

WILDLIFE

The wolf wasn't guilty

Paul Larmer**April 3, 1995**

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The wolf shot in late January in central Idaho did not kill the calf it was feeding on, says the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In a letter to Idaho Rep. Helen Chenoweth, R, acting regional director Thomas Dwyer said veterinary pathologists who examined the calf concluded that the animal died of “complications associated with birth ... the wolf in question did not specifically depredate on a living animal.” Earlier reports concluded exactly the opposite (HCN, 2/20/95). The agency’s continuing investigation into the attack has sparked resentment locally. Two federal agents armed with pistols and a search warrant visited Salmon rancher Gene Hussey’s ranch in early March to look for spent cartridges and the bullet that killed the wolf. Hussey, arriving shortly thereafter with Lemhi County Sherriff Brett Barsalou, says the agents called him a welfare rancher, reports the Idaho Falls Post-Register. Special agent Paul Weyland tells a different story; he says Hussey threw rocks at him and flipped the cap off his colleague’s head. “We did absolutely nothing wrong,” Weyland says. The agents left without conducting the investigation, and probably won’t return. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Mollie Beattie issued an internal memo March 9 asking that agents refrain from all Endangered Species Act enforcement unless cleared through her office. An agency spokesman says there are no plans to return to Hussey’s ranch.

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