



Ghost Gulos No More --- A wolverine population takes shape in Central Idaho

By Diane Evans Mack, Nongame Wildlife Biologist, McCall
Idaho Department of Fish and Game



Project co-leader Kim Heinemeyer checks the trigger mechanism on a baited, hand-made log box trap. The trap is a well-tested technique that keeps a wolverine warm and secure. Many wolverines are readily re-trapped, suggesting it's not a wholly unpleasant experience! Photo by Diane Evans Mack, IDFG.

Two years ago I wrote an article for Windows to Wildlife titled 'Walking with Wolverines'. It described my experience following a fresh wolverine (scientific name: *Gulo gulo luscus*) trail in winter, and explained how we used winter tracking to learn where this mysterious species occurred. I never saw the animals whose tracks I followed. DNA from hair or scat collected along the trail

confirmed (for those who didn't trust my tracking skills!) they were wolverine. We learned a little bit about the local wolverine population, but winter tracking easily raised more questions than it answered.

This winter those tracks and the pictures emerging from their whereabouts are much more detailed and fascinating than we could have

imagined from randomly-encountered tracks in the snow. Six wolverines are the stars of a new study on the Payette National Forest led by Kim Heinemeyer of Round River Conservation Studies and Jeff Copeland of the Forest Service Rocky Mountain Research Station. Equipped with GPS and VHF radio collars, the wolverines' travels are beginning to reveal some of the mysteries of their habits and habitats. Who lives where, how they interact with each other, how long it takes to circle through their territories, whether or not the females are denning --- all of these questions will be answered over time. Luckily all six appear to be resident animals rather than transients moving through and taking their collars (and location data) beyond the study area. We've already learned that one is readily attracted to the live traps, and another is our northern-most wanderer, while another is elusive. The main thrust of the study, though, is to look at the overlap between wolverine movements and winter recreation.

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Project co-leader Jeff Copeland and technician Will Tyson monitor body temperature throughout the processing time needed to measure body size and attach a GPS collar. Photo by Ana Egniew, Payette NF.

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Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Twentieth Online Auction Deemed a Success for Watchable Wildlife!

By Tricia Hoffman, Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation

With more than 100 bidders from Tennessee to Oregon, and offering more than 40 outdoor trips, the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation Inc. reports the 20th Online Auction raised \$17,000.

The Foundation's Board of Directors appreciates the partnership with and help of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, underwriting support of ActiveOutdoors, donations from businesses throughout Idaho, and the winning bidders.

This year's auction benefited Idaho's Watchable Wildlife program, which promotes an appreciation for wildlife and habitat, wildlife-based tourism, and responsible wildlife observation for the residents in Idaho. Efforts encourage wildlife viewing, photography, education, and other non-consumptive wildlife recreation to build community awareness, understanding, and support for the conservation of the wildlife and habitats upon which these activities depend.

The Foundation thanks the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, ActiveOutdoors, and all those who participated, supported, and donated to this year's auction. We couldn't have done it without you!

To learn more about the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation Inc., Please visit: www.ifwf.org or call 208.334.2648 and follow us on



Photo by Beth Waterbury, IDFG

4 ways to support Idaho's wildlife in 2010

1. BUY A HUNTING LICENSE. People who hunt in Idaho are the only ones contributing to the conservation of game animals such as elk, deer, and mountain lion.

2. BUY A FISHING LICENSE. Anglers in Idaho pay for all fish stocking, habitat restoration, fisheries research, and some educational programs.

3. BUY AN IDAHO WILDLIFE LICENSE PLATE. Make your car look good AND support Idaho's nongame wildlife!

4. DO YOUR TAXES RIGHT! None of your tax money goes to fish and wildlife conservation. Make a donation to the Nongame Wildlife Conservation Fund on Line 37 of your Idaho State Tax Form.

Photo by Mike Morrison

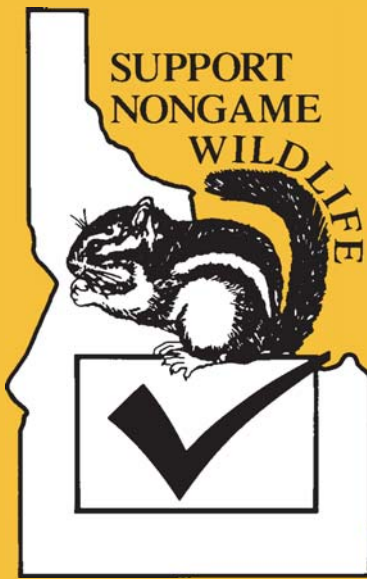
Still need to file your taxes?

Don't forget that over 90% of Idaho's wildlife are "nongame" and the ONLY source of state funding to support nongame wildlife is from the sales of wildlife license plates and voluntary tax donations.

Donate any amount on your 2009 tax form. This option is located on Line 39 of Idaho Tax Form 40.

Any amount is appreciated and helps support surveys, monitoring, research, conservation education, and wildlife viewing opportunities state-wide.

Idaho's wildlife thanks you for your support!



There is more to your license plate than just a pretty picture

Deniz Aygen, Watchable Wildlife Program Coordinator, IDFG

Most of you are receiving this newsletter because you purchased an Idaho Wildlife license plate—thank you! But did you realize you did something more than get a great new plate? Your plate purchase helps to support projects and programs directed toward species not hunted, fished, or trapped (nongame) in Idaho—that is over 90% of Idaho's wildlife. The Watchable Wildlife Program benefits from your plate purchase and helps to bring wildlife watching opportunities to you!

The Idaho Watchable Wildlife Program is a part of Idaho Department of Fish and Game's Conservation Sciences Program, but is guided by the Idaho Watchable Wildlife Committee. The committee is a collaborative group of local, state, and federal agency representatives and conservation organizations that include Golden Eagle Audubon Society, Idaho Department of Commerce, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Idaho Power Co., U.S. Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. These organizations promote an appreciation for wildlife and their habitats, wildlife-based tourism, and responsible wildlife observation ethics for the citizens and wildlife of Idaho.

"Watching wildlife" is not limited to nongame animals. Watchable Wildlife refers to any activity where people are enjoying, but not consuming, (hunting-fishing, trapping etc.) wildlife. Bird watching, nature photography, wildlife walks, plant and mushroom identification, watching salmon or other fish, viewing deer, pronghorn, or any other game animal are examples of Watchable Wildlife activities and are promoted by the program.



Wildlife watching is one of the most popular types of outdoor recreation and is big business in Idaho. In 2006, the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation (U.S. Census Bureau and USFWS) estimated that wildlife watching in Idaho generated over \$265 million in retail sales, 4,037 jobs, and \$35 million in state and local tax revenue. Additionally, the same survey estimated that hunting in Idaho resulted in \$284 million in retail sales, which directly supported 5,713 state jobs, and generated \$33 million in general tax revenues. Not only does wildlife watching contribute significantly to people's enjoyment of the outdoors, but wildlife watching has a substantial impact on Idaho's economy. So take a hike, get your camera out, and enjoy Idaho's wildlife while feeling good that you are supporting our state's natural heritage.

For more info about the Watchable Wildlife Program, visit:
<http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/nongame/watchable/>

SAWTOOTH FORUM AND LECTURE SERIES FOCUSES ON WILDLIFE THIS SUMMER!



The third season of the Sawtooth Forum and Lecture Series will begin in Stanley in early July and continue each Friday afternoon through August 27 at the Stanley Museum located on State Highway 75. Sponsored by the Sawtooth Interpretive and Historical Association, the Series will include speakers, lecturers, researchers, and authors from around the West, all of whom bring special expertise regarding wildlife of the Sawtooth area. Specific presentations will explore the natural history of Sandhill Cranes, mountain lions, raptors, and native fishes. Some presentations will include live animals. Participation is free.

SIHA President, Gary Gadwa, said, "We're excited to be able to host this Series again to enrich the Sawtooth community, to promote an understanding of the creatures and critters we share this land with, and to generate more excitement and advocacy for this beautiful and fragile environment."

The Series is supported by the Sawtooth Society and Idaho Rocky Mountain Ranch. Other partners helping to bring the Series to Stanley include the City of Stanley, U.S. Forest Service, and Stanley-Sawtooth Chamber of Commerce. By early May, the Series schedule and presentation details can be found at www.discoversawtooth.org.

The SIHA is a member-based, non-profit organization working in cooperation with the Sawtooth and Salmon-Challis National Forests. It was established in 1972 when the Sawtooth National Recreation Area was established by Congress. Its mission is to protect and advance the natural and cultural history of Idaho's Sawtooth-Salmon River Country through preservation and education.

*Thank You
to
All Contributors*

The following people made direct donations, let us know that they purchased or renewed a wildlife license plate, or informed us about a tax check-off donation between December 2009 through March 2010. This list represents those who marked the contributor box when they donated to the Conservation Sciences Program. However, many subscribers not listed here have contributed generously and Idaho's nongame wildlife thanks you ALL!

Robert + Glenda Braun
Gardner Cromwell
JA "Sandy" Emerson
Jules Fohnagy
Kathleen A Jennings-Mills
Leslie + Carrie Parton
Gary Reinke
Gary Smylie
Stephanie Snodgrass

*Also, a special thanks to those who donated money to IDFG using the nongame wildlife tax check off on their tax forms.
Thank you!*

Spring Wildlife Events

Boise Watershed-

11818 West Joplin Rd., Boise;
www.cityofboise.org/Bee/EnvironmentalEducation

WaterShed Weekend Series every third Saturday from 10am-2pm. Free for all ages. Join us for an outdoor walking tour of the Wastewater Treatment Plant at 1 pm.

April 17- Watershed Watch!

Be a water quality scientist for a day! No experience is needed to participate in this community event to get a snapshot of the health of the Boise River. All ages are welcome. Sign up by calling the Boise WaterShed at 208-489-1284 or email BoiseWaterShed@cityofboise.org. Please indicate your name, mailing address, email, phone, number of volunteers in group, and preferred monitoring location.

May 15- For the Birds

Hike with the Golden Eagle Audubon Society (one mile roundtrip) to secluded riparian areas at the wastewater treatment plant grounds. Hikes take flight at 8:00 am and 10:00 am. Then at 11:00 am, wildlife filmmaker and artist Norman Nelson will lead a presentation and hands-on project that will improve habitat for our local birds. View the film "World of Raptors" and take home tips to improve your backyard birding habitat.

June 19- Summer Kickoff

Welcome summer by participating in some wet and wild adventures! Come participate in outdoor water relay races, water balloon battles, splash tag and have a bubble bonanza. Inside, the fun continues with our H2Oh Yeah Olympics games. Please plan to bring a change of clothes.

Deer Flat NWR

13751 Upper Embankment Rd.; Nampa; 208-467-9278; <http://www.fws.gov/deerflat/>

April 8- Native Plants for Treasure Valley Landscapes; 7-8pm; Free

Just in time for spring, join local expert Ann DeBolt to discover Idaho's native plants and how to incorporate them in your yard! Native plants are beautiful and designed to thrive in Idaho weather. Ann DeBolt, Natural Communities Specialist, Idaho Botanical Garden.

May 11- 30 Years of Watching ID Butterflies; 7-8pm; Free

Learn more about these beautiful winged gems. Enjoy photos, tricks for spotting, and stories about butterflies from a local insect enthusiast. Paul Castroville, Orma J. Smith Museum College of Idaho.

April 17, May 15, June 19- Weed Warriors 9-11am; Free

Help improve wildlife habitat by removing invasive and noxious weeds. Call for more information

April 24- Earth Day Work Day 9am-12pm; Free

Celebrate Earth Day by volunteering to help wildlife. Pick up litter, remove noxious weeds, or participate in other volunteer activities. Must pre-register. Contact 467-9278 or deerflat@fws.gov.

June 12- BioBlitz

10am-3pm; Free
Explore and Celebrate Biodiversity at the BioBlitz Festival or help survey refuge life or volunteer at the Festival. Call for more information.

June 12- Kids Fishing Day

Participate in fishing-related activities and crafts and then practice your new fishing skills!

June 21-25- Desert Detectives Critter Camp

(for kids entering grades 2-3) Explore how plants and animals survive life in the desert through activities, nature walks, crafts & games. Register early; space is limited! Call 467-9278 or e-mail deerflat@fws.gov.

July 12-16- Biodiversity Basics Camp

(for kids entering grades 4-5) Explore the amazing variety of plant and animals that call the refuge home. Register early; space is limited! Call 467-9278.

Foothills Learning Center

3188 Sunset Peak Rd., Boise; (208) 514-3755
www.cityofboise.org/Bee/Foothills/index.aspx

April 10- Awesome Owls

10am-2pm; Free
Come join Katie McVey, Raptor Biologist and Deer Flat Refuge Environmental Educator, as she shares her knowledge and love for owls. Two identical presentations will be given at 10:15 and 12:15. After each presentation, we'll walk around the Learning Center grounds to spot our resident owls. We'll have spotting scopes and binoculars, but we suggest you bring your own if you have them.

Tuesday Evening Garden Series are from 6-7pm. Families and interested individuals are invited to join us as we tend our Foothills Vegetable Garden. Programs are FREE and no registration is required.

April 13- Planting cold crops and greens

May 11- How to attract pollinators with annuals

June 15- Beneficial Bugs

MK Nature Center

600 S. Walnut St., Boise; (208) 334-2225; <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/education/mknc/>

April 17- Be Outside Day! 2-4pm; Free

Come to the MK Nature Center and enjoy outside activity stations for Be Outside Day at the MK Nature Center. Make a mud pie, inspect tree bark up close, watch birds from a bird blind, take a micro hike and more.

April 18- Silent Secrets of Snakes 1pm; \$5 per person ages 3 and over

Wildlife educator Frank Lundburg will present a special program for the public with live snakes including both exotic and native species. Rattlesnake awareness and outdoor safety will be covered as well.

April 24- Earth Day Native Plant Sale 9am-3pm

Join the Pahove Chapter of the Idaho Native Plant Society and the MK Nature Center for our annual plant sale. Help support the INPS and the Nature Center..

June 12- Free Fish Day "Fish Fest"

9am-2pm at Park Center Ponds
Come to the Park Center Ponds for a day of free fishing. The Nature Center will be on hand with fish painting. Idaho Department of Fish and Game Fishing Trailer will have loaner fishing rods available. Barbeque lunch, activities and prizes !

The World Center for Birds of Prey

5668 West Flying Hawk Lane, Boise; (208) 362-8687; <http://www.peregrinefund.org>

June 5- Grand opening of California Condor exhibit

Celebrate the grand opening of our California Condor Exhibit with family activities and presentations about California Condors. Our facility is only one of three in the U.S. where visitors can see North America's largest flying bird! The exhibit features a 25 foot tall cliff scene and cave. We will be charging reduced admission: General \$5, Seniors (62+) \$4, and Youth (4-16) \$3.

Dubois Grouse Days

April 16 and 17; Dubois, ID

<http://www.grousedays.org>
Witness the unusual mating ritual of sage-grouse as males gather on traditional mating territories (leks) and strut their stuff while females wander around looking for their perfect mate! This annual event in eastern Idaho celebrates the shrub-steppe ecosystem and the unique animals which call it home. For more info, call Curtis Keetch at (208) 521- 1357.

Snake River Birds of Prey Festival

May 14-16; Kuna, ID

<http://www.snakeriverbirdsofpreyfestival.com>
Experience the unique habitat and birds of the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area. Field trips, lectures, children's programs, exhibit area, and banquet with keynote speaker.

International Migratory Bird Day

An annual celebration of birds world-wide. This year's theme is "Power of Partnerships." Celebrations will be held on Saturday, May 8.

Treasure Valley area:

MK Nature Center, 600 S. Walnut St., Boise, 9am-4pm: Celebration with live birds, bird banding, and children's games and crafts. Call (208) 334-2225 for more info.

The World Center for Birds of Prey, 5668 West Flying Hawk Lane, Boise; (208) 362-8687. Presentations that emphasize the theme and fun family activities to celebrate. Admission will be General \$7, Seniors (62+) \$6, and Youth (4-16) \$5.

McCall area: Contact Diane Evans Mack at IDFG (208) 634-8137 or Terri Bryant at Ponderosa State Park (208) 634-2164 for event details.

Lewiston area: 8am-11.30am at the Moscow Farmers Market: IMBD booth with live birds May 8, 1.30-4.30pm at the Lewiston City Mall: IMBD booth with live birds. Contact Joel at the Idaho Fish & Game office (208) 799-5010 for more info.

Who Built that Nest?

By Terry Thomas, Regional Habitat Manager, Upper Snake Region, Idaho Department of Fish and Game

The songbird was a blur as it rocketed out from the sagebrush. Surprised it let me get so close before bolting, it dawned on me that there must be a nest under the bush. I carefully peered beneath the overhanging branches. There, at the base of the bush, four tawny eggs, tiny and fragile, rested in a delicate cup-shaped nest of grass.

If the mother hadn't lost her nerve and led me to that hidden nest last June, I never would have seen it. Right now, though, while grass is still flattened by winter's snow and trees have yet to re-sprout leaves, birds' nests are easier to find. Granted, these are last year's nests and most won't be reoccupied, but it does help us get a feel for who our bird neighbors are.

Not all birds build nests. The killdeer that successfully hatched her brood in my neighbor's gravel parking area last year is evidence of that. She laid her eggs in a slight depression and relied on their cryptic, speckled camouflage to protect them from predators.

Ground-nesting birds, such as many songbirds and upland birds, build nests that range from a few blades of grass to elaborate cups woven from grasses and twigs. Waterfowl, such as ducks and geese, build ground nests as well, lining them with down from their own bodies.

Birds that nest off the ground have as many strategies for success as there are species. They may prefer shrubs or tall trees, nest high, low, or in a specific kind of tree. Colonial nesting is favored by others. Some smaller birds prefer to nest close to the tips of branches where it is difficult for heavy predators to reach them. Larger birds opt for the security of a forked branch where the nest is sheltered from the weather.

The nest of the Bullock's oriole hangs like a sack below a branch. These nests seem like an incredible feat of engineering, accomplished by a creature with a brain smaller than a marble.



Marsh wren nests are softball-sized structures made of grasses and sedges, fashioned with an entrance hole that usually faces south or west. The nests are attached to the stems of marsh vegetation and are located from one to three feet above water level. Photo by Mike Morrison.



Cliff swallow nests are gourd-shaped, enclosed structures built of mud pellets and are cemented with mud under the eave of a building, bridge, or other vertical surface. Photo by Mike Morrison.

Nests are made from all types of materials. Grass and twigs are used in most nests but mud is also common. Some birds line their nests with mud, and swallows construct cups or complete enclosed nests one ball of mud at a time.

Bluebirds, woodpeckers, some owls, American kestrels and a host of other birds prefer tree cavities for nesting. Woodpeckers are the main architects for these houses, but the other species readily move in once the hard work has been done.

Unlike many birds, eagles build nests to last and may use them for many years. An eagle's nest is constructed in a specific triangular pattern. Each year the pair adds to the nest, and some become huge.

Before spring paints the world green, get out in your yard or favorite haunt and do a little searching for last year's nests.



Warbling vireo's build a cup-like nest and can be made of bark strips, grass, leaves, plant fibers, hair, and lichen. Photo by Mike Morrison.



This wolverine was detected at a baited remote camera in 2008. She is the first individual live-trapped in the 2010 study, based on distinctive white toe markings. Photo by Diane Evans Mack, IDFG.

The remote areas wolverines occupy are no longer truly remote in winter due to increasing recreational activity. This study compares wolverine movements with those of snowmobilers and back-country skiers to determine the extent of overlap in both time and space. The Idaho State Snowmobile Association, Central Idaho Recreation Coalition, and Brundage Ski Area are collaborators, along with IDFG and the Boise and Sawtooth National Forests. Similar to radio collars on the animals that store location data, recreationists carry a small GPS unit when they head out for a day in the backcountry. Participation is strictly voluntary and anonymous. Their 'track' is downloaded and added to a growing recreation database. The collective group of recreation tracks will be overlaid with wolverine data to examine how wolverines move across the landscape given the presence and timing of recreation activity. Thus far, cooperation has

been tremendous, with over 475 individual tracks collected. In addition to GPS data, recreation is monitored with periodic fixed-wing flights to confirm the overall recreation footprint.

This study is expected to continue another year on the Payette National Forest before moving to the Boise and Sawtooth forests. The objective remains the same, and our conclusions will be strengthened by studying wolverine populations and winter recreation in different geographic areas. For more information, contact idahowolverine@gmail.com

Age/gender: Adult female

Trap/release date: January 30, 2010

Weight: 8.6 kg (19 lbs)

Personality: Feisty and fearless. After release, eluded detection for 32 days before her signal was heard again.



A radio-collared wolverine, soon to be released, recovers from anesthesia in the trap in which it was caught. Photo by Erica Goad, Wolverine Project.

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Boise's Peregrine falcon webcam is up and running for its second nesting season.

Watch the live broadcast at:

www.peregrinefund.org/falconcam/



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- Golden Eagle Audubon
- Idaho Department of Commerce and Labor
- Idaho Department of Fish and Game
- Idaho Department of Parks & Recreation
- Idaho Power Company
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

