

Wolf killed on Marble Creek



Darden Saylor, Lewiston, leans on the tailgate of his truck next to the female wolf he shot Oct. 13 near Marble Creek. She weighed 70 lbs. field dressed. - Chris D'Angelo

By Mary Truman

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Two days into the hunt the three person group had nothing.

Halfway up a ridge near Marble Creek they heard a wolf howl and the woods went silent.

"Everything shut up as soon as they started howling," Adam Bauer said. "There was a chipmunk nearby chattering and he shut right up when that wolf began howling."

Darden Saylor said he thought the wolves were on another ridge, but his wife, Heidi, said her hearing is better and knew they were closer than that. The second time the wolves howled it sounded as if they were right below them, Ms. Saylor said.

Mr. Saylor left the group to see if he could get his sights on one.

"As soon as he left I took my gun off of safety," Ms. Saylor said.

Soon after leaving the group a wolf came around a corner and stopped approximately 50 yards from Mr. Saylor.

"As soon as it seen me it stopped and woofed at me three times and then I shot it," he said. "I'm after a cougar now."

Another wolf came out of the woods, ran up the hill approximately 100 yards and started howling. The rest of the pack joined it there, but none came back down, he said.

"I heard him shoot and I thought he had just wounded it because the howling I heard was so mournful, but that was coming from the other wolves," Ms. Saylor said. "I've never heard a wolf howl except for on TV."

The wolf, associated with the Fish Hook Pack, weighed 70 lbs field dressed, which is about average for a six-year-old female, said David Spicer, of Idaho Fish and Game. She was probably the first collared wolf shot in the panhandle, he said.

As of Oct. 19, seven wolves have been shot in the panhandle, and 67 statewide, he said. None have been shot in Benewah County as of Oct. 14.

State packs average approximately seven and-a-half wolves, and there are seven packs living on the Joe, Mr. Spicer said.

Shooting the wolves will probably make them more skittish; he said but admits he does not really know what affect hunting season will have on them. This year is the first time in 50 or 60 years that the state has had a legal wolf harvest, he said.

"This whole thing is a big learning process for wolves, hunters, wildlife biologists and everybody," Mr. Spicer said. "We are treading on new ground. It's going to take some time."