



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 on 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 sign of a recent predator, call:

- Kent Laudon, Wolf Specialist, CA Department of Fish and Wildlife - 530-215-0751*
**For questions on wolves and wolf predation*
- Bill Watkins, non-lethal Specialist Wildlife Services - 530-616-5593
- Mark Bentz, Wildlife Services (Plumas and Sierra) - 916-616-0430
- Matt Albertsen, Wildlife Services (Butte) - 530-538-7381

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

Local Game Warden

- Kyle Kroll, Lieutenant (Plumas and Lassen) - 530-575-5736
- Brian Moore, Lieutenant (Sierra) - 916-408-5010
- Barry Ceccon, Lieutenant (Butte) - 530-513-4011

Wildlife Services State Office 916-979-2675

- Derek Milsap, North District Supervisor, Wildlife Services - 530-336-5623

Local CDFW Biologist

- Stacy Anderson (Plumas and Sierra) 530-624-8657 or Stacy.Anderson@wildlife.ca.gov

Game Warden Dispatch 916-358-1312

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

N. Central Regional Wildlife Conflict Hotline – CA Department of Fish and Wildlife 916-358-2917

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 lethally 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 for investigations on 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.

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.”¹ 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 <https://wildlife.ca.gov/conservation/mammals/gray-wolf>.



Policies have recently changed regarding **mountain lions** in California. Following an investigation that has confirmed a livestock loss from a mountain lion, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife may first issue a non-lethal permit for the depredation event. This permit will allow for non-lethal measures only, which include modifications to existing structures in place for livestock, pursuit, and/or hazing of mountain lions in the area. A second confirmed depredation event within the 28-day time frame of the non-lethal permit will allow the reporting party to request a lethal depredation permit for the lethal take of the offending animal (section 4802) given that all recommended non-lethal measures have been implemented. Furthermore, Section 4807 of the Fish and Game Code states; “Any mountain lion that is encountered while in the act of pursuing, inflicting injury to, or killing livestock, or domestic animals, may be taken immediately by the owner of the property or the owner’s employee or agent. The taking shall be reported within 72 hours to the Department.” The Department will conduct an investigation of the depredation, including the circumstances and the entire mountain lion. Upon satisfactorily completing the investigation, the Department shall issue a permit confirming that the requirements of this section have been met with respect to the particular mountain lion taken under these circumstances. For more information on mountain lion depredation, visit - www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Mammals/Mountain-Lion/Depredation. ***additional regulations apply in other regions of California.*



If a **bear** has been found to have caused livestock depredation, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife may issue a depredation permit outside of the bear hunting season. This permit requires evidence of bear damage or destruction, non-lethal efforts to avoid depredation (e.g. removing food attractants; hazing, motion lights, use of guard dogs, installing electric fencing), and proper disposal of the carcass. Furthermore, “The Department may, at its discretion, add terms and conditions to the permit necessary to protect wildlife and ensure public safety.”

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://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Mammals/Black-Bear/Depredation#572681130-potential-conflict-and-depredation>.

If a **coyote** is actively harassing your livestock, you can take immediate lethal measures of protection. However, if you are trying to control the coyote population with hunting, a valid hunting license is required, and all hunting regulations must be followed. There is no season or bag limit for coyotes. If wolves are known to be in the area, it is recommended that you work with Wildlife Services on any efforts to control coyote populations.



Ravens prey on newborn livestock and can also impact farming operations. The species is protected by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. There are some management options that can reduce conflicts, including the removal of inactive nests, however lethal removal of ravens requires a USFWS depredation permit. Active nests may only be removed with a Special Purpose permit which is also obtained by the USFWS.

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

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**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 -
tkschohr@ucanr.edu - 916-716-2643 cell**