

## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

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# News Release



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### **Investigation Into Cause Of Cow Death In Okanogan County Inconclusive**

Preliminary results of an investigation of a cow carcass found in Okanogan County, Washington, near the home range of the state's first confirmed wolf pack in 70 years, concludes that the carcass was too old and scavenged to determine the cause of death.

An agent from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Wildlife Services, along with a biologist from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, investigated the carcass May 22, 2009. When they arrived they found that the remains were reduced to just hide and bones. They believe that the carcass was at least 7 days old by the time they were called in.

The investigators could not find any obvious signs of what killed the cow. There were no puncture wounds or claw marks on the hide, or signs of a struggle, to indicate that a predator such as a cougar, bear, or wolf caused the death.

There were signs that many animals had scavenged the dead cow. Tracks that appeared to be from dogs, coyotes, ravens and others that could possibly be from a wolf were found near the carcass.

Wolves in Okanogan County and the western two-thirds of Washington state are protected by the federal Endangered Species Act. Wolves are also protected statewide by state law.

Anyone who wishes to report a possible wolf sighting can call the toll free Washington wolf hotline, 888-584-9038.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov).

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