



### 3 Steps When Finding a Livestock Predator Kill

*Tracy Schohr, Livestock and Natural Resources Advisor Plumas, Sierra and Butte counties*

Predation is a growing concern across rural counties with mountain lions, bears, coyotes, and now wolves in the landscape. When you encounter a livestock kill at your home ranch, on leased pasture or out on a wide open allotment, it is important to take critical steps to preserve the site so a formal investigation can take place.

#### **1. If you suspect predation, because you've seen signs of a recent predator, call:**

- Kent Laudon, Wolf Specialist, Ca. Department of Fish and Wildlife - 530-215-0751
- Bill Watkins, Plumas and Sierra, Wildlife Services - 530-616-5593
- Matt Albertsen, Butte Wildlife Services - 530-538-7381

If you can't get a hold of them, try calling the following folks:

Local Game Warden –

- Kyle Kroll, Lieutenant (Plumas, Butte and Lassen) 530-575-5736
- Brian Moore, Lieutenant (Sierra, Nevada and Placer) 916-408-5010

Wildlife Services State Office (916) 979-2675

- Jim Shuler, North District Supervisor, Wildlife Services at (530) 336-5623

Local CDFW Biologist –

- Teri Weist (Plumas and Sierra) 530-836-0889 or [terri.weist@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:terri.weist@wildlife.ca.gov)
- Henry Lomeli (Butte) 530-891-1065

Game Warden Dispatch 916-358-1312

N. Central Regional Office – CA Department of Fish and Wildlife 916-358-2900

#### **2. If you don't immediately suspect predation, when initially inspecting the site follow the steps below:**

- Minimize your own impacts. Watch where you step and do not step on any signs (e.g. tracks). The fewer steps you make the better!
- If you happen to discover tracks while initially inspecting the carcass, cover them with a can, pot, bucket, etc. to protect them.
- Take a picture of carcass and surrounding areas.
- Mark location with camera picture, flagging, or GPS - this can be helpful for investigators to find the site.
- Protect the scene by restricting people, dogs, and livestock from disturbing evidence.
- The carcass should be protected by covering with a tarp to avoid further feeding on the carcass.

### 3. Officially report incident to the Department of Fish and Wildlife:

Wildlife Incident Reporting System at <https://apps.wildlife.ca.gov/wir>.

This will provide a formal record of the incident. Such reports may result in the issuance of a depredation permit (permit to take animals creating property damage) for designated species requiring a depredation permit by California Codes and Regulations (this does **NOT** include wolves).

#### Additional Information

It is imperative to contact CA Department of Fish and Wildlife and USDA Wildlife Services to investigate potential livestock depredations. Depending on schedules, representatives from one or both agencies may conduct the investigation. During their visit, investigators will search the carcass site and surrounding area for predator sign, including tracks, hair, and scat. Therefore, it is important to preserve the site with the steps listed above. The investigators will closely examine the carcass for injuries, bite marks, and tissue damage patterns. Upon completion of the investigation, a "Livestock Loss Determination" report will be completed.

Following an investigation that has confirmed a livestock loss from a mountain lion, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife shall issue (depredation) permits when requested by ranchers. For more information on mountain lion depredation visit - [www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Mammals/Mountain-Lion/Depredation](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Mammals/Mountain-Lion/Depredation).

If a bear has been found to cause livestock depredation, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife can issue a depredation permit outside of the bear hunting season. Furthermore, Section 4181.1 of the Fish and Game Code states; "that any bear that is encountered while in the act of inflicting injury to, molesting, or killing, livestock may be taken immediately by the owner of the livestock or the owner's employee if the taking is reported no later than the next working day to the department and the carcass is made available to the department." For more information on Black Bear depredation go to <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Mammals/Black-Bear/Depredation>.

If wolves are present, ranchers can non-injurious haze wolves near livestock. "Non-injurious harassment is allowed when wolves are within 0.25 mile of livestock, or within 100 yards of a dwelling, agricultural structure, campsite, or commercial facility.<sup>1</sup>" Additionally, there are non-lethal deterrents that may work in certain circumstance to prevent further depredations of livestock by wolves. At this time, there is no compensation for ranchers who experience livestock loss from a wolf in California. Reporting losses from wolves will help document impacts. For additional information, including tools to discourage wolf presence and legal protections visit [www.wildlife.ca.gov/conservation/mammals/gray-wolf](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/conservation/mammals/gray-wolf).

#### Reference:

1. Tools for California Livestock Producers to Discourage Wolf Presence, Guidance for Suspected Wolf Depredation, and Wolf Legal Status. CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE – JUNE 2017.

*Photo credit: Gary Kramer, USFWS*

## Contact

This resource is courtesy of University of CA Cooperative Extension. For questions contact:

Tracy Schohr

Livestock and Natural Resources Advisor - Plumas, Sierra and Butte Counties -  
[tschohr@ucanr.edu](mailto:tschohr@ucanr.edu) - 916-716-2643 cell