

**ASSESSING GRAY WOLF RESTORATION IN IDAHO:  
PROGRESS AFTER TWO YEARS <sup>TWS</sup>**

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At least 29 of 35 gray wolves (*Canis lupus*) translocated to central Idaho and released on-site at selected backcountry locations in 1995 and 1996 have survived into winter, 1997. Two wolves died as a result of human-caused mortality; 1 of apparent starvation, 1 wolf death remains under investigation, and the status of 2 wolves is unknown. Of 29 regularly monitored wolves, at least 18 have joined with other radioed and non-radioed wolves (N=4) to form 11 potential breeding pairs. Three potential breeding pairs are located north of the Salmon River and 8 potential breeding pairs are distributed to the south. Nine wolves of reproductive age remain alone within the experimental area: a male and female remain north of the Salmon River and 5 males and 2 females are south. Translocated wolves did not reproduce in 1995 but 3 litters were produced during 1996. Radioed wolves have been located from fixed-wing aircraft every 10 days (approximate) since July, 1996 but once every 3 weeks prior to that time. Wolves moved extensively within the experimental area from 1995 through winter, 1996. However, only 5 of 33 wolves have permanently vacated or dispersed long distances outside the experimental area. Paired wolves were increasingly predictable in their movements during summer, 1996 but less so during winter, 1996-1997. Wolves preyed on elk (*Cervus elaphus*), moose (*Alces alces*), mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), beaver (*Castor canadensis*), and domestic sheep and cattle. We responded to 9 livestock depredation incidents; 3 were confirmed wolf depredations. The distribution of Canadian wolves released in Idaho is similar to the distribution of historical wolf reports during the past 70 years. Surveys in 8 areas where wolves were known to occur in 1996 found hunter and outfitters were accepting or positive about their return to Idaho. On the ground management following wolf restoration has proven more complex and time consuming than anticipated.