

Gray Wolf Conservation and Management

Non-Lethal Wolf Control Methods

Although wolves mostly prey on elk, deer, and moose, some will attack livestock or scavenge on carcasses. Many non-lethal strategies have been developed to protect livestock from wolf predation and WDFW provides assistance to adapt them to individual producer situations.

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 where and when

The livestock you manage, and where they reside when, are important to consider for reducing the potential for problems with wolves. Assess, and perhaps change, where and when to turn out livestock of what age and type.

The type, age and number of livestock you manage is key. Sheep, goats and calves are the livestock most commonly attacked by wolves; adult bulls, cows, and horses are less at risk.

The location, size, and accessibility of your calving/lambing areas, feedlots, grazing sites and pastures may dictate your level of risk. 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 pup-rearing dens or rendezvous sites.

Dial 911 to report an emergency

**Carnivore Depredation on Livestock
1-877-933-9847**

More information on wolf-livestock conflicts

[Livestock Injury and Mortality Investigations: A Reference Guide For WDFW Field Personnel](#)

WARNING: This manual contains graphic and potentially disturbing photos of depredation incidents.

[Livestock-Wolf Mitigation Measures Checklist](#)

[Wolf - Livestock Non-lethal Conflict Avoidance: A Review of the Literature](#)



Remove attractants

Wolves don't just hunt live animals; they also feed or scavenge on already 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, 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 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 this 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.



Guard with dogs and people

The frequency and intensity of livestock supervision provided can be critical because wolves are territorial and tend to avoid humans.

Use 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.

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 Hazing/Scaring Devices

Light and noise “scare” devices can be used to frighten wolves away from confined livestock and alert herders to the presence of wolves. Using non-lethal munitions – including propane cannons, cracker shells, rubber bullets, paintballs and beanbags – to haze wolves near livestock can be effective. The use of these tools must be done in coordination with WDFW and federal authorities.

The radio collars that are on some wolves for monitoring by WDFW can also be used to trigger Radio-Activated Guard (RAG) systems that emit flashing lights and loud sounds at the approach of the radio-collared wolf.