

CALIFORNIA'S KNOWN WOLVES – PAST AND PRESENT

WOLF PACKS

Lassen Pack

The Lassen Pack utilizes a broad area of western Lassen and northern Plumas counties, and its home range is approximately 500 mi². The pack has produced litters in 2017 (four pups), 2018 (five pups), 2019 (four pups), and 2020 (at least nine pups). The pack had two litters in 2020 – the original breeding female (LAS01F) had at least five pups, and a two-year old female (LAS09F) had at least four pups. GPS collar locations and field reconnaissance indicate LAS09F denned in spring 2021, while the status of LAS01F was unknown.

Genetic analysis indicated the original male was a 2014 offspring of southwestern Oregon's Rogue Pack. While he sired the 2017-2019 litters, he has not been detected with the pack since spring 2019. A black-colored adult male began traveling with the pack as early as June 2019, and genetic analysis of pup scats showed the black wolf sired both 2020 litters. He is not related to other known California wolves, and his origin is currently unknown. The pack's original breeding female (LAS01F) is not related to known Oregon wolves and genetic analysis indicates she likely dispersed from some other part of the northern Rocky Mountain wolf population.

In late summer 2020, a satellite-collared yearling male wolf (LAS13M) dispersed from the pack. After traveling through northern Lassen and Modoc counties, LAS13M entered Oregon in early October. At the end of 2020, the pack was thought to consist of at least five wolves.

In September 2018, a yearling female from the pack was found dead, and the matter remains under investigation. Gray wolves are protected under California Endangered Species Act (CESA). CDFW reminds the public that killing a wolf is a potential crime and subject to serious penalties including imprisonment. CDFW takes very seriously any threats to this recovering wolf population and fully investigates any possible criminal activity.

Beckwourth Pack

The Beckwourth Pack was confirmed in May 2021 when three wolves were photographed by trail camera at a confirmed wolf depredation site in southern Plumas County. Tracks of two wolves had been observed in the same general area in February 2021. Field efforts are ongoing, and it is not yet known whether the pack is reproductive. Preliminary DNA analysis indicates one wolf is LAS12F (from the Lassen Pack's 2019 litter). The origins of the other two wolves remain uncertain.

Whaleback Pack

The Whaleback Pack consists of the male wolf OR-85 and an uncollared female. They occupy a 480 mi² home range in eastern Siskiyou County. OR-85 was collared by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) in February 2020 and was likely born in 2019. He dispersed from the Mount Emily Pack near La Grande, Oregon and entered California in November 2020. The female wolf's origin is unknown at this time. GPS collar locations indicate the pair denned in spring 2021.

Shasta Pack

The Shasta Pack was California's first known contemporary pack and occupied a portion of eastern Siskiyou County. DNA indicated that both breeding wolves were from Oregon's Imnaha pack (the pack that produced OR-7). The pair was first detected in early 2015 and five pups were identified that summer. The pack was regularly detected from August through November 2015 and consisted of a minimum of six wolves in late November 2015. The pack was observed feeding on a cattle calf carcass in mid-November 2015, and subsequent investigation determined the wolves had likely killed the calf.

The pack was not detected after November 2015, except for one yearling identified within the pack's range in May 2016. The same animal, verified by DNA, was detected in northwestern Nevada in November 2016.

OTHER WOLVES DETECTED (Collared)

OR-103

OR-103, a 1 or 2-year-old male wolf, entered northeastern Siskiyou County on May 4, 2021. OR-103 was collared by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) in Deschutes County, Oregon. His pack origin is currently unknown.

OR-93

OR-93, a male yearling wolf dispersed from the White River pack in northern Oregon, initially entered Modoc County on January 30, 2021. After briefly returning to Oregon, OR-93 reentered Modoc County on February 4. On February 24, he entered Alpine County after passing through portions of Lassen, Plumas, Sierra, Nevada, Placer, El Dorado, Amador, and Calaveras counties. On February 25, he entered Mono County. In mid-March, he was in western Tuolumne County. By late March he was in Fresno County, and then entered San Benito County after crossing Highway 99 and Interstate 5. He was in Monterey County on April 1 and his last collar transmission was from San Luis Obispo County on April 5. His status is unknown. Through April 5 he had traveled at least 935 air miles in California, a minimum average of 16 air miles per day. OR-93 was collared in June 2020.

OR-54

OR-54 was an offspring of southwestern Oregon's Rogue Pack and was most likely born in 2016. She was the fourth Rogue Pack wolf known to have spent time in California. She was fitted with a GPS collar by ODFW in October 2017, and she initially dispersed to California in January 2018. She subsequently spent most of her time in California but made two trips back to Oregon. She traveled widely in northeastern California, through portions of Butte, Lassen, Modoc, Nevada, Plumas, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Tehama, and Yuba counties. In September 2019, OR-54 crossed to the south side of Interstate 80 and briefly entered Nevada before returning to California and again crossing the Interstate. Those points are the southernmost known wolf locations since wolves returned to California. She covered more than 8,710 miles after leaving the Rogue Pack.

OR-54 was found dead in Shasta County in February 2020 and the circumstances of her death remain under investigation. Gray wolves are protected under CESA. CDFW takes very seriously any threats to this recovering wolf population. Killing a wolf is a potential crime and subject to serious penalties, including imprisonment.

OR-59

OR-59 was a male wolf from northeastern Oregon. He was fitted with a GPS collar by ODFW in February 2018 and crossed the state line into Modoc County in December 2018. CDFW Wildlife Officers found OR-59 shot in December 2018. The poaching incident is currently under investigation. Gray wolves are protected and CDFW takes very seriously any threats to this recovering wolf population and will investigate fully any possible criminal activity in these deaths. CDFW reminds the public that killing a wolf is a potential crime and subject to serious penalties including imprisonment.

OR-44

OR-44 was a male offspring from northeastern Oregon's Chesnimnus Pack. He was fitted with a GPS collar by ODFW in December 2016 and dispersed from his pack in fall 2017. OR-44 crossed the state line into eastern Siskiyou County in March 2018. His collar failed in May 2018, and his last known location was in Siskiyou County.

OR-25

OR-25 was a male offspring of northeastern Oregon's Imnaha Pack. He was fitted with a GPS collar by ODFW in 2014. OR-25 made four trips to California during late 2015 and early 2016, traveling through portions of Modoc, Lassen, Shasta, and Siskiyou counties. OR-25 was found dead near Fort Klamath, Oregon in October 2017.

OR-7

OR-7 was born in 2009 in northeastern Oregon's Imnaha pack. He was fitted with a GPS collar by ODFW in February 2011. He dispersed from his pack in September 2011 and crossed the state line into eastern Siskiyou County in December 2011. He spent much of 2012 and early 2013 in California traveling through Butte, Lassen, Modoc, Plumas, Shasta, Siskiyou, and Tehama counties. OR-7 returned to Oregon in April 2013, found a mate, and formed the Rogue Pack.

Three of OR-7's offspring have been detected in California: the original breeding male of the Lassen Pack, a female detected in eastern Siskiyou County in 2017, and OR-54.

In late 2019 ODFW reported that OR-7 was no longer with the Rogue pack and his fate was unknown.

OTHER WOLVES DETECTED (Uncollared)

Since 2017, uncollared dispersing wolves have periodically been detected in northern California via trail cameras, DNA, handheld cameras, and visual observation by CDFW. Most of these detections have occurred in Modoc, Lassen, Plumas, and Siskiyou counties.

Genetic material has been collected from some uncollared dispersers including a female from the Rogue Pack in Siskiyou County in January 2017, a male from northeastern Oregon's Meacham Pack in Lassen County in October 2017, and a male of currently unknown origin detected in Modoc County in May 2020.

