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Predator poison killing central Idaho dogs

- The Associated Press

A poison called Compound 1080 that's intended to kill predators is behind a rash of dog poisonings that have killed 13 pets in the central Idaho town of Salmon since January, a toxicologist says.

Veterinary Diagnostic Toxicologist Patricia Talcott with the Washington State University laboratory examined four of the dead dogs poisoned within a two-block area in the city's main residential section.

"It is a very unusual type of poisoning," Talcott told the Post Register. In 20 years at the lab, "this is the biggest outbreak I have seen involving 1080."

Compound 1080 is restricted to collars worn by livestock and intended to kill attacking predators such as wolves and coyotes. It is distributed by the Wildlife Services agency, an arm of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Mark Collinge, the Idaho director for the department's Wildlife Services, said Compound 1080 has not been deployed in Idaho in five years.

Pesticide experts say someone could have stockpiled the poison before its use was restricted.

"We need to be ever more vigilant and call in anything that appears suspicious," said Salmon Police Chief Jim Spain.

Some Salmon residents are keeping their pets indoors or have sent them out of state. Residents are also concerned about their children.

It can take from 30 minutes to several hours for animals to show symptoms after being poisoned with the odorless and tasteless Compound 1080.

A reward of \$5,500 is being offered for information leading to the arrest of whoever is putting out the poison.