

Wolf sightings confirmed in N. California



California officials are tracking two wolves in Lassen County. Photo/CDFW

Two gray wolves are living in western Lassen County.

Gray wolves were eliminated from California more than 100 years ago, until the return of OR7 in 2011.

This summer, photographs, tracks and eyewitness sightings suggested the presence of two canids frequently traveling together.

After a wolf-like canid was photographed by trail cameras in Lassen County in fall 2015 and spring 2016, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife began operating additional trail cameras in the area and regularly searching for wolf scat and tracks.

Genetic analysis from scat samples confirmed the presence of a male and a female gray wolf.

Analysis of scat indicates that the male wolf was born into the Rogue Pack in 2014, and most likely dispersed to Lassen County in late 2015 or 2016. The founder of the Rogue Pack is the well-known gray wolf OR7 (collared in Oregon by the Oregon

Department of Fish and Wildlife) who dispersed from northeast Oregon and traveled around Northern California in 2011 and 2012 before eventually finding a mate and establishing a territory in southern Oregon in 2013.

The DNA of the female wolf does not match that of any known individual wolves from Oregon, and initial analyses indicates she is not a close relative of current Oregon wolves.

Gray wolves are listed as endangered federally and in California.