask AMOC for assistance). The Checklist shall incorporate and appropriately reference any USFWS decision (see Clarification 11, below) resulting from co-investigation of the reported depredation, and clearly indicate whether the reported depredation has been determined to be a depredation incident as defined in SOP 13.0: Control of Mexican Wolves.
- 9) After completing a Checklist, the Jurisdictional IFTL/designee shall immediately coordinate with the FPC and other IFTLs to initiate discussion and decisions regarding the appropriate management response(s) under SOP 13.0, within the timeframes prescribed in SOP 13.0.
- 10) The Jurisdictional IFTL/designee shall immediately file the completed Checklist with the IFT Alpine office, and initiate integration of the information into Project depredation databases, records, and files and into ongoing IFT analyses of dynamics between wolves and livestock, for development of better mechanisms by which to prevent or mitigate wolf depredation.

- 11) Within 24 hours of receiving a Co-investigator's written report on a confirmed Mexican wolf lethal depredation, the Recovery Coordinator/designee shall inform the AMOC Chair, FPC, and Jurisdictional IFTL of the USFWS decision on whether, due to livestock owner/operator denial of investigative access or occurrence of intentional attraction or repeated knowing attraction of wolves, a depredation incident shall not be assigned under SOP 13.0. Note: common (routine) livestock husbandry and management practices such as branding, castration, dehorning, herd gathering, etc. do not constitute "intentional attraction" or "repeated knowing attraction."
- 12) Within 14 calendar days of completing evaluation of the USFWS Co-investigator's written report, the FPC/designee and Jurisdictional IFTL/designee shall ensure integration of all non-confidential information on biological aspects of the incident into ongoing IFT analyses of the dynamics between wolves and livestock, for development of better mechanisms by which to prevent and/or mitigate wolf depredation.
- 13) The requirements above apply equally to public, state, and private lands, but they do not apply to Tribal lands (the latter including WMAT and SCAT lands) unless the appropriate Tribal authority voluntarily adopts them within the framework of their USFWS-approved wolf management plan.
- 14) Upon approval of this Clarification Memo, the AMOC Chair shall immediately incorporate an updated Depredation Report Form (Attachment A) into SOP 11.0, as Appendix A.

Rationale: Clarifications 1-12 address core issues in how on-site investigations are handled, from initiation through reporting to management decision and application. Timely verification of reported wolf depredations is fundamental to determining the appropriate management response(s) pursuant to SOP 13.0: Control of Mexican Wolves, and must be appropriately documented in Project records and recommendations. More information on biological aspects of depredation is needed to better enable the Project to identify proactive measures that can be taken to promote growth of the wolf population while reducing wolf impacts on livestock operators/owners. The responsibilities of the IFT Incident Investigator and the USFWS Co-Investigator and conduct (and application of the results) of their investigations are different, though overlapping. The former is focused on determining what happened, and the latter is focused on why it happened and how that information might be used to reduce the likelihood of recurrence. However, IFT investigative response within 24 hours of initial notification is the primary Project objective in these situations, thus the timeframes for investigation and particularly co-investigation reporting are necessarily short, to ensure information is available within the time allotted for the IFT, AMOC, and the Directors to develop, recommend, approve, and implement management response(s).

Clarifications 4 and 11: If a livestock operator/owner denies access to Project-affiliated staff conducting SOP 11.0 investigations or co-investigations, the IFT would not be able to determine whether a confirmed depredation incident (per SOP 13.0) occurred. This would complicate and thus impede developing and implementing informed management decisions under SOP 13.0.

Clarification 13: No Project SOP applies to Tribal lands unless the appropriate Tribal authority and USFWS have agreed to implement it as a component of their cooperative wolf management framework for specified Tribal lands.

Clarification 14: The Project's standard Depredation Report Form must be revised to delete "possible wolf predation" as a determination category, because it is too broad and speculative to be useful (Note: by policy, Defenders of Wildlife does not compensate for "possible" wolf depredations). The remaining determination categories adequately and accurately cover all relevant scenarios.

Approvals:

The USFWS Southwest Regional Director and the Directors from the other five Lead Agencies cooperating in the Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project approved this Clarification Memo on May 28, 2009.

Attachments:

- A. Depredation Report Form
- B. Jurisdictional IFTL Checklist for Assigning Depredation Incidents

Attachment A

DEPREDATION REPORT FORM

Resource Owner:																			
Mailing Address:																			
Phone:		County:		Ranch Name:															
SITE DESCRIPTION:																			
Nearest Town:				Allotment Name (if applicable):															
Approximate Location:																			
Coordinates:	UTMN:				UTME:														
Elevation:				Slope %:				Aspect:											
Vegetative Cover:																			
Topography (riparian, S. slope, bench, etc.):																			
General Description of Area:																			
Date/Time Complaint Received:					Date/Time Investigated:														
Land Ownership:		Private		FS		BLM		State		Tribal		Other:							
Type of animal:		Sheep		Lamb		Bull		Cow		Calf		Horse		Colt		Dog		Other:	
Number of Animals Depredated:																			
Damage Type:		Killed		Injured		Harassment		Stillborn		Other:									
Breed:																			
Ear Tag Number:																			
Sex:																			
Estimated time since death or injury:																			
Estimated Age of Resource:																			
Are there other livestock in the area?		Yes		No															
Describe (how many, behavior, composition, distance from mortality).																			
EVIDENCE:																			
Detection Method:		Report from owner		Birds		Other:													
Carnivore Tracks Present:		Mexican Wolf		Coyote		Mt. Lion		Black Bear		Other:									
Scat Present:		Mexican Wolf		Coyote		Mt. Lion		Black Bear		Other:									
Carnivores observed in area? Describe:																			
Carcass hidden or in the open? Describe:																			

Attachment A. Continued.

DEPREDAATION REPORT FORM

Carcass Covered?		Yes		No					
Carcass Moved?		Yes		No					
Drag marks present?		Yes		No					
Collared Wolves in area?		Yes		No	If Yes, then number:				
Blood on Vegetation?		Yes		No	Describe:				
Apparent point of first feeding:									
Percentage of Carcass Remaining									
0-25%---No soft tissue, hide present, disarticulated.									
26-50%--All organs consumed, all or most of quarters consumed, partial disarticulation.									
51-75%--All organs and portions of the hind quarters consumed, front quarters and neck intact, articulated.									
76-100%--some organs consumed, most soft tissue intact, skeleton articulated.									
Describe any additional evidence that is discovered in the area:									
Describe hemorrhages and corresponding marks seen while skinning the hide or other abnormalities (Location and type, e.g. claw marks on right hind leg, or canine marks on neck):									
Canine spread (if applicable): mm									
Cause of Damage:									
Confirmed		Carnivore (list species):							
Probable									
Accident									
Unknown									
Other:									
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:									
Were photos taken of the site?		Yes		No	Attached?		Yes		No
Was a veterinarian involved in cause of death determination?							Yes		No
If yes, is a veterinarian report attached?							Yes		No
SUMMARY OF INCIDENT (including preface and actions taken):									
Lead Investigator:									

Attachment B

MEXICAN WOLF BLUE RANGE REINTRODUCTION PROJECT
Jurisdictional IFTL Checklist for Assigning Depredation Incidents

Allotment:

Date and Time:

Date/time of SOP 11.0 investigation; name of IFT investigator			
Type and number of livestock present, killed, and/or injured			
Estimated date/time of kill(s) and/or injuries			
Number of carcasses and distance(s) apart			
Bite marks - number and measurement			
Hemorrhaging and blood evidence			
Scat/tracks on site (list species)			
Estimated weight of carcass(es) and percent consumed			
Ground telemetry (who, time, date, results)			
Weekly flight information (who, time, date, results)			
Distance to den			
Lawful presence of livestock (yes/no, date of affirmation)			
IFT investigator decision on wolf kill or no kill			
Jurisdictional IFTL decision on responsible wolf or wolves			
Summary of results of USFWS co- investigation of depredation incident			
Additional comments			
Contacted: AGFD	Name:	Date:	Time:
NMDGF	Name:	Date:	Time:
USDA-WS	Name:	Date:	Time:
USFS	Name:	Date:	Time:
USFWS	Name:	Date:	Time:
WMAT	Name:	Date:	Time:
Permittee/Landowner	Name:	Date:	Time:
Checklist completed by:			