

Wolf connected to livestock killings could be breeding, wildlife officials say

April 26 2024, by Lauren Penington, The Denver Post



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Wildlife officials said they will not remove a gray wolf potentially connected to recent livestock killings, despite requests from stockgrowers.

Two of the gray wolves reintroduced to Colorado's Grand County in December—including one suspected in recent depredations—are likely "denning" and in the breeding process, Colorado Parks and Wildlife officials said in a letter to the Middle Park Stockgrowers Board. The letter came in response to a request from the board to lethally remove two wolves suspected in the livestock attacks.

Removing the male wolf "would be irresponsible management and potentially cause the den to fail, possibly resulting in the death of the presumed pups," CPW Director Jeff Davis wrote in the letter.

In early April, the female wolf's GPS stopped uploading location points to the server and only started uploading again recently, according to Davis. Officials believe she was in the den, which interrupted the tracking collar's signal and aligns with the expected timing of wolf reproduction.

CPW officers are working to confirm the den's location.

Colorado's first confirmed wolf depredation incident happened on April 2 in Grand County. The second attack came just five days later, 60 miles north in Jackson County.

On April 18, the total number of livestock killed by wolves reached six as [wildlife officials](#) confirmed two more calf attacks.

Amid reports of [livestock](#) attacks and depredations, one of the 10 gray wolves reintroduced to Colorado was found dead in Larimer County, [federal officials](#) confirmed Tuesday.

Initial evidence shows the wolf likely died of [natural causes](#), but an official autopsy has not yet been completed.

"The wolf population in Colorado is far below any restoration goal," Davis wrote in Tuesday's letter. "We have the legal duty to establish a self-sustaining population of wolves while minimizing conflict risk."

As the wolf population in Colorado grows, the approach to lethal removals will likely become more liberal, Davis wrote.

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