

NEWS RELEASE

**U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Mountain-Prairie Region
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For Immediate Release

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ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT PROTECTIONS REINSTATED FOR NORTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAIN WOLF POPULATION

The U.S. Federal District Court in Missoula, Montana, issued a preliminary injunction on Friday, July 18, 2008, that immediately reinstated the Endangered Species Act protections for gray wolves in the northern Rocky Mountains. That area includes all of Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming; the eastern one-third of Washington and Oregon; and portions of north-central Utah. This injunction will remain in place until final resolution of this case.

The Endangered Species Act provisions reinstated by the court are those that were in effect before wolves were delisted on March 28, 2008. Any and all permits issued by the States under their authorities while wolves were delisted are null and void as of 4:04 p.m. on Friday, July 18, 2008. In the meantime, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and its partners are evaluating legal options regarding the Court's order and the ongoing litigation over the agency's delisting of the northern Rocky Mountain wolf population. The Service believes gray wolves in the northern Rocky Mountains have recovered and no longer need the protections of the Endangered Species Act.

All wolves in the southern half of Montana, all of Idaho south of Interstate 90, and all of Wyoming will be managed under the 2005 and 2008 Endangered Species Act nonessential experimental population regulations. To better understand these regulations, please visit the Service's website at <http://www.fws.gov/mountain-priare/species/mammls/wolf/>. These regulations allow people to take wolves under certain circumstances, such as when wolves are in the physical act of killing, wounding, chasing, or molesting legally present livestock and dogs. Any killing or wounding of a wolf in that area must be reported within 24 hours and the scene should not be disturbed. Each incident will be investigated by law enforcement agents to determine that the physical evidence at the scene demonstrates those wolves were in the act of attacking livestock and dogs. Please see the maps on the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks website (<http://fwp.mt.gov>) regarding those specific borders in Montana. Wolves outside of that area, including those found in the northern half of Montana, as well as those found statewide in Washington, Oregon, and Utah are listed as endangered and may not be legally harmed by the public, unless it is to defend from an immediate and direct threat to human life.

Any other conflict with wolves listed as endangered can be legally addressed only by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or its legally designated Federal, State, or Tribal agency agents. Violations of

the Endangered Species Act can result in penalties of up to \$100,000 in fines and one year incarceration.

Under cooperative agreements with the Service that have been in place for the past 3-4 years, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks will continue to lead all wolf management activities under the Endangered Species Act regulations in Montana. Idaho Department of Fish and Game will continue to lead all wolf management activities under the Endangered Species Act regulations in Idaho. Until a similar cooperative agreement can be finalized with Wyoming, the Service has resumed the lead for all wolf management activities throughout all of that state. All wolves in Wyoming are protected by the Endangered Species Act as a nonessential experimental population.

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.

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